HAILSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Hailsham: Neighbourhood Plan, 2025 - 2042

Prepared by Troy Planning + Design

Review of the 'made' Neighbourhood Plan

Pre-submission Regulation 14 version December 2025

Hailsham
TOWN COUNCIL

When the Monks came up from old Marshfoot,
each man to ring his bell.
And they rang with zeal, and rang with skill,
and they rang the changes well.

And the Monks would listen to Michelham Tower,
for those bells were of good renown.
And few there were that could compare,
with Saint Mary's of Haylesham Town.

Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan, 2025 - 2042
REVIEW AND UPDATE OF 'MADE' PLAN
Pre-submission Regulation 14 version
December 2025

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Foreword

Work on the first Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan commenced in 2016. It was adopted in 2021. The document you are now reading is the first review and update of this.

The reason for revamping our current Neighbourhood Plan is due to the ongoing growth and expansion of our Town in housing and population terms.

New and enhanced policies will give greater influence in future planning applications and decisions taken in our area.

A Neighbourhood Plan assists in bringing residents and businesses together to have a greater say and voice in deciding the look and the feel of our Town and Community.

It's clear that the Community is passionate about where they live, grow up and work, and the Town Council will use the Neighbourhood Plan to influence change at every available opportunity to bring future change to benefit Hailsham as a whole.

Councillor Mary Laxton
Chair, Neighbourhood Planning Committee
Hailsham Town Council

Progress and challenges from the first Neighbourhood Plan

Over the last five years the Town Council has led on the delivery of new and improved services and facilities across Hailsham, including:

- Hailsham Country Park pathway.
- Maurice Thornton Pavilion roof.
- Cemetery pathways.
- Western Road Recreation Ground path lighting, cricket nets and outdoor gym replacement.
- Stroma, Battle Road and Maurice Thornton play area enhancements.
- Common Pond drainage and island improvement works.
- Changing Places facility in the town centre.
- Contribution to hockey pitch.
- CCTV.
- Battle Road allotment gates
- Noticeboards and signage.
- The Station Youth Centre and The Manse.
- Refurbishment of play areas.

Delivery of the projects has been made possible through use of funding payable to the Town Council by new development (the 'neighbourhood portion' of the Community Infrastructure Levy - CIL). Government regulations state that Town Councils receive 15% of the CIL (capped) but, as Hailsham has a Neighbourhood Plan, this increases to 25% (uncapped). The Neighbourhood Plan is thus crucial in helping to fund and deliver local infrastructure projects.

Many of the projects listed above were based on ideas identified through work on the first Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan. As the town continues to grow and expand, and pressure on services increases, so having an up-to-date Plan in place becomes ever more important. The review of the Neighbourhood Plan recognises this and has a strong focus on community facilities (forming the first 'policy chapter' in the Plan) as well as other improvements sought as raised through consultation, including improved connectivity for all.

The scale of growth remains a challenge. This Plan is accompanied by a Design Guide & Code that seeks to influence the quality of new development that comes forward and how it is integrated with the town. It is seeking to plan for better, more integrated development.

Since the last Neighbourhood Plan was made, proposals for the revitalisation of the town centre have faltered, and the Government has introduced new permitted development rights that allow for diversification of town centre uses without the need for planning permission. Together, this is undermining the role and function of the centre. This Plan thus seeks to strengthen the town centre at the heart of community and civic life, including environmental improvements, uses that support activity, for all ages and genders, throughout the day, and interventions that strengthen local character and identity.

1. Introduction

The Neighbourhood Plan Review

1.1 This is the Regulation 14 consultation version of the new Neighbourhood Plan for Hailsham. It represents the first review and update of the Neighbourhood Plan that was formally 'made' by Wealden District Council in July 2021 and forms part of its statutory development plan.

1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan covers the entire area within the boundaries of the Town Council (Figure 1), setting out the community's aspirations for the area over the period to 2042 (which aligns with the timeframe established in the emerging Wealden District Local Plan) and establishes policies relating to land use and development. These are policies that will guide future planning applications and decisions in the area. But the Neighbourhood Plan is much more than this.

1.3 The purpose of neighbourhood planning is to give local people and businesses a much greater say in how the places they live and work in should change and develop over time. Neighbourhood planning is designed to give local people a very real voice in shaping the look and feel of an area. The Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan thus brings together more than just traditional planning matters, and includes wider aspirations for change, to infrastructure and green space for example.

1.4 Hailsham was formally designated as an area for neighbourhood planning purposes in August 2016. Having a Plan in place has helped to shape and influence where money sourced from developers through the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 agreements should be directed (for example, towards new and improved community facilities).

1.5 The made Neighbourhood Plan has been recognised as a good example of community-led plan-making. The Examiner of the made Neighbourhood Plan stated:

*"Overall **this is a hugely impressive neighbourhood plan** which seeks to fundamentally influence the way that new development is developed. It strives to deliver high quality places, based on a clear strategy of ensuring connectivity and high-quality design."*

1.6 The Plan was shortlisted in the 2018 Planning Awards and is used as a case study example in the Guide to Twenty minute neighbourhoods published by the Town and Country Planning Association. It also features, alongside places such as Paris, Milan and Utrecht, as a case study in European Union funded research into 'Human-centred planning in action'.
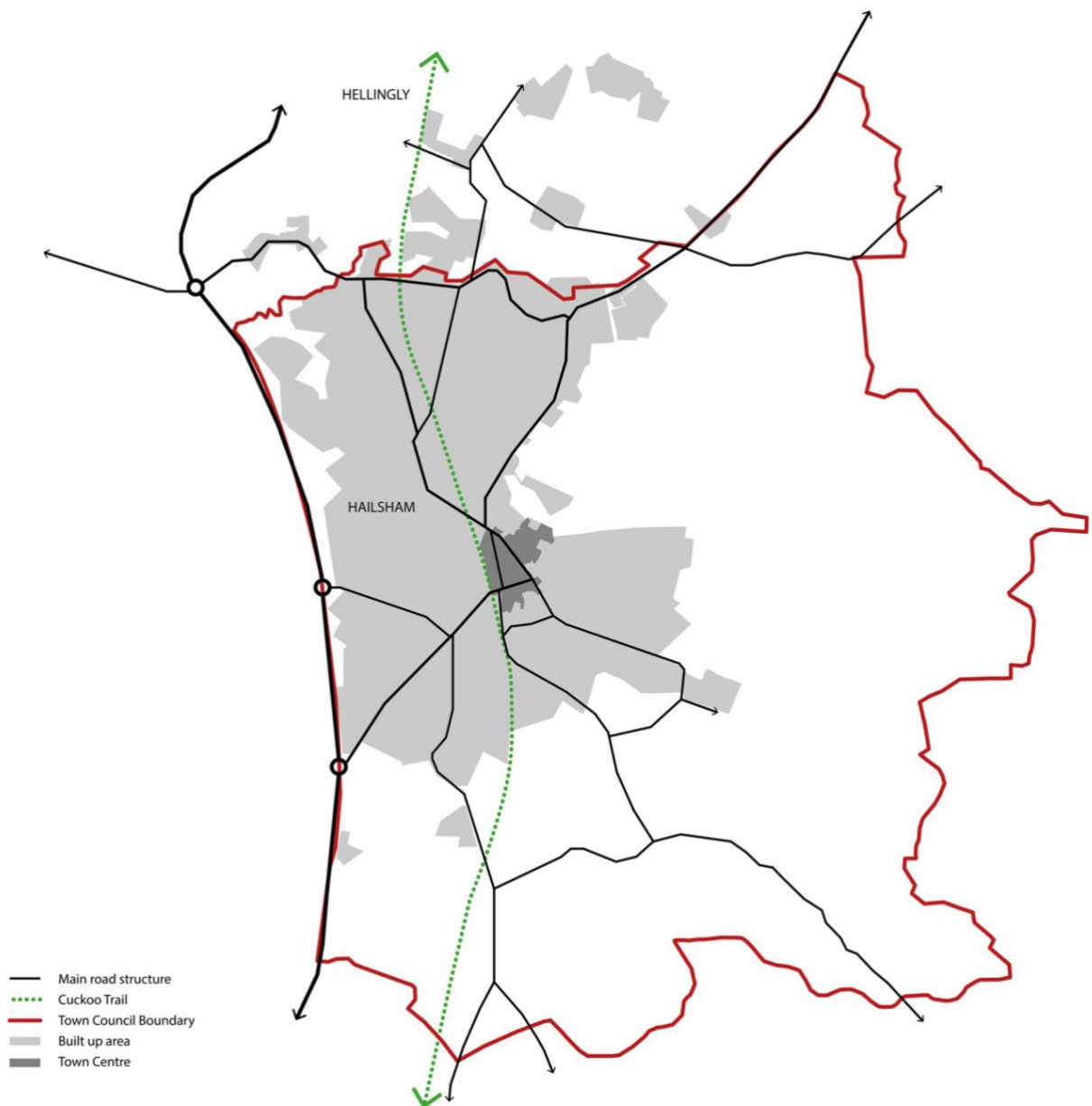
Figure 1: The designated Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan area (which is aligned with the extent of the Hailsham Town Council boundary)

1.7 Although the Neighbourhood Plan was made as 'recently' as 2021, much of the work undertaken to inform the Neighbourhood Plan took place during 2017 and 2018. Changes that have taken place over the last seven years now need reflecting in an updated version of the Neighbourhood Plan. These include:

- Ongoing growth and expansion of Hailsham, which has seen new residential development in the area, including that in adjacent Hellingly which, although outside of the Plan area, has implications for Hailsham in the way that services and facilities are used.
- The emergence of a new draft Local Plan being prepared by Wealden District Council which establishes requirements for further development in Hailsham.
- Changes at the national level, including increasing awareness of the impacts of climate change, and the importance of health and well-being, as well as new planning policy/guidance, changes to permitted development rights, and the relationship between good design and creation of attractive, liveable and healthy places.

1.8 These factors have been reviewed as part of the update of the Neighbourhood Plan and have been considered against responses to consultation activities to help refocus and refine the Neighbourhood Plan.

1.9 One of the key messages emerging from the review is that there has been too much development in Hailsham, and that this has not been accompanied with the necessary level of investment in infrastructure, and that no further development should take place, at least until supporting infrastructure has been put in place.

1.10 It is important to make clear that:

- The scale and location of growth that has taken place in Hailsham, and which continues to take place, is reflective of policies in the Wealden District Local Plan. These are not decisions that have been taken through the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The delivery of infrastructure is subject to investment and funding by a combination of developers, utilities and service providers, and falls outside the remit of the Town Council.

1.11 The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for development or establish funding and delivery strategies for infrastructure. It does though seek to take a pragmatic approach to future change. It recognises that development will happen, but that this should be undertaken in 'the right way', such that it brings benefits to the community. The Neighbourhood Plan is seen as a vehicle to help shape 'good growth' and development. Having a Neighbourhood Plan in place also enables the Town Council to receive a higher 'share' of funding payable by developers through the Community Infrastructure Levy and which can be directed to improvements to local infrastructure. The Neighbourhood Plan is very much an opportunity, not a threat, and fleshes out how future change should come forward to benefit Hailsham as a whole.

What is in the Neighbourhood Plan

1.12 There is no prescribed format for a Neighbourhood Plan or the content of it. Indeed, [Planning Practice Guidance](#) confirms that it *'is for the local community to determine the specific topics to be covered by a Neighbourhood Plan'* (Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 41-004-20190509). The guidance does though state that the Plan should contain policies that relate to the development and use of land, and that wider aspirations can also be set out. The Neighbourhood Plan includes a series of different coloured boxes which, for clarification, include the following:

- Neighbourhood Plan policies are presented in boxes shaded in green.

- Project ideas and aspirations for the Plan area which are not specifically land-use planning related are presented in boxes shaded in yellow.

1.13 The review of the Neighbourhood Plan builds upon the foundations created by the first Neighbourhood Plan and the extensive engagement undertaken as part of that to develop a vision and set of objectives for Hailsham, as well as policies and projects for future change and development. These have been tested, expanded upon and updated through consultation undertaken as part of the review process, with the opportunity taken to make policies more specific to challenges in Hailsham.

1.14 The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for development (this is for the emerging Wealden Local Plan) but does recognise that planning applications for new development will continue to come forward. It thus includes policies that seek to influence the location, scale, form, design and quality of development, so that what does come forward reflects local character and the qualities that define the area. It also includes policies that reflect matters of concern as reflected through consultation, including the future of the town centre, the provision of community facilities and the ability for all to be able to move around the area safely and easily.

1.15 Alongside the Neighbourhood Plan a Design Guide & Code has been prepared. This is presented as a free-standing appendix to the Neighbourhood Plan but is referenced in policies and supporting text, as relevant. It covers the entire Plan area and includes guidance and codes that should be used to inform new development proposals, and which should be referenced by applicants and decision makers.

Matters not covered by the Neighbourhood Plan

1.16   The Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the development plan for Wealden. It will sit alongside and does not need to repeat policies in the adopted statutory development plan for Wealden District. Equally, it is unnecessary to repeat national policy and guidance, nor those matters prescribed through Building Regulations.

1.17   Matters associated with sustainable building standards, housing space standards and the requirement for biodiversity net gain were all raised in one way or another through consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan. The approach to all of these is though set out at the national level or are strategic matters that Wealden District Council is addressing in the new Local Plan.

1.18   It is also important to note that this Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to identify nor allocate sites for development. Rather, it is Wealden District Council, through work on the emerging Local Plan, that will establish the scale and distribution of homes to be planned for across the district as a whole and, through that, what land will ultimately be allocated for development in Hailsham. At the same time, the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, relating to matters such as design, layout and accessibility, for example, will influence decisions on the scale, location and form of future development so it is appropriate to its setting and local context.

Ownership of the Neighbourhood Plan

1.19   The Localism Act 2011 gave communities the power to develop Neighbourhood Plans, to be progressed by Town and Parish Councils or neighbourhood forums.

1.20   Work on this Plan has been led by the Town Council who established a committee of Council members and interested residents to consult upon and develop the Plan.

1.21   Through work on the Plan the committee has endeavoured to engage, enthuse and energise residents and the wider community, including businesses and other stakeholders and organisations, to have their say on the future of Hailsham and help shape the Neighbourhood Plan.

1.22   As and when the review and update of the Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' it will form part of the 'development plan' and will be used by Wealden District Council, alongside the emerging Wealden Local Plan and other documents in its statutory Development Plan, to determine planning applications submitted for new development in Hailsham.

Status of the Neighbourhood Plan

1.23   This document comprises a review of the made Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan. Up until the point at which the review is formally 'made', the current Neighbourhood Plan will continue to be used to inform planning applications and decisions in Hailsham.

1.24   There are various stages involved in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. Broadly, they include:

- Initial informal consultation to identify issues, concerns and areas of focus for the Neighbourhood Plan.

- Collection of 'evidence' on the issues and potential options, ideas and strategies to be progressed through the Plan.

- Production of and informal consultation on emerging policy ideas.

- Drafting of and formal consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan (known as the Regulation 14 Stage).

- Updating the Plan in response to consultation and submitting the Plan to Wealden District Council for the Regulation 16 Consultation stage.

- Subjecting the Neighbourhood Plan to the independent examination process.

- Subjecting the Neighbourhood Plan to a local referendum.

- Adopting ('making') the Neighbourhood Plan as a policy document – if more than 50% of people that turn out vote 'yes' at the referendum.

1.25   This is the formal consultation 'Regulation 14' version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Structure of the Neighbourhood Plan

1.26   Following this introduction the Neighbourhood Plan comprises eight further sections. These are:

- Section 2, which presents the context for the Neighbourhood Plan, providing an overview of the growth and evolution of Hailsham and the relationship between the Neighbourhood Plan and wider planning policy.

- Section 3, which presents a summary of the consultation process and key messages arising from that, and which informs the vision, objectives and overarching principles for future change and development in Hailsham.

- Sections 4 – 8, which present the Neighbourhood Plan policies and, as appropriate, associated projects.

- Section 9, which summarises the projects and outlines the next steps in the plan-making process.

2. Context for the Plan

The growth and evolution of Hailsham

2.1 Hailsham is the largest of the five main towns within Wealden District. It sits amongst the lowland forests and marshes of the Sussex Weald and is a gateway to the South Downs National Park. Hailsham is a market town – its charter was granted in 1252 – and its history can be traced back to the Domesday Book. The Plan area has a population of about 23,100 people (based on the 2021 Census), the majority of whom live in the town.

2.2 The town has grown steadily over time, with significant expansion experienced since 1945. In particular, development over the last decade (and which continues to take place) to the south and east of the town has extended the built form out towards the Pevensey Levels. To the north further growth has taken place in the adjacent Parish of Hellingly. Although not part of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan area, this growth is closely related to and looks towards Hailsham for services and facilities. The combined population of Hailsham plus the immediately adjacent settlement areas in neighbouring Hellingly is around 26,900 people.

2.3 The town's traditional industry was in rope making. Today, industrial areas at Diplocks Way and Station Road, as well as commercial premises in the town centre, comprise the main areas of employment in the town.

2.4 Hailsham Town Centre is the heart of the town. It has previously been subject to proposals for investment and redevelopment, but these have not come to fruition. Improvements are still though needed, supporting the quality of the visitor experience and its important role as a civic and transport hub.

2.5 The town is located approximately 5km north of Polegate and 15km north of Eastbourne, which is the nearest large town. These towns were previously connected to each other by rail, though the route through Hailsham was removed as a result of the Beeching report. In its place is now the Cuckoo Trail: a green walking and cycle route running north to south through Hailsham. Main road connections to and from the town comprise the A22 and A27.

2.6 Close to the town is the Pevensey Levels: a low-lying wetland of national and international conservation importance. It is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Ramsar Site, and a Special Area of Conservation. It comprises an extensive drainage network and is vulnerable to the effects of climate change and eutrophication. The environment of the Pevensey Levels needs careful management.

2.7 Further information on the growth and character of Hailsham is presented in the Design Guide & Code that sits alongside the Neighbourhood Plan.

Relationship with the Wealden Local Plan

2.8   Neighbourhood Plans must be prepared to accord with national guidance and legislation including the Localism Act (2011), the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012, subsequently updated in 2015 and 2016), the Neighbourhood Planning Act (2017), the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

2.9   The NPPF supports the delivery of sustainable development and how this should be facilitated through plan-making and the determination of planning applications. Neighbourhood Plans need to align with the NPPF and support sustainable development.

2.10   Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the 'development plan'. They should not repeat nor frustrate these policies. The development plan for Hailsham includes the Wealden Core Strategy. This was approved by full council in November 2012 and formally adopted in February 2013. It covers the period 2013 to 2027. Alongside this, development plan policies saved from the previous Wealden Local Plan (adopted in 1998) remain used for determining planning applications. An Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan was also adopted in 2016 and forms part of the development plan, as do the Joint East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton and Hove Waste and Minerals Plan (2013), the Waste and Minerals Sites Plan (2017) and the Waste and Minerals Local Plan Review, Revised Policies (October 2024).

2.11   Alongside preparation of the first made Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan, Wealden District Council submitted a new Local Plan for examination. This was eventually withdrawn from that process, leaving the made Neighbourhood Plan as the most up-to-date expression of planning policy for Hailsham.

2.12   The Wealden Local Plan is now subject to review again. This will eventually replace the Core Strategy and saved policies from the previous Local Plan. The review of the Local Plan provides an opportunity for the update of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan to have a greater focus on matters more specific to Hailsham. Planning Practice Guidance makes clear that where a new Local Plan is being prepared, the reasoning and evidence behind this is likely to be relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan, and that a proactive and positive approach to plan-making should be taken such that policies in Neighbourhood Plans are complementary to those in the emerging Local Plan.

2.13   Key points of relevance for the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan are summarised in the following sections:

The adopted development plan

2.14   The Core Strategy includes a suite of 'spatial' and 'core' policies that direct growth and development to higher order settlements in the district (i.e. Hailsham), meeting economic and housing needs, whilst protecting the environment and delivering improvements to biodiversity and green infrastructure.

2.15   It presents an area strategy for Hailsham and Hellingly that directs major growth to the east and north of the town whilst supporting regeneration in the town centre, including traffic management measures and improved public transport services. The Core Strategy also recognises the sensitive nature of and proximity to the Pevensey Levels, and the need for appropriate mitigation measures to be provided as part of development to ensure ongoing protection of the area.

The emerging Local Plan

2.16   Consultation on the draft emerging Local Plan took place between March and May 2024. This comprised the 'Regulation 18 stage'.   At the time of writing, all consultation responses to the Regulation 18 Local Plan have been considered. Further to the publication of the new version of the NPPF in December 2024, which amongst other changes raised the housing need figure for the district, the decision was taken to run a second Regulation 18 consultation focussed on the Spatial Strategy and other issues associated with the new NPPF in the Winter of 2025/2026. The District Council anticipates that the emerging Local Plan will be subject to examination in the Autumn of 2026, followed by adoption in Spring 2027.

2.17   The emerging Local Plan lists those policies which are strategic in nature (and thus which Neighbourhood Plans should be in general conformity with). They include the scale and distribution of new housing growth across the district. Hailsham is identified as a 'Type 1 settlement' and, as the largest settlement in the district, is a location for new growth. Between 2023 and 2040 it is expected that 2,959 new homes will be built and delivered in Hailsham. Of these, 1,826 are 'committed': this is, they have planning permission or are being built out. 842 homes are to be delivered on allocated sites, and a further 291 homes are expected to come forward through an allowance for 'windfall', typically comprising smaller sites within the existing built-up area. These may change as the Local Plan evolves.

2.18   It is also important to acknowledge the scale of growth anticipated to take place in neighbouring Hellingly. The emerging Local Plan anticipates than 1,224 new homes will be delivered over the plan period. Of these, 787 comprise commitments, 385 are to be accommodated on allocated sites, and 52 are expected to come forward as windfall. Although growth in Hellingly is outside the Neighbourhood Plan area, the reality is that further growth here will impact on Hailsham, particularly in terms of movement, services and facilities.

2.19   Development site allocations in the emerging Local Plan, for housing and employment purposes, are illustrated in Figure 2.
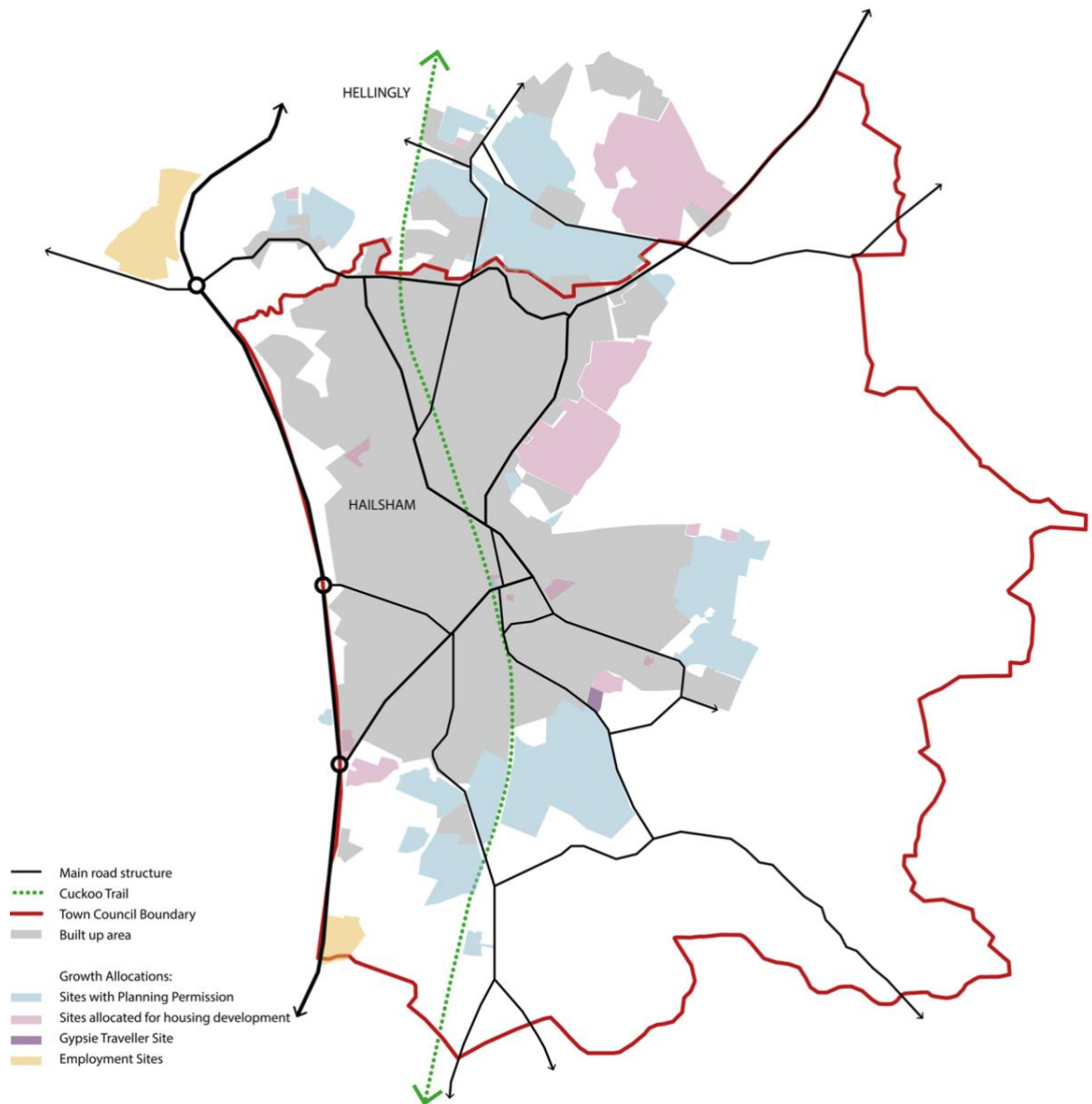
Figure 2: Allocations and committed developments in Hailsham and neighbouring Hellingly as set out in the emerging Wealden Local Plan

2.20   The emerging Local Plan includes a suite of strategic policies relating to the natural environment, climate change and green infrastructure, encourages sustainable and active travel, and takes a 'town centre' first approach to new retail and supporting uses.

2.21   The emerging Local Plan also supports growth that helps deliver the concept of the 20-minute neighbourhood, which it refers to as 'complete, compact and connected neighbourhoods', where services and facilities that support day-to-day life are provided in close proximity to the home and are easily accessible to people in the community of all ages and abilities. The emerging Local Plan supports delivery of the 20-minute neighbourhood concept in Hailsham and notes that this is reflected in the made Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan which is underpinned by the aspiration for Hailsham to be a 'ten-minute town'. Although utilising different terminology, the concepts are effectively one and the same. And, as noted in the following section, strong support was expressed through consultation for the 'ten-minute town' concept.

3. Vision and Objectives

Consultation and engagement

3.1 Extensive engagement exercises were undertaken in the making of the first Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan. These were used to develop a vision for the Plan and formed the basis of policies within that. Further consultation was undertaken as part of the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. This indicated that:

- There remains concern about the scale and quantum of development that has and continues to take place around Hailsham, and the pressure this is placing on local services and facilities. Responses suggest there is a need for new and improved facilities and that, ideally, facilities required as a result of development should be put in place during the first stages of development.

- Linked to the growth of the town is a concern about what this means in terms of green spaces and the surrounding countryside. Responses suggest that better use should be made of previously developed land and existing green spaces preserved, protecting the environment, areas of wildlife value and the floodplain.

- Where new housing development does take place, it should be well-designed, well-integrated within the existing built area, and provide for a mix of homes that respond to local needs.

- The growth of the town has resulted in additional traffic and increasing occurrences of congestion, particularly in the town centre, and the quality of roads, footpaths and cycle routes is generally poor. Respondents suggested that these issues need addressing, and that improved transport choices for all are required, including improved public transport, walking and cycling options. The opportunity should be taken to make better use of the Cuckoo Trail.

- The town should be a cleaner, safer, greener place, including new street tree planting and improved areas of play. Respondents suggested that there is a need for better litter and waste management, and efforts should be taken to improve air quality and reduce pollution.

- The quality and experience of the town centre should be improved, including the public realm, provision of new areas of greenery and a more diverse range of shops and services, including arts and culture.

3.2 The messages received through the events informed the vision and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan. These are presented across the following pages.

Vision

3.3   The vision set out in the made Neighbourhood Plan has been updated. The revised vision is set out below. It retains elements from the first Neighbourhood Plan but brings these up to date, reflecting feedback from the consultation events:

In 2042, Hailsham is a vibrant, attractive and sustainable town that harmoniously blends its rich heritage with modern amenities. Our community thrives on strong local connections, supported by robust infrastructure that ensures seamless mobility and access to essential services.

Hailsham is renowned for its green spaces and commitment to sustainability, with high quality parks, community food growing opportunities and eco-friendly initiatives that enhance our environment and quality of life. Our town centre is a bustling hub of independent shops, cafes, and cultural venues, offering a diverse and engaging experience for residents and visitors alike.

We prioritise the well-being of our community by providing comprehensive healthcare facilities, excellent educational institutions, and a variety of recreational opportunities. Our transport systems are efficient and well-maintained, ensuring easy access to all parts of the town, for all of our residents and visitors. A range of housing choice and opportunity has been provided, meeting the diverse needs of the population.

Hailsham is a place where people of all ages feel safe, supported, and connected. We celebrate our unique character and work together to create a future that is inclusive, prosperous, and resilient.

Objectives

3.4 The objectives that flow from the vision are presented below. These consolidate and update the previous set of objectives, reflecting priorities raised through consultation. They are:

Objective 1: Community

3.5 To promote delivery of a range of community facilities and services that cater for all, including new healthcare, meeting the needs of residents and supporting community cohesion and social inclusion.

3.6 Policies relating to this objective are primarily set out in Section 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Objective 2: Town Centre

3.7 To enhance the quality, attractiveness and overall experience of the town centre, making this a pedestrian friendly environment that offers a range of services and activities throughout the day.

3.8 Policies relating to this objective are primarily set out in Section 5 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Objective 3: Housing and Design

3.9 To promote well-designed new homes that provide a mix of housing types and tenures to meet local needs, which are well-integrated within the fabric of the town, and deliver high standards of sustainability and energy efficiency.

3.10 Policies relating to this objective are primarily set out in Section 6 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Objective 4: Accessibility

3.11 To enhance access for all, making it safer and easier for people of all ages to get around Hailsham, supporting sustainable, active and healthy travel choices.

3.12 Policies relating to this objective are primarily set out in Section 7 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Objective 5: Green infrastructure

3.13 To strengthen the quality of the green infrastructure network across Hailsham, enhancing wildlife and biodiversity, and providing accessible areas of natural and amenity green space close to home.

3.14 Policies relating to this objective are primarily set out in Section 8 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Overarching principles

A compact, 'complete' place

3.15   The first Neighbourhood Plan for Hailsham was framed around the concept of the 'ten-minute town'. The aspiration is that the shopping basket of services and facilities needed to support day-to-day life are available in Hailsham and are within safe and easy access of the home for everyone of all ages and abilities, within a ten minute journey (Figure 3).

3.16   This means provision of and access to schools and healthcare, play space and local shops. It means that a mix of homes should be provided to meet the needs of the community, and that opportunities to access employment should be available to all. It supports safe movement by foot, bike and public transport, for those who can travel that way. It seeks to promote a socially inclusive and cohesive community.

Figure 3: Graphic illustrating the 'ten-minute town' concept

3.17   In reality, the distances that people will travel for different services and facilities will vary. Small pocket parks should ideally be close to home, as should bus stops, encouraging their use. However, people will be more willing to travel further for services such as hospitals and theatres. Although reference to ten minutes is used, the concept is really about creating a compact, complete, connected, climate-friendly community.

3.18   During the consultation respondents were asked to say whether they felt the concept remains relevant and should be carried forward into the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. The overwhelming majority of respondents signalled their support for the concept. Where suggestions were made as to the concept or how it could be improved, comments included providing better public transport and safer cycle routes, providing more green spaces, parks and community facilities, and supporting a more diverse mix of shops and services in the town centre.

3.19   This is reflected in the set of policies and projects that follow in the Plan. In particular:

- The Plan, and the associated Design Guide & Code, set out principles for new residential development, indicating how this should be better integrated with the existing built form and which will help provide better connections for public transport, walking and wheeling, where community facilities are in locations that can be used by existing and new residents (and thus support community cohesion), and where a mix of useable and meaningful green space typologies are well integrated within the layout of new development.
- The Plan supports delivery of new community facilities across Hailsham, as well as improvements to existing facilities, catering for all ages and interests. The design and location of these should be accessible to all and spaces should be multi-functional, allowing the whole community to make use of the facilities. In particular, new healthcare facilities are welcomed.
- The Plan identifies opportunities for new transport infrastructure, supporting use of public transport, walking and wheeling. It envisages a series of 'community mobility hubs' across Hailsham that provide a range of travel choices and which are integrated with community facilities, helping make these a hub of local activity.
- The Plan envisages improvements to the network of green infrastructure across Hailsham, including opportunities for diversifying existing spaces and retrofitting existing streets and public spaces to integrate areas of greenery into these.
- The Plan supports a more walkable and pedestrian friendly town centre which has a range of uses and facilities, and which support daytime activity as well as a family-friendly evening economy.

3.20   These ideas embody the principles of sustainable development and healthy places. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to direct and shape growth and change such that it enhances quality of life and place for current and future generations: such that Hailsham becomes a really great place.

Supporting good design and 'placemaking'

3.21 The benefits of 'great places' are illustrated in Figure 4. It is clear that accessibility (for all people, of all ages, incomes and abilities), the provision of a wide range of services and activities, and proximity to these and other people, as well as good design and a mix of uses, is central to the creation of successful places.

Figure 4: The benefits of 'great places'. Image adapted from the PPS Group

3.22 Good design has a major role in contributing to the quality of life and creating attractive, liveable places. Good design goes beyond the look of buildings and considers the mix of uses and activities that help create lively and interesting places; the local character and distinctiveness of a place, reflected through its landscape and building materials for example; contributing to healthy lifestyles by making it easy for people to move by foot and by bike; fostering a sense of community through well designed, functional and attractive public spaces; and enhancing the quality of environment.

3.23 In short, good design will help create high quality, safe and successful places in Hailsham where people enjoy living, working and visiting.   A Design Guide & Code has been prepared and sits alongside the Neighbourhood Plan and helps illustrate what is meant by good design in Hailsham. Applicants for development will be expected to refer and respond positively to the Design Guide & Code.

Safe and convenient travel choices for all

3.24   To help move towards a well-designed, climate-resilient and inclusive place, it is important to re-think the quality of streets and spaces in the town. The town is relatively flat and suitable for cycling, but cycling provision, beyond the Cuckoo Trail, is limited. New routes and connections are needed, that provide for direct links between the places people want to travel to and which, more importantly, are safe. Space for cycling should be made available on the main routes in and around the town, and safe crossings provided at junctions to avoid conflicts between vehicles and cyclists.

3.25   Whilst travel by car remains important in Hailsham, and is a mode that many people will continue to use and which needs to be catered for, consultation comments highlighted the issue of traffic congestion, and impact of this, particularly on the town centre. Traffic management solutions should be put in place. However, walking and cycling can and should be the default choice for moving around in Hailsham. It is an aspiration that short trips, by foot and by bike, will become more common. This is good for the environment, for health and social well-being, and for the economy. For longer distances, or for those who struggle to walk or cycle, then bus services should provide an attractive proposition. This means providing frequent services and good waiting facilities, coupled with junction priority and good quality vehicles, providing both comfort and the ability to use Wi-Fi. Travel by foot, by bike or by bus should be a delight. Good public transport supports a good walking and cycling network and should form the backbone of the movement strategy for the town.

3.26   But this needs to go hand-in-hand with changes to the way we currently use the car. The Neighbourhood Plan aims to create the conditions that encourage safe, attractive and efficient travel by alternative modes, and which provide people with the choice and opportunity to travel by foot, bike or public transport: a choice that doesn't fully exist at the moment. Indeed, providing for good walking and cycling conditions, and improved public transport services, helps reduce congestion and carbon emissions from vehicles, bringing environmental benefits.

3.27   For Hailsham, land use and transport decisions must be aligned, so that new growth knits into the existing urban fabric and which provides the conditions for walking and cycling. Streets should be designed to recognise that they are places too, that they comprise the majority of public space in the town and should therefore provide opportunities for people to meet, sit and enjoy. Equally, smarter approaches to parking should be made over time, with less surface car parking in the centre, providing scope for new shops and homes, public spaces and civic facilities.

3.28   In Hailsham we want to see real, attractive transport choices for all. Everybody will be able to get around, safely and enjoyably, by foot and by bike, and have access to frequent, fast and reliable public transport services.

Policies and Projects

3.29 The policies, and projects, within this Neighbourhood Plan intend to deliver on the vision, objectives and overarching principles. The following sections of the Neighbourhood Plan present these, grouped in response to key themes captured by the objectives.

3.30 **It is important that the Neighbourhood Plan is read as a whole. All policies should be viewed together in the preparation and consideration of planning applications**.

3.31 For the avoidance of doubt, the following sections include a mix of policies and projects, introductory and explanatory text. Policies and projects are presented in coloured boxes as indicated and described below.

Policy Box

The Neighbourhood Plan establishes policies for the use and development of land in Hailsham. These are contained in green shaded policy boxes, like this one. These cover matters where planning permission is required for development to take place. They do not apply to those schemes allowed under 'permitted development rights'.

Project Box

The Neighbourhood Plan covers more than just traditional planning matters as it presents the community's vision for the area. Items that the community are seeking, but that cannot be delivered through planning policy (such as infrastructure improvements), are identified, and contained in yellow project boxes, like this one. These do not form part of the statutory development plan but are included within the body of the Neighbourhood Plan, rather than being presented in a separate chapter or appendix, because they relate to the objectives and form a clear and important part of the story. Projects could potentially be delivered by or with partner organisations and service providers.

4. Community

Introduction

4.1 The presence and provision of social and community infrastructure is critical to sustaining and meeting the day-to-day needs of local residents in Hailsham, providing access to essential services and facilities, and helping to maintain a high quality of life. Such facilities, which include schools, healthcare, churches, sports and community centres, also have an important role to play in strengthening social networks, sense of community and identity. Locating such uses in easy access of home and co-located with other activities will help increase access and use by the whole community.

4.2 This is recognised in good practice guidance. The guide to 20-minute neighbourhoods published by the TCPA seeks to show how complete, compact and connected neighbourhoods can be created, where people are able to meet their everyday needs within a short walk, or cycle, of the home. This means that important facilities that support day-to-day activity, including for example, schools and healthcare, should be in close proximity to the home and accessible to all. Equally, the Quality of Life Framework introduces the concept of 'belonging' and 'connected communities'. It notes that access to a range of social services can help foster a sense of identity, develop social connections, and strengthen health and wellbeing.

4.3 Policy SS9 of the emerging Wealden Local Plan states that community facilities should be located where they are accessible by active and sustainable means of transport, and where they are located to help facilitate community cohesion. Policy INF7 develops this further, establishing principles for the location of such uses, that they should be designed to support multi-functional use, and are well-integrated within development and the community they are intended to serve. The policy also supports the retention of and improvements to existing facilities. These points are all recognised as being important locally.

4.4 The importance of providing new community facilities, particularly as a result of growth and development, was stressed in the first Neighbourhood Plan. Consultation undertaken through the review of the Neighbourhood Plan reiterates this point, with respondents highlighting the need for healthcare provision, facilities for youths and younger children, public toilets and areas of play. It was noted by respondents that facilities should be in close proximity of the home and support use by all ages, and that given the pressure on existing services arising from the scale of growth that has taken place across Hailsham (and Hellingly), any further growth should be dependent on new or improved facilities being provided.

Healthcare

4.5   The need for new and improved healthcare facilities in Hailsham is recognised by Wealden District Council. A new medical centre was to be delivered as part of the 'Aspires' proposal for the regeneration of the town centre that have since paused with this work brought to a close recently. Despite this, the District Council has reaffirmed their commitments to delivery of a new medical centre irrespective of wider regeneration in the town centre.

4.6   Delivery of a new medical centre will respond to the needs of the growing population of Hailsham as well as its role as a hub for surrounding communities who are reliant on the provision of services in the town. To this extent, delivery of a medical centre will also help respond to changing demographics and the needs of an ageing population in Hailsham and its wider catchment and help relieve pressure on existing services. The need is further emphasised in the draft Wealden Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) Part 2 which states that, in Wealden as a whole, just over half of all residents have access to a Doctor's surgery within fifteen minutes of the home by public transport or foot. This is the lowest percentage of all local authority areas in East Sussex and below the average of around 64% for the county as a whole. Delivery of new health services are rated as 'critical' in the draft IDP Part 3 (March 2024).

4.7   The District Council has committed to working with the Sussex Integrated Care Board which will help inform the scale of facility and range of health services to be provided. Funding has been earmarked by the District Council for delivery of a new medical centre, although it is likely that there remains a funding gap.

4.8   The funding and delivery of healthcare services and facilities is complex: NHS Commissioners (NHS England and Clinical Commissioning Groups) place contracts with NHS providers to treat patients. The providers of NHS Services include the NHS Trust, General Practitioners, NHS dental practices, NHS community trusts, private and third sector contractors. Funding comes primarily through general taxation and National Insurance Contributions. Where development might result in an increased population and additional burdens on healthcare services, funding through s106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy can be sought to contribute towards any necessary improvements. Any proposals for primary healthcare provision (or contributions to such facilities) should have regard to the operational and financial viability of the facility concerned, with the operational details agreed with NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board or other such appropriate body.

4.9   As an alternative to traditional models of delivery, opportunities may instead exist to use or repurpose existing buildings as health hubs, potentially on a temporary basis, providing a range of services such as clinics, outdoor activities for well-being purposes, training programmes, social inclusion and support groups. Additionally, scope may exist to provide mobile health facilities, providing residents access to healthcare who might not otherwise be able to reach such services without reliance on the private car, providing equity of access to healthcare facilities. In such instances, collaboration between healthcare providers and community organisations will help design and deliver such schemes.

Policy HaCF 1: Healthcare

1. Proposals for health facilities should be located within the town centre or, if sites are unavailable in the town centre, then consideration may be given to an alternative sustainable location that is accessible to all by public transport, foot and cycle.

2. The range of health facilities to be provided should be determined in consultation with the Sussex Integrated Care Board and, as far as possible, include a combination of Doctor's Surgeries, dental services, pharmacy, a minor injuries unit and other walk-in services as appropriate.

3. As appropriate to the scale and nature of the proposal, development should include rooms and facilities (including public toilets) that can be utilised by the public, other community groups and services.

4. Where proposals comprise part of a mixed-use development the uses should be complementary, with noise and odour conflicts between uses avoided.

5. In advance of a new medical centre being provided, proposals for the temporary use of vacant buildings or use of rooms in other community facilities and which enable provision of healthcare, should be explored. Uses should be located where they benefit from good public transport provision.

Wider health initiatives

4.10 Alongside provision of new health facilities is the importance of supporting healthy lifestyles. The Town and Country Planning Association has prepared guidance on [Planning for Healthy Places](#) (2024). This states, quite clearly, that:

"Some of the most pressing health challenges faced by the UK, such as obesity, mental ill health, physical inactivity, social inequality and the needs of an ageing population, can all be affected by the quality of our built and natural environment. These 'wider determinants of health' are in-turn influenced by the planning system. Improving both physical and mental health and wellbeing should therefore be integral to neighbourhood planning."

4.11 In terms of addressing health through wider policies the following are of relevance:

Healthy neighbourhood design

4.12 The Neighbourhood Plan is supported by a Design Guide & Code which establishes principles in respect of the layout of development and how it should be integrated with the existing built form, providing green space and opportunities for walking, wheeling and public transport. The Neighbourhood Plan is underpinned by the concept of the 'ten-minute town', which supports provision of facilities that support day-to-day needs in close proximity to and easy access of the home. These principles support active play and active travel, encouraging regular exercise and contributing to healthy behaviours. Please refer to Section 6 of the Neighbourhood Plan as well as the Hailsham Design Guide & Code for relevant policies and more information in respect of encouraging healthy neighbourhood design.

Healthy homes

4.13 A combination of national policy and building regulations establish standards in respect of the design and construction of new homes. The emerging Wealden Local Plan also includes various standards. These are intended to address matters such as sustainability, climate change impacts and air quality. The Neighbourhood Plan expands upon this by establishing a mix of different types and sizes of home that should be provided, supporting the provision of mixed communities that provide for a wide range of needs, including young families, opportunities for downsizing and specialised homes for an ageing population. Please refer to Section 6 of the Neighbourhood Plan as well as the Hailsham Design Guide & Code.

Healthy food

4.14 The emerging Wealden Local Plan encourages provision of allotments and community gardens that support opportunities for food growing. The Neighbourhood Plan supplements and expands upon this, establishing principles for the provision of community gardens, allotments and food growing places in later parts of this Section of the Plan. The emerging Local Plan also states that where hot food takeaways are proposed they will need to be accompanied by production of a

Health Impact Assessment. This, and wider guidance in the NPPF in respect of the proximity of hot food takeaways to schools, is not repeated in the Neighbourhood Plan, though both are important in creating healthy places and lifestyles.

Natural environment

4.15 National guidance and the emerging Wealden Local Plan outline the approach to protecting the natural environment, responding to climate change and mitigating flood risk. Access to green space and the natural environment has social and well-being benefits. The Neighbourhood Plan supports improved access to green and blue infrastructure, including delivery of new and improved spaces within the built form of the town. Please refer to Section 8 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Healthy travel

4.16 National guidance supports movement networks that give priority to pedestrians, followed by cycling, public transport and then the car. It is recognised that people will continue to own and use cars. However, it encourages people to walk, wheel and make use of public transport for shorter journeys. This contributes to active and thus healthier lifestyles. The Neighbourhood Plan is linked to this and, in Hailsham, supports provision of a network of mobility hubs that provide travel choices, and which are connected by safe and attractive walking and wheeling routes that cater for all ages and abilities, including improved connections to the Cuckoo Trail. Support is also expressed for improved public transport provision, linked to wider aspirations being developed by the County Council, such as intra-urban bus services and improved bus waiting facilities. Please refer to Section 7 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Education and early years

4.17   The draft [Wealden Infrastructure Delivery Plan Part 3](#) notes that, over the Plan period, there is likely to be a shortfall of early years places in Hailsham.

4.18   In terms of education, the [School Organisation Plan](#) published by ESCC for the period 2024 to 2028 indicates surplus capacity within primary and secondary schools to accommodate additional pupils resulting from housing and population growth. This also suggests that surplus capacity exists in Hailsham beyond this period and will be able to accommodate additional pupils arising from ongoing growth in the short to medium term. However, longer term (i.e., over the Plan period), and as new development comes forward, the draft Wealden Infrastructure Delivery Plan Part 3 identifies a shortfall of primary school places, with a potential further shortfall rising beyond the Plan period.

4.19   Meeting the need for primary school places in Hailsham is most likely to involve the expansion of existing school sites. This may, in the short term, include the provision of temporary classrooms in advance of new, permanent education facilities being provided, in order to establish need. The expansion of existing school facilities may also provide for and thus help address the need for additional early years places. Provision of these facilities is identified as being 'essential' in the draft Wealden Infrastructure Delivery Plan Part 3.

4.20   Where new school and early years places are provided the impact on traffic generation must be considered. The impact of the 'school-run' can cause traffic issues at school drop-off and pick-up times. Proposals that involve delivery of ['school streets'](#) will be supported. It is however important that wherever school streets are implemented these do not simply displace traffic onto immediately surrounding streets. They should thus be delivered in combination with a package of transport measures that include provision of a network of safe, well-connected active and sustainable travel routes that connect residential areas with schools. Implementation of these schemes will also contribute to health, safety and air quality improvements, and should be progressed further in liaison with ESCC.

> ### Policy HaCF 2: Education and early years
>
> 1. Where facilities suitable for Early Years use are proposed these should be in locations accessible by foot.
>
> 2. Proposals for the expansion of existing primary schools should, as appropriate, include new primary school places and Early Years space.
>
> 3. Proposals for primary school and Early Years places will be expected to support delivery of measures that encourage use of active and sustainable travel.

Community Halls, Centres and Hubs

4.21   Consultation responses drew attention to the need to improve the quality of the existing network of community halls across Hailsham, diversifying the use of space such that they become attractive and inclusive spaces for all to make use of.

4.22   Improvements to facilities will be supported where they involve the retrofitting and refurbishment of the existing building. Where new development is proposed, which may comprise an extension to the existing facility or provision of a new facility, it should be informed by the scale and density of buildings in the existing vicinity. The design of the building and spaces within it should be accessible to all and enable a range of different groups and activities to make use of it. Flexible and adaptable spaces should be incorporated into the building.

Figure 5: The James West Centre

4.23   Opportunities that are taken to transform existing (or new) facilities into 'community mobility hubs' are supported. This concept is set out more fully in Section 7 of the Neighbourhood Plan. It envisages community facilities being co-located with a range of transport choices and becoming hubs that provide a range of functions. This includes community sharing kiosks or similar where people can borrow or make use of various goods and household equipment, such as gardening and DIY tools, maintenance and cleaning equipment. Such a facility can help support the environment by reducing the consumption and disposal of goods that are often purchased but rarely used. These can be places that also allow people to learn new skills, volunteer their own time and services, and become more connected with their community. Delivery of such facilities are welcome in Hailsham and may take inspiration from the model developed and operated by the 'Library of Things'.

4.24   The community feedback also stressed the need for provision of public toilets, particularly in the town centre. These could be combined with and provided within community halls and hubs.

Policy HaCF 3: Community halls, centres and hubs

1. Proposals for new or improved community halls, centres and hubs should:

    a. include provision of flexible space that can be used for a variety of appropriate community uses;

    b. be provided in locations that capitalise on opportunities to promote walking, wheeling and use of public transport, and take opportunities to act as a 'community mobility hub' including, as appropriate to the site, secure cycle parking and EV charging points;

    c. be inclusive and easily accessible to all users, ages and abilities;

    d. provide public toilets; and

    e. respond positively to local character and, as appropriate to the location, design policies and guidance set out in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code.

2. Where proposals for the provision of community facilities form part of mixed-use development the uses should be complementary, with noise and odour conflicts between uses being avoided.

3. Where the loss of a community facility is proposed it is expected that a facility replacement is provided, equivalent to or better than exists currently or where the need can be met by an existing facility within the Neighbourhood Plan Area, and where evidence is provided that demonstrates that the current facility is no longer required or viable.

4. Where an existing community facility is to be vacated, and wherever practicable, reuse for alternative community facilities will be the preferred land use option. Proposals that would result in the loss of community facilities will need to be supported by material which demonstrates the benefits to the community which outweigh the harm created by the loss of that facility.

Allotments

4.25   The [Wealden Open Space study](#) reports that the current provision of allotments in Hailsham equates to just 0.05 hectares per 1,000 people, which is well below the recommended national standard of provision which is 0.25 hectares per 1,000 people (as recommended by the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners).

4.26   The Open Space study also recommends that allotments should be located within a fifteen-minute walk of the home. However, with only two areas of allotments in Hailsham (at Station Road and Battle Road), the vast majority of households fall outside of this distance.

4.27   The provision of allotments and other community-based food growing opportunities is recognised as being important in terms of food resilience, health and mental well-being, providing an opportunity for people to come together and reducing the risks of social isolation, as well as increasing contact with nature. Local food growing also supports biodiversity.

4.28   Opportunities for local food production are identified as a key feature of compact and complete communities as outlined by the [Town and Country Planning Association](#) in their guide to '20-minute neighbourhoods' (a similar concept to the Hailsham ten-minute town idea, which features in the guidance as a case study).

4.29   New development of an appropriate size in Hailsham is expected to provide allotment space, or contributions to this, in line with the standards established in the Wealden Open Space Study.

4.30   The provision and layout of allotments, including access arrangements, landscaping, provision of communal areas and structures on site should be designed in line with good practice established by the National Allotment Society. Management of the allotments will be subject to agreement at the planning application stage. As an alternative to provision of formal plots, development may incorporate community orchards and gardens which allow residents to grow their own produce.

4.31   Where the scope exists to do so, opportunities may be taken to retrofit existing streets and spaces to incorporate food growing space. Opportunities may exist to introduce food growing areas within underused amenity space.

Policy HaCF 4: Allotments and food growing

1. Proposals for residential development should, as appropriate to the scale of development, provide new growing space in the form of allotments, community orchards or gardens in accordance with quantity standards established in the Wealden Open Space Study (April 2022) and informed by evidence of local demand.

2. Where it is proposed to provide growing space on-site, its location should relate positively to the wider green infrastructure network, wherever practicable.

3. Proposals for the reuse of currently underutilised or vacant land for the use of growing space will be supported. These should help create a connected network of green infrastructure across Hailsham.

4. The location of growing space must be accessible by foot.

5. Use should be made of natural boundary treatments, including trees and hedges, around the allotments or community gardens.

6. The size and layout of plots within allotments is aligned with guidance published by The National Allotment Society (21st Century Allotments in New Developments).

Sport

4.32 Policy INF8 of the emerging Wealden Local Plan establishes the approach to sports facilities and trigger points for delivery of or contributions to such facilities. It recognises the important role that schools play at the heart of communities, helping bring communities together. The range of facilities provided within schools can also be used for the benefit of the wider community, with out of hours or out of term-time use being made of sports facilities, playgrounds and classrooms.

4.33 A new community sports hub is being delivered by Wealden District Council just to the north of Hailsham. This will include courts and pitches for various sports, as well as a skate park, children's play area, community café, meeting space and changing rooms. However, and given the need for good access to facilities for the community as a whole, and the recognised shortage of space across Hailsham, opportunities for improvements to and the shared use of facilities will be supported in Hailsham. The Wealden Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy and Action Plan indicates that most facilities in Hailsham are at or over capacity. It also notes that the quality of playing pitches is often quite poor. It identifies the Maurice Thornton Playing Fields as a key site that is over played and of a poor quality. Improvements to this should be made. In addition, use of other existing facilities, including school facilities, should be made where possible. This is an approach supported by Sport England.

4.34 Third generation turf (3G) pitches can be found at Hailsham Community College and Grovelands Primary School, though neither is lit nor available for community use. Opportunities should be explored that make these available out of school hours for use by clubs and the wider public. Where this is facilitated, consideration will need to be given to the impact on neighbouring amenity associated with, for example, the noise and lighting associated with use of sports facilities in the evening. Wherever artificial lighting is proposed it should be designed to minimise light pollution in line with the following principles:

- Use should be made of low colour temperature lighting;
- Light fittings should be incorporate shielding to minimise sky glow;
- Lighting should be confined to the area of activity;
- Use should be made of 'smart switching' so that lights automatically switch off when not in use; and
- The use of lighting should be limited at different times of the year to minimise impact on nocturnal wildlife.

4.35 Where facilities are to be provided, or improvements made, they should be accessible to all, with an emphasis placed on good walking and cycling links to these, as well as provision of secure, and dry, cycle parking provision. These may include the provision of new walking and cycling routes. All facilities should be designed to reflect the character and qualities of the site and local setting, and have regard to Active Design Guidance published by Sport England.

Policy HaCF 5: Sports facilities and playing pitches

1. Proposals for development that provide new or improved sports facilities and playing pitches (and any associated buildings, including changing facilities), including the use of existing school facilities outside of school hours, should:

   a. be provided in locations that are or can be made accessible via safe walking and cycling routes;

   b. avoiding impacting on residential amenity and or the natural living environment where artificial lighting is required; and

   c. be carefully sited to minimise loss of trees or other natural features.

2. Proposals for development are expected to be fit for purpose and have regard to Active Design Guidance published by Sport England.

3. Where new parking provision is required and proposed it should be well related to facilities and make use of existing hard standing where possible. On greenfield areas, parking should reflect landscape character, be informal in layout, and avoid use of impermeable surface treatments.

Play and amenity space

4.36   There is a lack of play and amenity space across Hailsham. The Wealden Open Space study suggests that, in Hailsham, there is sufficient access to all open space typologies, but that much of the this falls below good quality standards, as does the overall provision of open space. This is also highlighted in the Green Infrastructure mapping prepared by Natural England which shows that many people in Hailsham do not benefit from local access to green space. This has implications for health, leisure and social exclusion. With additional growth in Hailsham the pressure on existing open spaces, and impacts on residents, will be increased.

4.37   Responses to consultation identified support for new play and amenity space. This came across particularly strongly in sessions with younger members of the community.

4.38   Where new play amenity space is to be provided as part of development, it should be safe, accessible, and usable for all, and provide a range of open space types. It should be inclusive and designed to cater for play for all ages and genders, and linked to other leisure and communal activities, including provision of outdoor gym equipment, allotment gardens and community orchards. In particular, the design of the space and facilities provided within it should make space for girls, with engagement exercises undertaken to help design the space so it can be enjoyed safely by all. Resources published by Make Space for Girls should be used and help act as a conversation starter for engagement and co-design activities. As far as possible, such spaces should be overlooked by new development, providing natural surveillance of that space.

4.39   These spaces should ideally be connected by a network of green infrastructure, including public rights of way, tree-lined and landscaped streets, and which incorporate wildflowers and similar that support biodiversity and enable insect pollinators to extend their range.

4.40   Opportunities that are taken to diversify existing open spaces to introduce a wider range of open space typologies will be supported. Equally, opportunities that are taken to introduce greenery into existing streets and spaces will be supported. Many residential streets, particularly those in more recent developments, are dominated by areas of hard standing, with cars parked in the street and homes close to the pavement edge, with little or no front garden. There is often very little greenery in these areas and, coupled with a street network that includes cul-de-sacs, limits access to play and amenity green space.

Policy HaCF 6: Play and amenity space

1. Where relevant, and as appropriate to their scale, nature, and location, proposals for new residential development (resulting in a net gain of new homes) should contribute towards the provision of accessible and inclusive natural & semi-natural green spaces, amenity green space and play space for children and young people in line with quantity and accessibility standards established in the Wealden Open Space study. Development should:

   a. Avoid creation of left over space that lacks purpose.

   b. Integrate open space within the development rather than pushing this to the periphery.

   c. Locate new green space within walking distance of as many residents as possible.

   d. Link new and existing green spaces through a network of green routes wherever possible, including public rights of way and tree-lined or landscaped streets.

   e. Provide a range of open space types, including areas of play, exercise areas for dogs, opportunities for growing food, and quieter areas for relaxation, which cater for all ages, genders and abilities.

   f. Ensure that play areas and public spaces are well-overlooked, providing natural surveillance of the space. Hidden spots must be avoided.

   g. Enable play spaces that are accessible for all children and incorporate elements relating to nature and landscape as well as play equipment.

4.41   The transformation of existing streets into green or garden streets is encouraged and is an initiative that residents may wish to bring forward. A garden street typology is illustrated in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code and may form a model for transformation of existing residential streets. An artist's illustration of how an existing street might be retrofitted is presented in Figure 6.

4.42   Designed around shared spaces and slow traffic spaces, elements include provision of pocket parks and doorstep play spaces, street tree planting, traffic calming and integrated parking spaces. Such an approach is intended to help create safer, greener streets for residents, encourage human interaction and community ownership of the space. It would also help deliver environmental benefits through an increase in biodiversity and local management of surface water flooding.

Figure 6: Artist's illustration showing how a typical residential street (top) might be transformed into a 'garden street', introducing doorstep access to green space (bottom)

Project PAS-01: Transforming existing residential streets into green streets

The Town Council is supportive of proposals from residents who would like to transform residential streets into green or garden streets.

The Hailsham Design Guide & Code illustrates a Green / Garden Street as one typology that should be incorporated in new residential growth areas, and which could be adapted to inform the retrofitting of existing residential streets.

The identification and transformation of existing residential streets would need to involve the cooperation of homeowners and close partnership with the relevant authorities, including the local highways authority, to identify a pilot project to trial this concept, ahead of any longer-term roll-out of such a project.

Identification of a pilot project would enable funding streams to be identified to help facilitate such transformation, with management and maintenance regimes and responsibilities established as a result of the trial.

Ahead of this, temporary applications for street closures as part of annual car free days and other similar events are encouraged and can be used to monitor the community benefits.

Burial space

4.43   The made Neighbourhood Plan noted that remaining cemetery space in Hailsham is limited, and that the Town Council would seek to work with Wealden District Council to identify the most appropriate and effective strategy for providing additional burial capacity in the future. The draft Wealden Infrastructure Delivery Plan Part 2 notes that, as the emerging Local Plan progresses, further work will be undertaken to assess burial needs across the district.

4.44   The 2018 assessment of burial space undertaken by Wealden District Council indicated that, in Hailsham, all burial space would reach capacity within 30 years, although as the population of Hailsham continues to grow this may have implications for remaining capacity.

4.45   A crematorium has recently been opened in Horam, although there remains a desire for provision of burial space to be provided closer to home, where that person lived or had a local connection before their death. As far as possible, new burial space should ideally be located in close proximity to existing facilities in Hailsham, benefitting from shared use of existing facilities and, crucially, helping to ensure that local families have access to dignified, accessible burial options.

4.46   Where new burial space is proposed in Hailsham the appropriate national guidance on site, location and management must be adhered to, particularly in respect of flood risk, groundwater pollution and other environmental considerations set out in guidance published the Environment Agency. This will also help determine whether an environmental permit is required. Proposals for natural burial sites, which represent a more environmentally friendly approach compared to traditional burial methods, will be supported. Guidance on natural burial grounds published by the Ministry of Justice would need to be complied with.

4.47   All burial grounds, natural or otherwise, can bring wider benefits to the community in terms of wildlife and biodiversity value. Whilst primarily being a tranquil place for the laying to rest of the deceased, cemeteries also provide opportunities for wildlife and use of the open space by the public for walking and relaxing. The landscaping of any burial ground should be appropriate to context and take opportunities to extend existing green infrastructure networks.

Policy HaCF 7: Burial space

1. Development proposals for provision of a burial ground, including natural burial, should:

    a. where possible, be located in close proximity to existing burial space, allowing for shared use of facilities;

    b. avoid areas of flood risk and comply with guidance in respect of groundwater contamination;

    c. minimise impacts on sensitive environments in line with national guidance established by the Environment Agency and Ministry of Justice; and

    d. take opportunities through landscaping to provide a sense of tranquillity and ecological value.

Delivery

4.48   Where major new development is proposed that triggers the need for new community facilities and supporting infrastructure, this should ideally be provided in the first phase of development or prior to occupation of the relevant phase of development to help integrate the new community with the existing, and to locate this such that it is accessible to and can be used by new and existing residents.

4.49   Whilst the provision of social and community infrastructure within any area of major new development should principally be focussed on addressing the needs of that development, they should, where possible, complement and respond positively to the needs of existing communities upon whom development will impact. The District Council will need to be satisfied about the phasing and delivery of these uses. The policy acknowledges that whilst this outcome may not always be practicable or viable, the early delivery of new community uses will help to build a sense of community and integration with existing surrounding communities.

4.50   Where possible, uses should be designed such that they are multi-functional. This might include, for example, the ability for the community to make use of facilities outside of normal operating hours (such as school sports facilities). To help facilitate this, applicants for new or improved facilities are encouraged to prepare and submit a Community Use Agreement as part of the planning application material. This will help formalise the operation and use of the facility for different uses and activities.

Policy HaCF 8: Community infrastructure delivery

1.   Wherever practicable and commercially viable, any social and community facilities that are to be provided as part of any major development proposal should be delivered during the early phases of development.

2.   Proposals for major development that include new community facilities should outline how the facilities will be delivered and, should the application site comprise multiple land ownerships, the mechanisms by which landowners will work together to deliver those facilities.

3.   Applicants for new community facilities, or improvements to existing facilities, are encouraged to prepare a Community Use Agreement as part of the planning application material.

5. Town centre

Introduction

5.1 Strong and successful towns have a strong centre. The NPPF encourages the use of planning to support "strong, vibrant and healthy communities" and improve the vitality and competitiveness of town centres. This is embedded in policy in the adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan for Wealden.

5.2 Consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan emphasised the importance of the town centre and a desire for an improved retail offer and experience, better quality and new pedestrian-friendly spaces. The extent of the Town Centre, as defined in the emerging Local Plan, is illustrated in Figure 7.

5.3 The first Neighbourhood Plan identified a series of issues and challenges for the town centre. These remain and, as the town continues to grow, so the pressure on the High Street is increased. Challenges identified include:

- The quality of the historic fabric of the town is undermined by extensive areas of car parking, servicing and larger scale development footprints that contrast with the finer grain nature of the town.
- Traffic dominated spaces, including car parking and streets, dominate and undermine the quality of the pedestrian environment.
- There are conflicts between vehicular movement, pedestrians and cyclists, with incomplete or fragmented routes between the High Street and surrounding areas.
- There is a lack of diversity in the centre, with a limited evening and nighttime economy.
- Investment is needed in the quality of the public realm, shopfronts and general appearance of the town centre to help draw people into the High Street and claw back expenditure that is leaking to other towns.

5.4 The Hailsham Design Guide & Code, which sits alongside the Neighbourhood Plan, presents a series of design principles for future change and development in the town centre, which are framed by the following objectives:

- An accessible town centre.
- A diverse town centre
- A walkable town centre
- A green town centre
- A climate resilient town centre.

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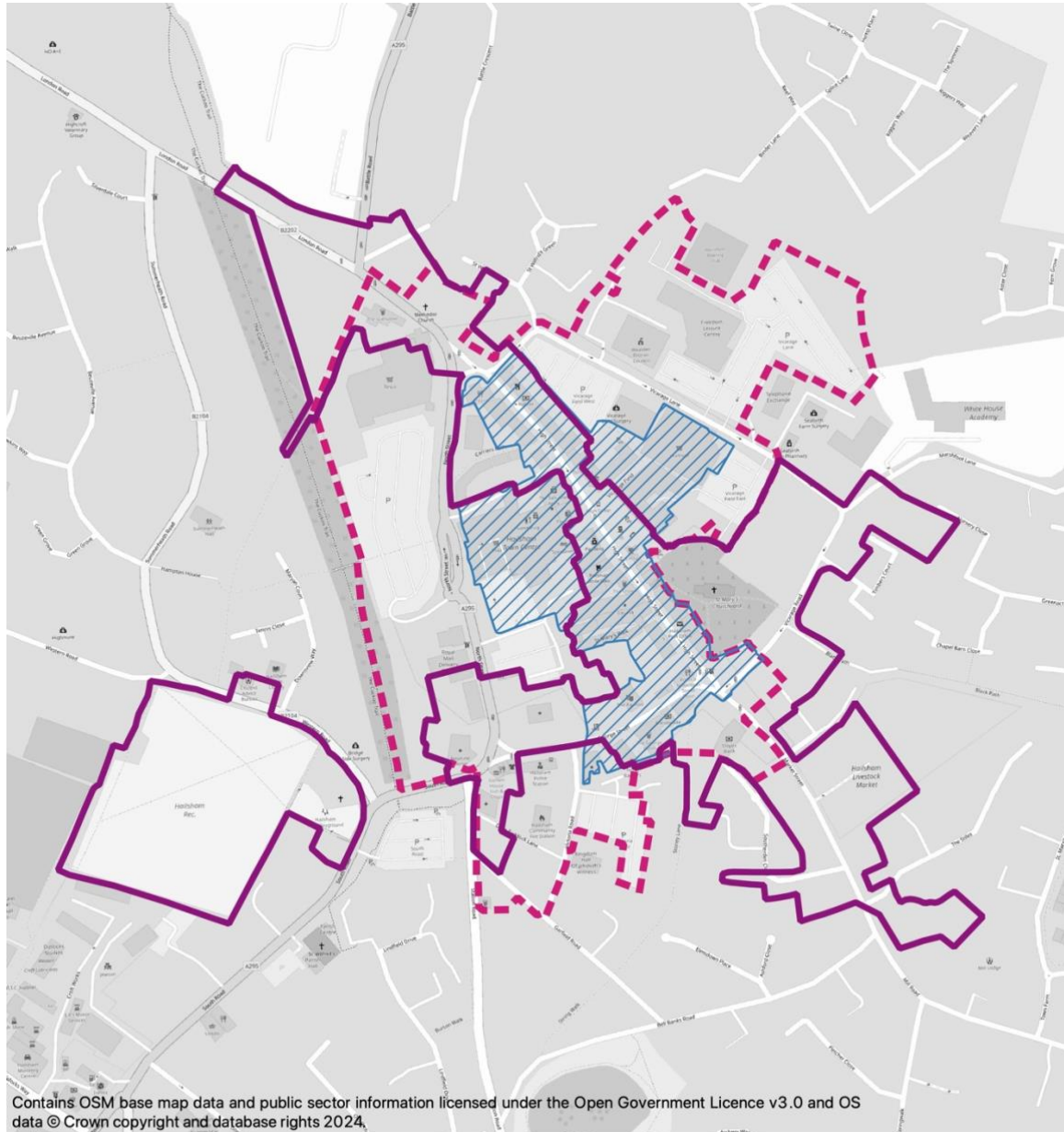
Legend:
- Conservation area
- Town Centre Boundary
- Primary Shopping Area

Figure 7: Defined town centre boundary, primary shopping area and conservation area, based on the emerging Wealden Local Plan policies map

5.5   The objectives seek to put in place a framework that creates the conditions for an attractive centre that caters for the needs of the community as well as visitors to the town. The aspiration is that the town centre will be a thriving place with a diverse range of facilities, uses and attractions, and where new development responds to the historic qualities of the built form. It is intended that the town centre is the beating heart of Hailsham, where public, economic and cultural life all come together.

5.6   Although consultation responses expressed a wish for a wider retail offer this alone will not deliver the step change required in the town centre. Streets and spaces account for the vast majority of public space in the town centre. Improving the quality of these, including the potential for part-pedestrianisation of the High Street (Figure 8), will significantly enhance the visitor experience.

Figure 8: Artist's illustration of potential public realm improvements along the High Street.

5.7 A wider range of uses should also be encouraged to locate in the town centre, providing for greater diversity and activity in the town centre throughout the day, drawing people in at different times of day and thus supporting retail and other commercial activities. Providing for some new residential development in the town centre will also help create life and activity and offer a new housing offer for Hailsham. This could be realised through new mixed-use development, with commercial use on the ground floors and residential above.

5.8 Although this Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate specific sites for development it does establish key principles that applicants should respond to, and which are intended to help deliver improvements in the town centre. Key opportunities for the town centre include:

- Strengthening east west connections to and through the town centre, linking with the wider green space network and completing the pedestrian network within the town centre, making these better connected, more convenient and comfortable to use, convivial and conspicuous.
- Maximising the Cuckoo Trail through improved connections to this and promoting complementary uses close to this that will enhance the user experience.
- Promoting public realm improvements and a network of enhanced public space, with improved street fronts as places where people enjoy being and feel safe in.
- Repairing fractured streets by exploring the potential to rationalise car parking space and bring forward new development opportunities that make more efficient use of the land and help bring vitality and life to the town centre.
- Rationalising major junctions to provide a better balance between competing users, making conditions safer for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Enhancing the quality of the town square as a multi-functional and lively space that is active and welcoming throughout the day.
- Optimising the use of land by exploring opportunities to bring forward more effective parking solutions that makes land available for new mixed, town centre uses and activities.
- Reflect and respond positively to the prevailing building heights in the town centre and heritage assets.

5.9 The policies outlined in this section are intended to help guide change and future development such that it contributes to a stronger and better functioning town centre. These are to be read in association with the Hailsham Design Guide & Code: principles and guidance within which are intended to help create active and interesting places that can be enjoyed by all, and which help towns flourish by creating 'sticky streets' – those places where people want to go to and spend time in. These principles also respond to the existing urban grain, the health and social benefits to be gained from human scale active places and well-articulated building fronts.

Town centre uses

5.10 Hailsham was granted a Market Charter in 1252 by King Henry III (see below). Its role as an important market town continues: it is the largest town in Wealden and serves its growing population as well as communities in surrounding towns and villages. This role needs to be retained and should be reflected in the range of services and facilities provided.

To all Citizens of Heylesham

We have granted and by this our charter have confirmed to our dear and faithful Peter of Savoy, Duke of Richmond that he and his heirs in perpetuity may have a market in his manor of Heylesham every week on Wednesday with all customs pertaining to such a market, so it be not to the detriment of neighbouring markets. A toll on chattels and beasts to be collected in the market place each Wednesday market.

King Henry III

5.11 The Town Centre should offer a wide variety of retail uses, maintaining a variety of shops that complement each other, rather than a small number of retailers dominating the townscape. These uses should be supported by the introduction of a family friendly evening economy, uses and facilities for younger people, as well as improvements to the look and appearance of individual units and the quality of the public realm, making this an attractive destination to visit, spend time and money in.

5.12 The High Street is the historic heart of the town and should remain the primary focus of town centre activities. However, with the changing nature of the 'High Street', competition from other larger centres and from internet-based shopping, uses that provide for a mix of activities, including services, are encouraged. Use of such services will help support retail activities, by bringing customers into the centre, including local and independent retailers, servicing local residents as well as those in the rural hinterland.

5.13 Other supporting uses within the town centre that would be considered appropriate include leisure and entertainment, office floorspace, cultural activities, community uses and residential development. Other town centre uses, including hot food takeaways and betting shops, can undermine the vitality and viability of the main retail areas and be detrimental to public health. The presence of and proposals for such uses will need careful management to avoid detrimental impacts and conflicts between uses and the visitor experience of the town centre.

5.14 Proposals for mixed-use development including residential are encouraged, as this will increase the resident catchment of the centre and provide movement and activity throughout the day, helping to sustain and support town centre businesses. A 'layered' approach to the mixing of complementary uses within buildings should be followed, supporting diversity, community cohesion and inclusion. Key principles are outlined in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code.

5.15 Where development does come forward, it should be designed to allow for change over time, breaking development blocks down into individual plots, facilitating incremental change and adaptation on a plot-by-plot basis, rather than block by block, allowing for organic growth and minimising the impact on the wider area.

5.16 To help ensure the centre remains a vital and active place, the temporary re-use of vacant buildings and retail units, through 'pop- up' and 'meanwhile uses' (see Glossary) is encouraged, providing life and activity in the short-term whilst opportunities for longer-term re-use and marketing of the units is undertaken. Pop-up units could cover a range of activities compatible with the function of the town centre, including retail and places to eat.

Figure 9: Market stalls at the Vicarage Field development on the High Street

Policy HaTC 1: Town Centre uses

1. Proposals for development in the Town Centre (as defined on Figure 7) should reinforce the High Street as the main spine of activity and location of retail uses, supported by complementary facilities and uses across the Town Centre, including opportunities for the reuse of under-utilised land to the rear of the High Street.

2. Proposals for new retail development and other complementary uses in the town centre (including arts, leisure and culture, financial and professional services, cafes and restaurants, community facilities and visitor accommodation) should help strengthen the retail offer and visitor experience.

3. Other uses that may be appropriate within the Town Centre include:

   a. Applications for town centre uses that contribute to the evening and nighttime economy, including leisure, cultural and community facilities are welcome. These should enhance and diversify the offer within the town centre, subject to assessment of scale, character, location and impact of the proposed uses.

   b. Proposals that contribute to an improved range and quality of office and business accommodation, including space for start-up businesses are encouraged. The use of empty and vacant floorspace on upper storeys is encouraged, particularly for office or residential use.

   c. Applications for residential development, particularly where they comprise part of a mixed-use scheme. Residential units within the primary shopping area should be provided on upper floors, with the ground floors comprising retail or other complementary uses.

   d. Applications for development that seek to enhance existing community facilities or provide new community facilities in the town centre.

4. Proposals should take a layered approach to the mixing of development, as set out in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code, whereby uses within buildings are complementary and where the development has been designed to avoid noise and odour conflicts between uses.

5. Opportunities should be taken to make use of the ground floor of vacant premises on a temporary basis for new retail or other main Town Centre uses.

6. Proposals for development in the Town Centre should, where appropriate to the scale and nature of development, enhance the attractiveness of the public realm and improve the quality of the pedestrian environment.

Town centre design principles

5.17   Hailsham Town Centre, much of which is designated as a conservation area, has been shaped by the historic evolution of the town. The Draft Hailsham Conservation Area Appraisal identifies key characteristics of the town centre as being:

- Medieval core to the town focused around the church and market square.
- Survival of 16th-17th century or earlier buildings in the market square and the roads leading to it, many of which have been refronted in the 18th-19th centuries.
- Large scale 19th century expansion and development on the periphery of the historic core.
- Limited modern infill development, with more recent development concentrated outside of the conservation area.
- Built form within the urban centre is predominantly sited directly on the street frontage, with some setbacks to residential properties.
- Mix of uses within the conservation area, including retail, office and residential uses.
- Approximately 40 Grade II listed building or structures; two Grade II* and the Grade I listed St. Mary's Church.
- Many buildings identified as being of local, vernacular or cultural interest.
- Older buildings within the core of the village are timber-framed, but have either been refaced with brickwork, which has been painted or rendered in some instances; or first floor areas have been tile hung, with brickwork facing to the ground floor.
- Most buildings are two storey in height, predominantly of brick or stucco (render), with clay tile roofs and some slate roofs.
- Some historic shop fronts survive, whole or in part.
- Boundaries to plots are not hard against the road, are generally formed by brick, flint or rendered walls. There are also some limited examples of railings, fences and hedges.
- Key buildings: St Mary's Church, The Grange, the Old Manor House, Cortlandts, the Fleur-de-Lys, 25-27 High Street.
- Key open spaces: Churchyard, recreation ground, Vicarage Fields precinct.

5.18   The Draft Conservation Area Appraisal identifies a series of issues which detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and establishes guiding principles for future change.   It is expected that proposals for development, including changes to the public realm, demonstrate how they have responded to this guidance. Development should enhance the qualities of the historic fabric and, where opportunities arise, seek to better integrate the Church within the town centre.

5.19   Equally, the first Neighbourhood Plan identified challenges for the town centre. These remain, with responses to consultation on the review and update of the Plan emphasising the importance of planning for change. Issues include the traffic dominated nature of the public realm, particularly along North Street and Vicarage Lane, where service yards and car parks undermine the quality of environment, visitor experience and links with the High Street.

5.20   Good growth and development in the town centre should help strengthen its role as the civic and commercial hub for Hailsham as well as surrounding rural communities who use the town as their main leisure and retail centre. Good design must be reflected in the layout and distribution of buildings and uses, the spaces between them, the scale and architecture of buildings. Efforts to revitalise the centre should make it an attractive place to visit and spend time in.

5.21   Proposals for the regeneration and redevelopment of the town centre were previously explored through the 'Aspires' project. This envisaged major redevelopment of the Vicarage Fields shopping area as well as land around the District Council office and adjacent Leisure Centre. The timing of the proposals coincided with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and have since faltered.

5.22   An alternative approach to development thus needs exploring in Hailsham. This may include the retrofitting, refurbishment and upwards extension of buildings, where these enhance the street environment and respect the historic environment, prevailing building heights and street enclosure ratios (as set out in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code).

5.23   Opportunities also exist for development through the rationalisation of land currently occupied by surface car parking and service yards. Development of such sites will be supported where they help create new street frontages and thus improve the sense of arrival and welcome to the town centre. Car parks along North Street and Vicarage Lane present opportunities for transformation, enclosing the rear of existing properties, completing the perimeter block and supporting improved connections to the High Street. Where new or incidental public spaces are created as a result of development, these should be designed with safety in mind and have regard to micro-climatic conditions, eliminating strong winds and maximise access to sunlight.

5.24   Proposals for change and development in the centre should reflect the growth and evolution of Hailsham, supporting the main spine of activity along the High Street. Proposals should also allow for buildings to be changed and adapted over time, responding to changing circumstances, retail, working and living habits.

Policy HaTC 2: Town Centre design principles

1. As appropriate to the scale, nature and location, proposals for development in Hailsham Town Centre (as defined in Figure 7) should strengthen the character of the centre and, as set out in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code:

   a. Create clear and consistent building lines with active frontages at ground floor level, following established building lines where they exist.

   b. Provide the principal points of access to buildings on the main street or public space onto which it fronts.

   c. Uses on upper floors should include windows and, where appropriate, balconies, that look out across the street and create variety and interest in building form.

   d. Provide for clear, direct and well-overlooked pedestrian routes through or around the development site, connecting with the existing route network.

   e. Clearly define areas of public and private realm through well-defined building lines and enclosure of private space. Blank walls and exposed back land areas, including car parking and servicing areas, should be screened from view, preferably through the wrapping of these with active development edges, or with other solutions such as provision of green walls that improve the quality of the townscape.

   f. Avoid the creation of 'superblocks', allowing for the subdivision of land into different parcels which can come forward for change and development over time.

   g. Corner buildings should be well-articulated and blank gable ends avoided.

   h. Respect the prevailing building height and street enclosure ratio. Where building heights vary this change should be subtle and step up or down by no more than half to one storey between buildings.

   i. Incorporate generous floor to ceiling heights, particularly at ground floor level, to allow for the mixing of uses and building in flexibility that enables change of use over time.

   j. Support improvements to the quality of the public realm and, where appropriate, provision of new green infrastructure, in the town centre.

2. Development should respond positively to heritage assets in the town centre. Development should:

   a. Take opportunities, through retrofitting, alteration or redevelopment, to replace or improve buildings or features that detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, as set out in the Draft Hailsham Conservation Area Appraisal.

  b. Contribute to the preservation or enhancement of the character of the Conservation Area.

  c. Respond positively to the immediate setting of the development site within the Conservation Area by virtue of its scale, massing, architectural features and materials, avoiding any adverse effects on the Conservation Area, heritage assets or their setting.

  d. As far as opportunities arise, better integrate the Church with the town centre.

3. Where relevant, development proposals should be designed and arranged to respect the ability for the market and other outdoor events to operate in the town centre.

Project TCM-01: Town centre concept masterplan

The Town Council, in collaboration with the District and County Council and other stakeholders, including landowners, businesses and the wider public, is keen to develop a concept masterplan for the town centre. This would explore, spatially, how change can be taken forward, guide future development and other interventions, including those associated with accessibility and the public realm.

Safe places for all

5.25 One of the key messages highlighted through consultation events was concern about personal safety in the town centre, particularly amongst the younger generation. This concern is exacerbated by the limited evening and night-time economy, and thus lack of activity in the town centre after typical opening hours, and which is coupled with the network of fragmented twitterns, hidden corners and service areas.

5.26 Buildings and spaces in the Town Centre must be designed with issues of personal safety and security in mind, responding to the needs and concerns of all ages and genders at all times of the day and night. Public spaces, for example, should be well-overlooked, designed within inclusion in mind, and with walking routes being direct and well-lit.

5.27 The quality, safety and use of public space will benefit from an approach to co-design and collaboration through the planning and design process. Places that are designed with women, children and the vulnerable in mind will become better, more attractive, vibrant and safer places for all. Places should ideally be shaped with vulnerable groups through a process of co-design and collaboration. Key principles are set out in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code and include creation of well-overlooked spaces and use of sensitive lighting, well-connected streets and spaces and the arrangement of buildings and landscaping to allow for clear sightlines, supporting use of the town centre throughout the day and designing public spaces and facilities to cater for a mix of ages

Policy HaTC 3: Safety by design

1. The design of development (including retrofitting of existing buildings) and public spaces must support gender inclusion and personal safety, embedding design principles that minimise opportunities for anti-social behaviour, crime and the fear of crime. Proposals should have regard to the principles outlined in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code, the setting and character of the Conservation Area and heritage assets within it.

2. Proposals for development should take an approach to co- design and collaboration.

3. Maintenance and management strategies should be prepared for public spaces, with use of high-quality and low-maintenance materials made as appropriate to ensure design features are long-lasting.

Shopfronts and signage

5.28   There are a wide range of commercial business premises operating in the town centre. These include shops and offices, bars, cafes and restaurants and clubs. Inevitably, the quality of design of their frontages and associated signage varies considerably.

5.29   The quality of the shop fronts along the High Street and within the town centre as a whole has an influence on the appearance and attractiveness of the town centre. During consultation the visual appearance of buildings in the town centre was raised: many people thought that the upkeep and maintenance of the buildings could be improved, and that a consistent approach to signage and shopfronts would make an improvement to the experience of the town centre.

5.30   Poor quality signs and materials undermine the visual quality of the town centre and the historic qualities of the centre that the District Council is seeking to preserve and enhance through the conservation area designation. It is thus considered important that shopfronts respond better to local character and bring a consistency of style to the town centre.

5.31   Equally, the use of shop signage on pavements should be limited to reduce clutter within the town centre. Any new signage on pavements that is associated with the business of the individual premises should have due consideration for the character and design of the street furniture in the wider area and should seek to enhance the public realm.

5.32   The National Design Guide stresses the importance of creating active frontages, particularly in local centres, and, in terms of responding to character, states that consideration needs to be given to façade design. This includes aspects such as symmetry, variety, the pattern and proportion of doors and windows, and their details. However, in Hailsham, the presence of inactive building frontages in the town centre (particularly associated with 'big box' retail units) has resulted, in places, in a poor relationship with the street. Where there have been insensitive alterations to shopfronts, as well as newer, poorly designed shopfronts, these have begun to erode the character of both the local area and of the host buildings.

5.33   The Hailsham Design Guide & Code includes a section that specifically relates to the town centres and shopfronts, and where adherence to these codes will help support a vibrant, safe and attractive centre for the enjoyment of all. It is important that shopfronts are designed and conceived in relation to the entire building, scale, proportions and architectural style. Key consideration include:

- Vertical elements within the overall building design, such as columns and fenestration, should be reflected in the shopfront design.

- Horizontal elements of the shopfront design, including signage, fascia and glazing should be consistent and relate well to surrounding facades.

5.34 The design of the shopfront should acknowledge and continue the overall design language and common features that occur on adjacent buildings, with the palette of materials and colours generally being consistent with the overall character of the street and the age of the building. To help support the relationship between ground floor activities and the street environment, the use of opaque film and vinyl stickers in windows should generally be avoided.

Policy HaTC 4: Shopfront design and signage

1. Proposals for shopfronts in the town centre should be designed in line with the Hailsham Design Guide & Code:

   a. The shopfront should complement the scale, proportion and architectural style of the host building and wider street scene, including, as appropriate, the scale, character and features of adjoining buildings.

   b. The fascia should complement rather than obscure or damage existing architectural features including windows.

   c. The restoration of original and traditional shopfronts should replicate the original materials of the host building, where practical.

   d. Signage should complement the host building and provide visual consistency along the street.

   e. External lighting, if used, should be unobtrusive and protect the visual amenity of the area. Internally illuminated signage should be avoided.

   f. Doors and main points of access should be clearly defined and enable access directly from the main street onto which the shop unit fronts.

2. Proposals for external shutters should demonstrate that there are no other reasonable alternative solutions that can provide adequate security. External shutters must be perforated and must be appropriate to the host building and wider shopfront design.

3. Proposals should, as appropriate, protect and reinstate original architectural features. This includes retention of existing or provision of new pilasters and cornicing.

4. Proposals for shopfronts should, as appropriate to location, contribute to the preservation or enhancement of the character of the Conservation Area, avoiding any adverse effects on the Conservation Area, heritage assets or their setting.

Project SHS-01: Shopfront improvements

The Town Council, in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders and public bodies, will explore opportunities to offer grants or other incentives to shop and landowners to promote the repair of damaged facades, reinstate lost historic features and install high quality traditional windows and shop fronts in the town centre.

Public realm, gateways and wayfinding

5.35   The public realm is defined as all the spaces between buildings to which the public has access. The importance and value of good quality public realm is well recognised.

5.36   In Hailsham town centre recent street works have sought to improve the quality of the public realm along the High Street, George Street and Vicarage Lane. However, many places remain traffic dominated and present an underwhelming environment and visitor experience. Efforts to improve the quality of the street scene are encouraged, including rationalising the amount of road space, through the narrowing of the carriageway for example, removal of unnecessary street signs that cause visual clutter, and extension of the current public realm works across the wider town centre to create a unified feel and appearance. The aim is to create an attractive and welcoming town centre environment that is open to and accessible for all, particularly for those on foot and bicycle.

5.37   Consultation responses drew attention to the need for the town centre, and the High Street in particular, to be a more pedestrian friendly and inviting space. The Hailsham Design Guide & Code explores the potential for part pedestrianisation of the High Street, possibly closing this to vehicles during normal trading hours, but allowing access outside of this. This would allow for a multi-functional space to be created that can be used differently through the day, including areas of seating and outdoor dining, and places for market stalls which could also be utilised for servicing and parking. This would also allow for integration of green infrastructure into the High Street. Combined with this, and any necessary rerouting of bus stops and taxi services, the network of twitters between the High Street, North Street and Vicarage Lane need to be improved. A similar public realm treatment to that used along the High Street would help bind these together, but wider improvements would also be required to development along these, making these more active, safer and inviting spaces for people to use at all times of the day. This may also include, as appropriate, installation of feature lighting and public art that improves the feeling of safety.

5.38   The 'square' outside the Vicarage Fields development is the main public space and gathering point in the town centre. It is an important nodal point between the High Street, shopping centres and Church, it is the location of the market and other public activities and is where east west and north south pedestrian movements cross. However, the space is dated and provides limited opportunity for people to sit, relax and interact with each other. This is Hailsham's 'outdoor room'. Proposals that seek to enhance the quality of the public realm and provide for multi-functional use of the space throughout the week, and at all times, will be welcome.

5.39   Throughout the town centre, opportunities for introducing green infrastructure should be explored. This could include installation of green walls and roofs but is more likely to involve the rationalisation of existing street space and removal or 'depaving' of hard surfaces.

5.40   The potential to provide new street tree planting is welcomed, alongside the creation of new areas for people to sit and relax. Other opportunities, including the use of movable, high quality tree planters, the planting of wildflowers and grasses, as well as the introduction of raingardens that provide biodiversity value as well as flood resilience measures.

5.41   This might include the use of parklets and other trial methods in the short term to test the potential for longer term interventions. Alongside this, blank walls and gable ends, the exposed backs of properties and unsightly service yards should be screened from view and their public face improved. The use of green walls and public art to enliven these areas is encouraged.

5.42   Within the town centre, key opportunities for introducing new green infrastructure include the High Street and along North Street. Opportunities for introducing trees and others forms of green infrastructure should also be explored elsewhere and which help connect existing green spaces on an east west basis, including Western Road Recreation Ground, the Cuckoo Trail, Church Grounds and countryside surrounding Hailsham (Figure 10). This would help connect these stepping stones and form a connected network of green infrastructure.

5.43   Where green infrastructure is provided in the public realm it should be designed as part of a comprehensive street design strategy, with opportunities taken through the design and location of planting to also provide better crossing points for pedestrians and, as appropriate to the street, infrastructure that supports safe cycling.

Gateways

5.44   There are a number of important gateways or arrival points into the town centre. They signal to the visitor that they have entered a different part of the town, often defined by the character of buildings, spaces and activity taking place. Gateways should welcome the visitor and help create a sense of place. In Hailsham, more could be done to improve the quality of the gateways, signifying and celebrating the sense of arrival. Potential opportunities for enhancement to these in the town centre include:

5.45   **The South Road car park:** This is the former location of Hailsham railway station and where South Road loops up and over what is now the Cuckoo Trail. Despite being a major asset for the town, the route of the Cuckoo Trail becomes fragmented at this point, requiring journeys to be made through the car park and on-street. The history and recreational value of the Trail, and its connectivity with the town centre, is under played. The car park could potentially be reorganised and reimagined as a community mobility hub, providing a range of active travel choices combined with other community facilities. This could include a visitor centre and café, combined with public art, lighting and landscaping that celebrates the route of the Cuckoo Trail, provides space for people to dwell, and where wayfinding supports orientation and connectivity with the wider town centre.

5.46 **North Street:** North Street comprises the main vehicular route through the centre of Hailsham. It is a traffic dominated space where buildings have turned their backs on the street and where the visitor is greeted by areas of surface car parking and service yards. The Neighbourhood Plan and associated Design Guide & Code suggest elsewhere that where opportunities are taken to bring forward development on North Street, they should help create new street frontages, rationalising and enclosing space used for parking and servicing. Alongside this, green infrastructure should be incorporated along the street, including street tree planting and installation of green walls or public art on buildings that enlivens the street environment. Routes from North Street to the High Street should be clearly defined, through use of materials and wayfinding, combined with which unnecessary street clutter should be removed, minimising visual clutter and obstruction to pedestrians

5.47 **Cuckoo Trail bridge via Tesco car park:** This is an important route for people arriving into the town centre by foot and bicycle. However, it directs users through the service access and car park towards North Street and where a slight detour is required to reach the crossing point on North Street where visitors are greeted by the blank wall of the Asda store / Quintins Centre. Opportunities could be taken to better define the route, potentially through use of materials that give priority to pedestrians and cyclists, where crossings along North Street are aligned with desire lines, and where the rear of the Asda Store and associated service yard is screened, potentially through public art, sensitive lighting or use of green walls.

Wayfinding

5.48 The sections above highlight the importance of connectivity and wayfinding, better improving the links between the component parts of the town. This may incorporate use of signage and public art at key destinations. These should be of a consistent design and reflect the heritage and culture of Hailsham. Information presented should help support and encourage movement by foot and bicycle.

Legend:

- Town centre boundary
- Buildings
- Existing green spaces
- New / diversified green infrastructure
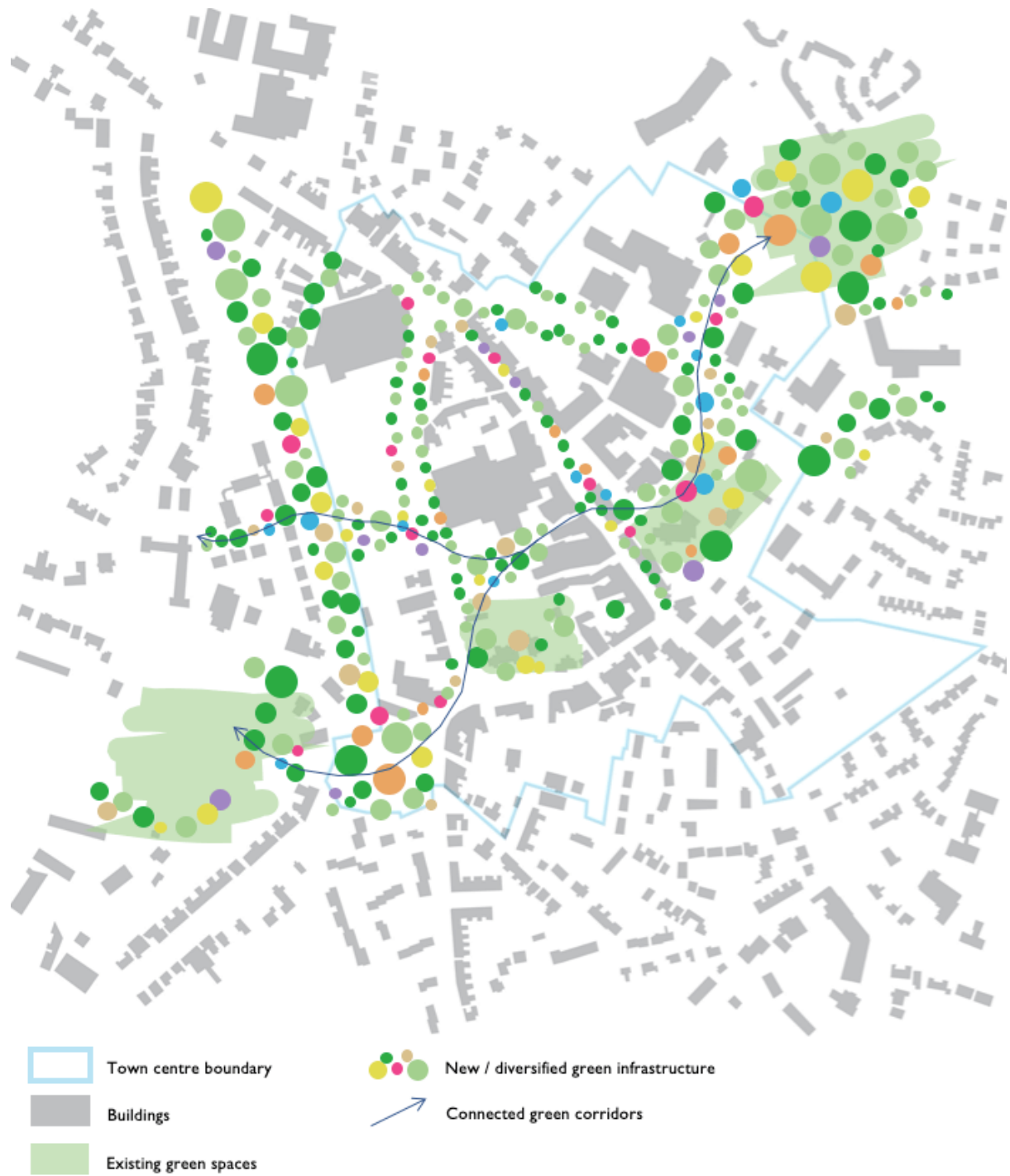- Connected green corridors

Figure 10: Concept plan that illustrates the potential for introducing new green infrastructure within the town centre and which can be used to connect existing green spaces, creating a networked of linked spaces that connect town with country and support the movement of species, including pollinators

Policy HaTC 5: Public realm, gateways and wayfinding

1. As appropriate to the scale and location of development, proposals should enhance the attractiveness of the public realm and improve the quality of the pedestrian environment, resilience to climate change and introduction of green infrastructure (and support delivery of ideas presented in Project PRG-01).

2. Proposals for development adjacent to a twittern should facilitate improvement of that twittern by:

   a. providing new entrances and windows that face into the twittern;
   b. making the route more direct and with clear visual links from either end; and
   c. providing, as relevant, lighting that respects neighbouring amenity.

3. Proposals for development at 'gateway locations' (as identified in the supporting policy text) are expected to enhance the sense of arrival through:

   a. Provision of public space that enables orientation and which supports social use and interaction as part of the network of public spaces in the area.
   b. Alignment and connectivity with existing routes, including new and or improved crossing points, for people walking, wheeling, cycling or using other non-motorised forms of travel.
   c. Improved wayfinding through provision of a legible development structure, signage, planting and public art.
   d. Integrating and enhancing existing features of value, both natural and built.

4. Proposals that incorporate wayfinding signs and information should be:

   a. Consistent, across the Plan area, in terms of design and quality.
   b. Well integrated with other street furniture to avoid unnecessary street clutter and physical obstruction.
   c. Located in gateway and arrival points into the area, and at key destinations, aiding orientation.
   d. Designed for inclusivity, utilising solutions (such as tactile and audible maps or digital technology) that enhances accessibility and mitigates barriers to mobility for those with disabilities.

5. Proposals should contribute to the preservation or enhancement of the character of the Conservation Area, avoiding any adverse effects on the Conservation Area, heritage assets or their setting.

Project PRG-01: Town centre public realm improvements

The Town Council is keen to explore opportunities that improve the quality of the public realm and highway network in the town centre, and to work with partner organisations to test and deliver the projects outlined below and presented in more detail in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code. Ideas outlined below would be tested and explored further with the community.

Greening

Opportunities should be taken that contribute to the greening of the urban environment (Figure 10). Subject to agreement of appropriate management and maintenance regimes, this includes but is not limited to:

- New tree planting as well as planting of wildflowers.
- Installation of green walls and roofs.
- Introduction of urban rills and other water features, including rain gardens, supporting sustainable urban drainage systems.

Where new green infrastructure is provided, this should help create a connected network of green spaces and routes, which support the movement of species as well as strengthening connectivity between the town centre and surrounding landscape.

Streets and Spaces

Opportunities should be taken that improve the quality of the pedestrian experience in the town centre. These include but are not limited to:

- Potential for partial pedestrianisation of the High Street, which could take the form of a shared surface area, including 'multi-functional' areas that can be used at different times of the day (e.g., after normal trading hours) or specific days of the week for servicing, parking, outdoor dining and other activities, including street markets.
- Rationalisation of street clutter and introduction of new areas of seating along the High Street.
- Defining gateway locations into the Town, including those at the entrance to the Cuckoo Trail at the South Road car park and along North Street through introduction of street tree planting, public art and new crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists that provide safer connections to the High Street.
- Improvements to the quality and attractiveness of the network of twitterns that link into the High Street.
- Implementation of a wayfinding strategy across the town centre.

Public art

5.49   Opportunities exist in Hailsham to enliven the quality of the townscape through installation of public art, with blank walls, car parks and public spaces being a canvas for cultural interpretation.

5.50   The Cheltenham Paint Festival (Figure 11) provides inspiration for artwork in Hailsham. An annual street art festival featuring large scale artworks, this brings colour and vibrancy to the street and draws visitors to the town. A similar approach in Hailsham could be taken that forms part of a wider 'place-branding' strategy that raises the profile of the town, with artwork taken the form of a 'year-round gallery' that supports local arts and culture.
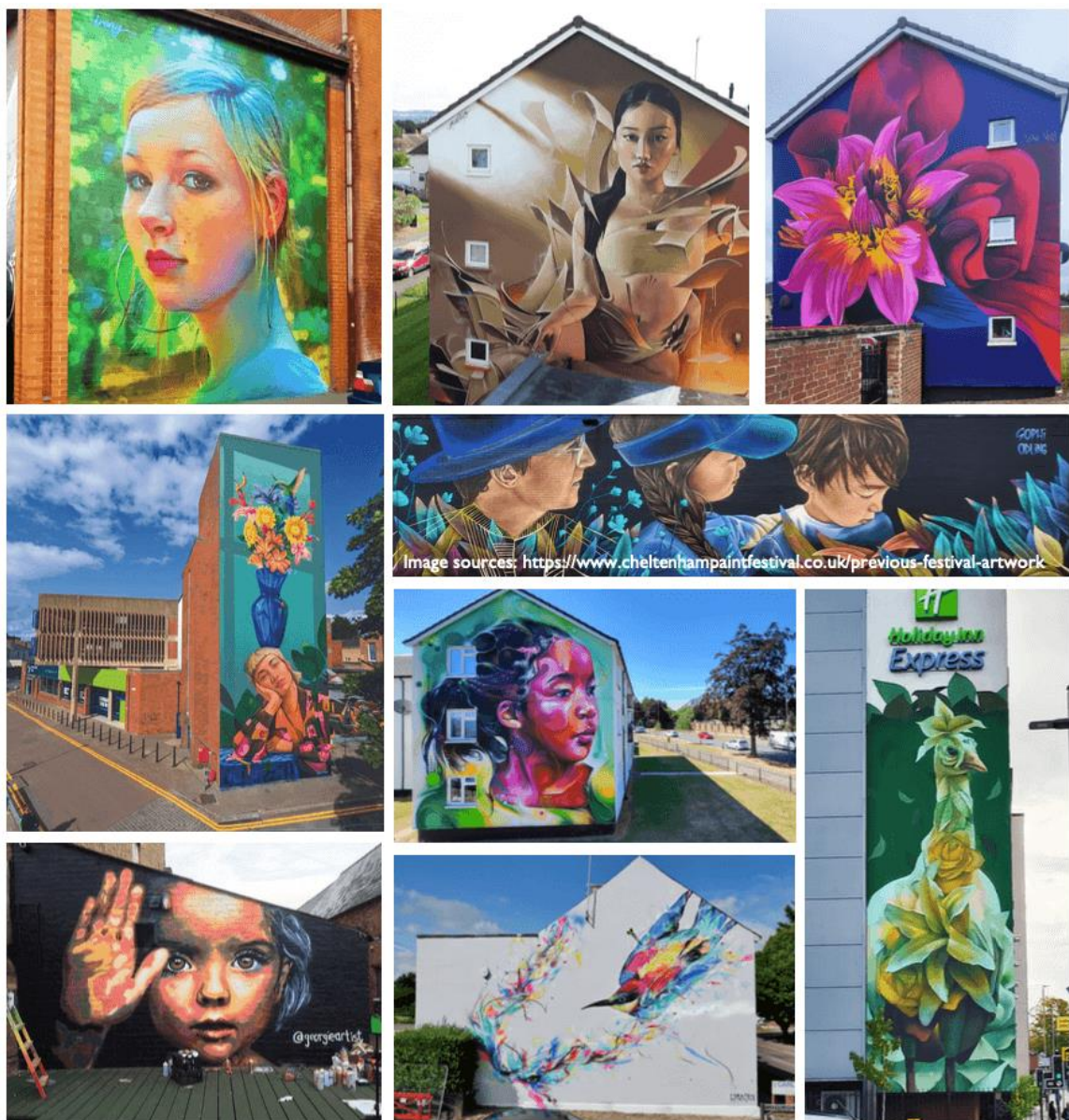

Figure 11: Example of artwork in Cheltenham created as part of the annual paint festival, showing how buildings can be transformed. Such an approach could be taken to enliven blank walls and spaces within Hailsham town centre (source of images: Cheltenham Paint Festival)

5.51   Public art can be both temporary and permanent and cover a wide-ranging variety of installations that support local distinctiveness and promote civic pride and identity. Artwork may include sculptures and murals, lighting and street furniture that is functional as well as decorative, event and performance space that supports use of public space. It may also extend to new trends, such as immersive productions and use of augmented reality.

5.52   Embracing new trends and artwork in a way that reflects the historic context of Hailsham is important to the cultural offer of the town. Installations should be coordinated and limited in number in order to have the greatest impact. Suitable locations might be those that help aid legibility, provide landmarking at key gateways or junctions, support interpretation of the history of the area, or provide a new point of interest and activity. Combined with improvements to the Cuckoo Trail, new art installations can help create visual and physical links between this and the High Street, supporting wayfinding and drawing visitors into the town centre.

5.53   Immersive and experiential artworks which reflect the diversity of the area can help raise the profile of and inward investment into the town centre should be explored, with opportunities taken to showcase innovation. Provision of such installations should be coordinated with public seating and wider public realm improvements that allow people time to experience the artwork.

5.54   Artists should ideally be involved in the design and or assessment of a scheme. Where public art is being designed as part of a building, components of this may be suitable for artistic interpretation, reflected within the building and materials or in the public realm and landscaping associated with the building.

Policy HaTC 6: Public art

1. Proposals for public art, including the replacement of installations, should be:

   a. located in a public space, it is well integrated with the space, avoiding physical obstruction and impeding sightlines.

   b. respond sensitively to the setting of heritage assets.

   c. sensitive to the design of the building, if forming part of a building.

   d. strengthen sense of place through interpretation of the cultural identity of Hailsham.

   e. enhance legibility.

   f. should be accompanied by a management plan that establishes ownership and management responsibilities, subject to the scale, nature and location of the proposals.

2. Where part of a building or public realm scheme, proposals involving public art should be developed in partnership with the artist(s) at the earliest opportunity to support the successful integration of the artwork into the townscape.

3. Proposals for immersive installations will need to demonstrate there is sufficient public space to allow people to experience the installation without comprising pedestrian or traffic movement, or causing harm to amenity through noise and lighting.

Roofscape

5.55   The retrofitting and repurposing of existing buildings is strongly supported. This includes the way in which the roofscape is utilised. There are several buildings in the town centre that occupy a large area and where flat, often unused roofs predominate. More effective use can be made of the roofscape, integrating green and blue infrastructure into them, helping to mitigate against the impacts of climate change through the cooling and insulation of buildings, reducing the heat island effect, and increasing biodiversity. Such roofs can also support flood mitigation measures by delaying and reducing runoff through a combination of rainwater storage and evaporation back into the atmosphere.

5.56   Opportunities exist to incorporate green and blue roofs throughout Hailsham through the retrofitting of existing buildings as well as within new development (Figure 12). Integrating green and blue roofs into existing buildings is more likely where existing roofs are flat, but this should not preclude opportunities to explore the retrofitting of other roof forms.

5.57   Green and blue roofs can take a variety of forms, including vegetated and lightweight sedum roofs, biodiverse roofs designed to replicate or create habitats for a range of species and supporting the movement of pollinators, and more intensive green roofs requiring irrigation and which may allow for urban agriculture to take place.

5.58   Where green infrastructure is to be integrated within a building, through installation of green roofs or opportunities for rooftop food growing, consideration must be given to structural impacts, management and sustainable forms of irrigation. All forms of green infrastructure should minimise use of mains water for irrigation, incorporating measures that maximise the capture and reuse of rainwater.

5.59   The use of roofs may also provide scope for the provision of outdoor amenity space or other use, such as provision of affordable workspace. In such instances, the space should be carefully designed to avoid negatively impacting on neighbouring amenity either by way of noise or overlooking. The Rotterdam Rooftop Catalogue, prepared by MVRDV in collaboration with Rotterdam Rooftop Days, outlines a series of roof typologies that could be utilised, depending on the form of building and size of roof. This can be used for inspiration.

5.60   Where roof space is to be utilised, the opportunity should be taken to incorporate wider sustainable design measures that support climate change and energy reduction, including installation of air source heat pumps, solar thermal and solar photovoltaics where the orientation and angle of the roof support operational efficiencies. Where installed, systems should be sensitive to the building and surrounding context, particularly when involving historic buildings. Solar rooftiles, which mimic the look of traditional tiles, may be a more appropriate solution than conventional photovoltaic panels.

Events space

Energy generation

Green roof / food growing

Affordable workspace

Icons by pngtree.com

Figure 12: Aerial photo of the town centre with opportunities indicated for making more effective use of large, flat roofs

5.61   Research published by Centre for the South ([Getting solar off the ground](#)) found that there is significant potential to deploy photovoltaic panels on rooftops and car parks, minimising the impact on farmland, landscape and nature, whilst contributing to Government targets to increase solar capacity and move towards net zero. Mapping of buildings in East Sussex undertaking in the research found that around 45% of rooftops have sufficient sunlight over the course of a year to make installation of photovoltaics effective, although this needs balancing with an understanding of structural impact on the building, ownership of the energy generated, and connectivity with the grid. There are numerous buildings in Hailsham Town Centre with flat roofs that present opportunities for intervention.

Policy HaTC 7: Roofscape

1. Proposals that involve the use of roofs, including the retrofitting of existing buildings, should:

    a.   Incorporate green and blue infrastructure; and or

    b.   Incorporate renewable energy generation.

2. All green infrastructure should make use of sustainable forms of irrigation, including rainwater capture and reuse.

3. Proposals that incorporate outdoor amenity and activity space, or which incorporate new uses such as affordable workspace at roof level, should not result in a loss of amenity or privacy to neighbouring properties. Where screening is proposed it should not adversely affect the appearance of the building.

4. The use of the roofscape should be designed to respond positively to the character of the building and the overall composition of the street, avoiding any adverse effects on the Conservation Area, heritage assets or their setting.

5. Insofar as planning permission is required, the installation of solar thermal or photovoltaic panels, or battery storage, should be sited to minimise their effect on the external appearance of the building and amenity of the area.

Town centre car parking

5.62   Provision of car parking in the town centre is important to the vitality of business and the ability of the town to serve the need of residents, including those in outlying towns and villages who are reliant on the retail offer and wider services in Hailsham.

5.63   However, whilst the town centre is a vibrant place that supports a range of services and activities for residents and visitors alike, the quality and enjoyment of the centre is somewhat undermined by the presence of extensive areas of parking around the historic High Street (Figure 13). In all, there are 1,085 parking spaces in the town centre. The land occupied by these amounts to 5.5 hectares, equivalent to the size of seven football pitches.

5.64   Opportunities that are taken to improve the quality of the street environment and public realm, and thus the visitor experience of the town centre, are welcome, but must be balanced with recognition of parking requirements.

5.65   Given the scale of growth that has taken place in Hailsham recently, as well as that which is envisaged to take place as set out in the emerging Local Plan, it is recognised that existing parking provision does not cater for demand. It is thus likely that car parking provision may need to expand in line with future growth but, at the same time, active and sustainable travel choices need putting in place that provide alternative travel choices and reduce the need to travel, by car. This means more direct walking and cycling routes to the centre, as well as initiatives that support micro-mobility solutions and park and ride.

5.66   Overall, car parking capacity in the town centre should be maintained, though it can be rationalised to make more effective use of the land, with well-designed parking provided in places that reduces vehicle movements in the centre, utilising, as appropriate, data and technology that influences smarter parking choices.

5.67   The rationalisation of car parking in the town centre could involve provision of a new multi- storey car park, delivery of which would require agreement with the landowners. However, it, or another suitably designed and accessible location for a multi-storey would help release existing surface car parking elsewhere in the centre enabling wider development opportunities to come forward. Development of existing surface car parks to the rear of the High Street would help meet windfall housing targets for development in Hailsham, support provision of new town centre uses, and enable improvements to the quality of the centre and visitor experience, repairing the urban fabric of the town.

5.68   In the event that a multi-storey car park is proposed it should be wrapped with active uses which help create an attractive street frontage. Suitable uses include commercial, leisure and retail activities. The wrapping of the car park with active uses should be designed to break down the mass of the building, with the scale and rhythm of frontages informed by the character of the town centre and adjacent buildings.

Legend:
- Town centre boundary
- Buildings
- Green space
- Surface parking and service yards
- Strong, active street frontages
- Poor, inactive street frontages
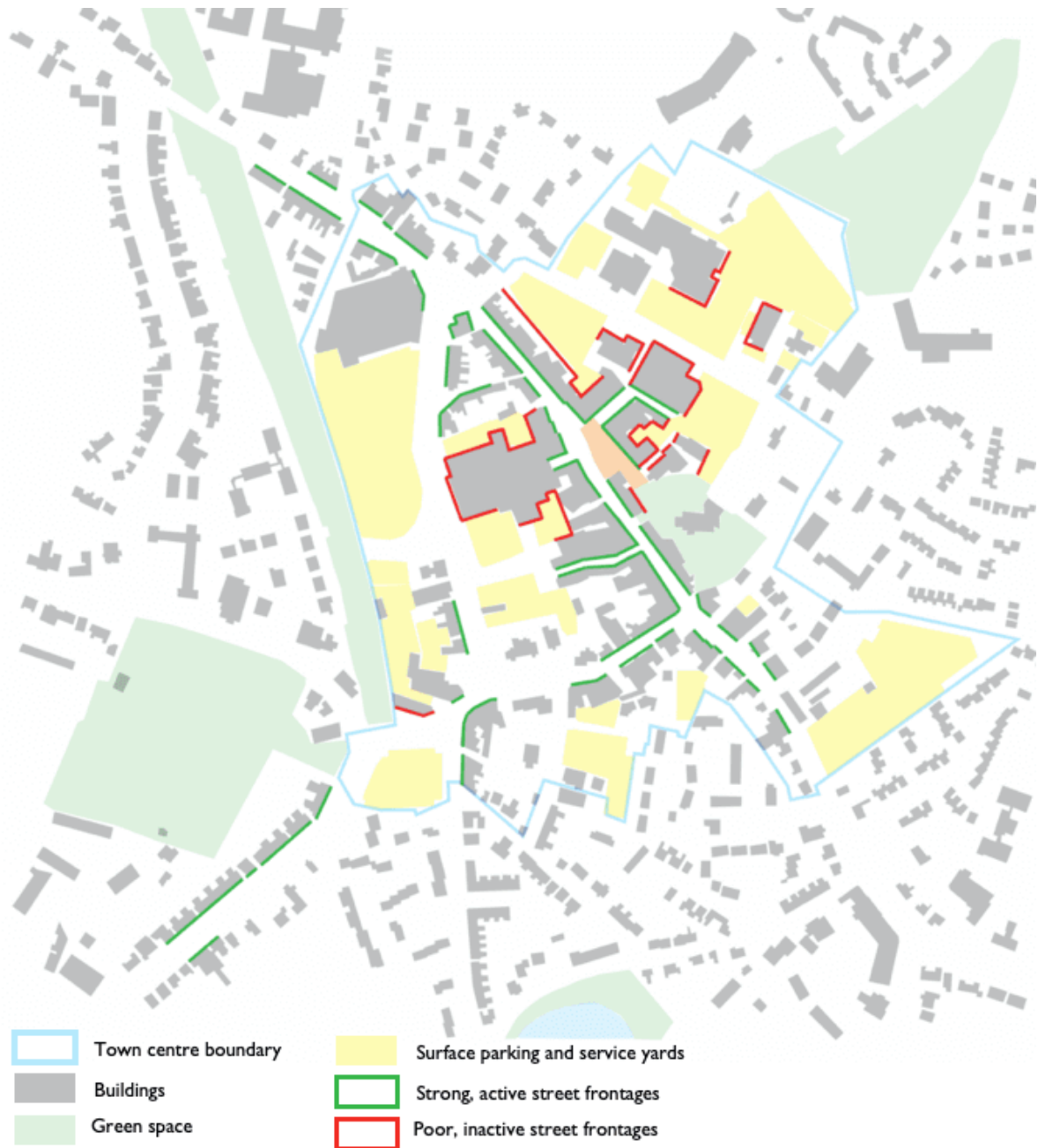
Figure 13: Plan showing location and extent of surface car parking and service yards in the Town Centre.

Policy HaTC 8: Town Centre parking

1. Development proposals that retain existing parking provision should take opportunities to reconfigure the space to introduce multi-functional green space and public realm improvements.

2. Proposals that result in the overall loss of parking provision in the town centre will need to provide evidence of car park utilisation and which show there is surplus alternative provision elsewhere in the town centre.

3. Proposals for multi-storey car parking will need to demonstrate that:

    a. The proposal does not result in unnecessary traffic movement to, in and around the town centre.

    b. The proposal contributes to the quality of the street environment through integration of appropriate town centre uses that wrap the development and include opportunities for inclusion of active ground floor uses.

    c. Routes between the proposed development and town centre activities are clear, logical and well overlooked.

    d. The proposal allows for the rationalisation and reduction of surface car parking spaces elsewhere in the town centre.

    e. The proposal avoids adverse effects on the Conservation Area, heritage assets or their setting.

4. Proposals for multi-storey car parks should take opportunities to introduce green walls and utilise roof space for introduction of green infrastructure or renewable energy generation sources.

6. Housing, development and design

Introduction

6.1 The NPPF is clear that a sufficient amount and variety of land is required to meet housing needs, including the needs of different groups. It also notes that the supply of large numbers of new homes can often best be achieved through planning for large scale development, including extensions to existing towns and villages. This has been and continues to be the case in Hailsham. However, and as highlighted through consultation, new development has not often been well-integrated with the existing built form, and the mix of new homes has not necessarily responded to housing needs. This section of the Neighbourhood Plan thus puts in place policies that seek to influence the mix and design of new residential development in Hailsham.

6.2 The policies in this section of the Plan should be read alongside the Hailsham Design Guide & Code. Consultation messages stressed the importance of new development being well-related to the character and identity of Hailsham, which create well-integrated and interesting places. This is reflective of the NPPF which states that planning policies should ensure that development is sympathetic to local character, establishes or maintains a strong sense of place, and which creates safe, inclusive and accessible places.

6.3 The emerging Wealden Local Plan identifies housing growth areas across Hailsham and also establishes a 'windfall' target for new development. This is subject to change as Wealden District Council progress its Local Plan. To help create a truly cohesive and inclusive community, areas of new growth must be well connected with the existing, providing a range of housing choice and be fully supported by the 'shopping basket' of services and facilities that support everyday life. Such facilities should be located such that they are accessible to all. This includes health, leisure and education, as well as local shops, but also extends to energy networks and other utilities, including wastewater and management of surface water drainage.

6.4 The Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan seeks to influence the form and layout of development, and the mix of housing types provided, such that this meets local needs, makes better and more effective use of land, and responds to the qualities and characteristics that help define Hailsham.

Design and character

6.5   Good design is essential in producing attractive, high quality, sustainable and healthy places which people want to live, work and relax in. Good design is not just about the way that buildings look but also considers factors such as the mix of uses and activities that help create lively and interesting places. These foster a sense of community through well designed, functional and attractive public spaces, and enhance the quality of environment.

6.6   Furthermore, achieving good design requires consideration of the local character and distinctiveness of a place. In Hailsham, it is important that new development responds to the distinctive positive, characteristic features and qualities of the area.

6.7   The achievement of well-designed places is a core principle of the NPPF. It states, at paragraph 131, that *'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities'*. It goes on to note the importance of local communities in developing design policies, so that *'they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics'* (paragraph 132). Neighbourhood Plans are crucial in identifying the special qualities of an area and explaining how they should be reflected in development.

6.8   Given the importance of design and drivers for this established at the national level, the opportunity has been taken through the Neighbourhood Plan to prepare a Hailsham Design Guide & Code. This draws out the defining features of the area, setting out the qualities of the built-form particular to Hailsham and how these should be reflected through new development. The Design Guide & Code forms a free-standing appendix to the Neighbourhood Plan. It is expected that applicants for development will demonstrate how they have responded positively to the Guide & Code.

6.9   The Hailsham Design Guide & Code draws out the positive features of residential development in Hailsham. These tend to relate to older, more established areas and include:

- Utilising a mix of local materials and combinations of these, creating diversity and interest.

- Well-proportioned residential areas successfully integrating green space, landscaping and vegetation, as well as residential buildings set-back from the highway which provide both a sense of openness and privacy.

- Permeable street networks that support travel by a range of modes.

- Parking which is successfully integrated with the street environment.

- Fine grain, human scale buildings within the historic core of the town, which allow emphasise local character and allow for flexibility of use.

6.10 Equally, aspects of the built form that detract from the quality of place in Hailsham have been identified. Such approaches to development should be avoided in the future. They include:

- Narrow street widths and front gardens in newer developments, with a lack of privacy and greenery.

- Vehicle dominated layouts with left over green spaces that have limited use and function.

- Poorly arranged parking, particularly in residential areas, that is not used in the way it was intended and results in people parking on the pavement.

- A lack of diversity and appearance of modern house types and limited use of materials.

- Poorly designed and equipped playing spaces in newer developments.

- Presence of blank gable ends fronting the street.

6.11 A design–led response to development, referencing good practice principles, will help create successful places. This includes use of Building for a Healthy Life which helps bring the range of national design guidance and principles together. It is cited in the NPPF (paragraph 138) as a tool to be used to help assess proposals for development. It presents a range of design considerations that should be used to help inform new development, exploring the qualities of successful places and how these can be best applied in a proposed scheme. The twelve overarching design considerations established in Building for a Healthy Life should be used alongside the Hailsham Design Guide & Code to help deliver well-designed and locally responsive developments.

6.12 This policy has been designed to have a universal effect in the neighbourhood area, though acknowledges that it will need to be applied on a proportionate basis.

6.13 The approach to design outlined in Hailsham does not preclude innovation in design, modern or contemporary architecture. Indeed, innovative design, which raises the standard of design in Hailsham, but which also promotes and reinforces local distinctiveness, is welcome. This includes the use of contemporary design approaches where they respond positively to context, outlook and amenity.

6.14 Architectural competitions are encouraged, providing interest and variety, particularly so within proposals for larger schemes that may come forward on the periphery of Hailsham and which can be broken down into different parcels or phases, each creating their own character. This aspiration aligns with guidance on creating character and identity set out in the National Design Guide, which states at paragraph 59, that the design of large-scale development *"may benefit from a variety of characters so that different areas or neighbourhoods each have their own identity"*.

Policy HaHD 1: Housing design and character

1. Proposals for all new residential development must have regard to the Hailsham Design Guide & Code and demonstrate, where required, in the Design and Access Statement submitted as part of the planning application, how they have responded to this.

2. As appropriate to site size and location, development should:

   a. Be well integrated with existing development, in terms of the scale, height, massing, layout and rhythm of development, and connections with the existing street pattern.

   b. Support improvements to existing character as set out in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code.

   c. Incorporate building lines that are consistent with those established adjacent to the development site and clearly define areas of public and private space, creating well defined streets and spaces fronted by active development edges.

   d. Orientate buildings so they front onto the street with windows and doors activating the street. Inactive and blank facades should be avoided. Where a building sits on a corner plot, active frontages must be provided on both edges facing the street.

   e. Reinforce local character through use of locally distinctive materials and integration of landscaping, including tree planting and natural boundary treatments, within the street and development plots, and support interest and variety in the built form by avoiding use of repetitive housing types.

   f. Help create places that are easily navigable, where local landmarks and landscape features aid wayfinding, with a well-connected and legible network of streets and other routes that aids safe walking and wheeling.

   g. Respect existing residential amenity in terms of overlooking and overshadowing.

   h. Incorporate private outdoor amenity space in all new residential development, including front and back gardens, or, in flatted development, balconies, terraces and communal outdoor spaces. Where gardens are provided the depth of these should respond to adjacent plots and building lines.

3. Development proposals that establish bespoke design solutions and residential typologies, whilst demonstrating an imaginative sense of place, will be expected to show how this responds to local context.

Project DC-01: Architectural variety and innovation

Site promoters and developers are encouraged to run architectural competitions that lead to variety and interest.

Where larger schemes are capable of being delivered in phases and or include several development outlets, support is given to use of multiple architectural practices, each leading on the design detail for one parcel or outlet but operating within an overarching masterplan for the site that establishes key principles, such as layout, connectivity and green infrastructure.

Well-integrated residential development

6.15 Hailsham has been and continues to be subject to proposals for growth and expansion, and the emerging Local Plan envisages further growth over the Plan period with additional allocations for residential development to the east of the existing built-up area as well as to the immediate north of Hailsham in neighbouring Hellingly Parish. There are also a series of smaller allocations elsewhere in and adjacent to the existing built-up area, and an expectation that a large number of new homes will also be delivered as 'windfall' development, which are typically (but not always) smaller developments of fewer than ten homes (see full definition in the glossary).

6.16 Respondents to consultation highlighted concerns with the form and impact of development that has taken place around Hailsham, stating that it has led to increased car-use, that there is a lack of supporting infrastructure, and that green space is limited in size and lacks functionality.

6.17 Much recent development (in Hailsham and elsewhere too) is poorly integrated, physically and socially, with the existing built form and communities. A lack of facilities on-site, or links to nearby facilities, requires trips to be made further afield, and the layout of development provides limited support for and integration of bus and cycle routes which, combined with provision of main road junctions, accentuates reliance on car-based travel.

6.18 The first version of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan stated that development must *'achieve a high level of integration between the existing communities and new development and ensure that development is part of a cohesive whole'*. This remains important and is central to:

- Community cohesion, providing good connections between areas, existing and new residents, and shared use of community facilities.
- Supporting more effective patterns of movement and which helps facilitate sustainable and active travel.
- An approach to development that responds to the character of the town and its pattern of growth over time.

6.19 The Hailsham Design Guide & Code illustrates an approach to how development on large and small sites should be laid out to better integrate with the existing built form and which extends to the orientation of buildings, network of streets, junction design and location of supporting infrastructure, including amenity space and public transport provision. It is equally important that the form of development looks forward. As has been the case historically, Hailsham has continued to grow and evolve, and this pattern is likely to continue: if not in the Plan period, then certainly at a later point in time. Development should be structured in such a way that future growth can plug into this, creating a cohesive and well-integrated community as opposed to a series of individual cells bolted onto each other.

Policy HaHD 2: Well-integrated residential development

1. Proposals for new development must be well-integrated with the existing built form and, as appropriate, surrounding landscape, having regard to guidance and principles established in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code.

2. Proposals involving new streets and other active travel infrastructure should locate these, so they provide connections with the existing movement network. Road junctions should be designed to cater for sustainable travel options, including walking and cycling.

3. As appropriate to the site, proposed new buildings should front onto existing streets. Use of landscaping to screen new residential development from existing development shall be avoided unless provided for reasons of noise and amenity.

4. As appropriate to the scale and location of development, community facilities, bus stops and amenity space should be located where they can be easily accessed and used by new and existing residents.

5. Proposals for development that involve multiple land ownership boundaries and or which are adjacent to other allocated sites and potential future growth locations should take a holistic approach to the masterplanning and layout of development. This should establish:

   a. A clear vision and concept for the development.

   b. A development and land use plan showing the mix and type of development to come forward, including the broad locations of necessary supporting services, including local centres, health and education.

   c. Framework plans establishing the intended form and grain of development, character areas, densities and building typologies, which respond to local character and context.

   d. A movement plan establishing the street hierarchy and typologies, and sustainable transport measures prioritising walking, cycling and public transport.

   e. A green infrastructure plan setting out the network and typology of green spaces, links and areas of ecological importance.

   f. A phasing and delivery plan, demonstrating a logical pattern of development that helps build community with supporting facilities provided at the right time.

Sustainable design and construction

6.20 Through consultation the importance of responding to climate change was highlighted, particularly in terms of how buildings are designed and constructed, ensuring energy efficiencies and minimising carbon emissions.

6.21 Most carbon dioxide emissions come from heating, cooling and powering buildings. Reducing carbon dioxide emissions and other air pollutants will contribute to efforts aimed at tackling the effects of human-made climate change. This is recognised by the declaration of the Climate Emergency by Wealden District Council.

6.22 The adopted Core Strategy does not include a policy on sustainable design and construction, though does cross-reference the Wealden Design Guide SPD which includes a set of design principles that should be used to inform new development. The emerging Local Plan establishes its intent in Policies CC1 – 3, establishing standards in terms of net-zero, the retrofitting of existing buildings and principles in respect of design and construction.

6.23 The Government is planning to introduce a 'Future Homes Standard', requiring new build homes to be future-proofed with low carbon heating and energy efficiencies. It is anticipated that the Future Homes Standards will be implemented during 2025. The Government has also made clear, through the 2023 Written Ministerial Statement (Local Energy Efficiency Standards update), that it does not expect plan-makers to set local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned buildings regulations.

6.24 Future growth and development in Hailsham represents an opportunity to secure reduced emissions, potentially through the construction of highly energy efficient homes, the provision of decentralised energy networks and the retrofitting of existing homes to reduce their energy use and fuel bills. Buildings should be designed to maximise solar gain and incorporate technologies that maximise the use of energy from renewable sources.

6.25 All development in Hailsham will be expected to make use of the best available sustainable design and technology. Proposals for development are expected to minimise the use of resources, mitigate against and be resilient to the impact of climate change.

6.26 Current sustainability standards for new construction will be used for assessing the sustainability of new, non-residential buildings. This includes those established by BREEAM. For new homes, the UK New Home Construction: Residential (UKNCR) standards developed by BREEAM is intended to provide an indication of the quality and environmental performance of those homes. Housebuilders are encouraged to use this assessment method.

6.27 The Town Council will particularly support proposals for new buildings that are 'Future Homes Standard' ready and or which achieve zero or near zero net energy

consumption in line with the Passivhaus Standard (see Glossary). The Net Zero Toolkit is a good practice guide that presents a set of key design features that should be reflected in new developments.

6.28   The Net Zero Toolkit also makes clear that the embodied carbon of existing buildings also requires awareness and good design, with the refurbishment and retrofit of existing buildings preferred over demolition and redevelopment. The Publicly Available Specification (PAS 2035/2030) is the UK's first retrofit standard. This favours a 'fabric first' approach to reduce heat demand, ensure homes are well ventilated and issues in respect of damp and humidity are avoided. To support the transition to low carbon, low energy buildings, the refurbishment of existing buildings should involve replacing gas or electric boilers with heat pumps. Where the retrofit or refurbishment involves historic buildings, guidance published by Historic England must be referred to.

6.29   In addition to energy efficiency consideration must also be given to water consumption. The Neighbourhood Plan area is within a region that has been designated by the Environment Agency as being 'seriously water stressed' and where measures to improve the water efficiency of new development is encouraged. This includes the use of water efficient fixtures and fittings, rainwater/storm water harvesting and reuse, and greywater recycling. Such measures reduce the pressure on water recycling centres, by reducing the volume of water that needs treating at these and thus reducing energy and carbon emissions. In particular, a 'Fittings Approach' as set out in Part G of the Building Regulations, provides clear flow-rate and volume performance metrics for each water using device / fitting in new dwellings, and increases the confidence that water efficient devices will be installed in the new dwelling.

6.30   The Defra Integrated Plan for Water supports the need to improve water efficiency and the Government's Environment Improvement Plan sets ten actions in the Roadmap to Water Efficiency in new developments including consideration of a new standard for new homes in England of 100 litres per person per day (l/p/d) where there is a clear local need, such as in areas of serious water stress. This exceeds current Building Regulations for residential homes of 110 l/p/d. For non-residential development with a gross floor area of 1,000sqm or greater, BREEAM 'excellent' standards for water consumption should be met.

6.31   Alongside interventions that support energy efficiencies within new and existing buildings, the use of climate resilient design features that enable buildings to withstand extreme weather conditions are also encouraged. These include:

• Orientating the building to maximise natural daylight.

• Designing buildings and the positioning of windows and other openings to consider wind direction, allow for airflow through and natural ventilation of the building.

- Making use of lighter, reflective surfaces, coatings and materials, to help reduce heat loading, internal building temperatures and the urban heat island effect.

- Integrating vegetative species into the design of the building, including on walls and roofs, to help cool buildings.

- Making use of water-resistant insulation and employing techniques that prevent flood and rainwater from entering the property, including installation of membranes under the floor and within walls to divert water away from the property, and installing flood proof seals and locks to doors and windows.

6.32   The design of buildings must also consider the relationship with and impacts on microclimatic conditions, including the overshadowing and the wind tunnel effect. Proposals for development should undertake and be informed by analysis of the wider area and the implications of building scale, massing and layout on local weather conditions, including prevailing winds and access to sunlight. Design considerations include those set out in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code.

6.33   Sustainability and energy efficiency also extends to the use of on-site renewable energy generation. The Town Council supports installation of such technology in new buildings, but opportunities for the retrofitting of existing buildings is also supported and actively encouraged. This might include installation of solar photovoltaics or similar, as well as linked battery and energy storage, contributing both to decarbonisation and greater resilience in the energy network.

Policy HaHD 3: Sustainable design and construction

1. The design and standard of any new development should aim to meet a high level of sustainable design and construction and be optimised for water and energy efficiency, targeting zero carbon emissions and, as far as possible, being 'Future Homes Standard' ready. New development will be expected to demonstrate that:

   a. Subject to topography, layout and good urban design principles, buildings are orientated to maximise solar gain where appropriate to site topography and creating a consistent building frontage to the street.
   b. They are designed to minimise harmful impacts on microclimatic conditions.
   c. Solar access along the south façade of the building is maximised, with appropriate shading elements and cross-ventilation employed in new and existing buildings.
   d. They incorporate on-site renewable energy generation technologies and battery storage, where appropriate to the building and immediate context.
   e. They incorporate regenerative design measures that make use of sustainable materials, reduce waste and deliver energy efficiencies.
   f. The use of low embodied carbon materials is assessed through a Life Cycle Assessment.
   g. A 'Fittings Approach' is taken to improve water efficiency in buildings, including achieving a water efficiency standard of 100 l/p/d. Wherever practicable, non-residential development should meet BREEAM excellent standards for water consumption.

2. Innovative approaches to the construction of low carbon homes, including construction to Passivhaus standards, are encouraged where the development otherwise complies with Development Plan policies.

3. Where appropriate, proposals for refurbishments and or the retrofitting of existing buildings to optimise the energy efficiency of the building, reduce heat loss and installing energy saving measures and renewable energy sources will be supported. Associated alterations to existing buildings should be carefully designed to ensure that potential adverse impacts are adequately mitigated.

4. Wherever practicable, development proposals for large employment and industrial buildings should maximise the renewable energy potential of their site by utilising their roof space for solar panels. Where it is commercially viable to do so and would meet good design principles, employment buildings should be orientated to optimise passive solar gain and be designed such that they can accommodate photovoltaic panels or materials on roofs, either at the point of construction or at a future date. Alterations to existing commercial buildings should also be designed to secure energy reduction.

5. As appropriate to the site and location, proposals should avoid adverse effects on the Conservation Area, heritage assets or their setting.

Design Review

6.34   Paragraph 138 of the NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should have access to and make use of tools and processes to assess and improve the design quality of development, including making use of design review arrangements.

6.35   Design review is a way of assessing the design quality of new developments by an independent panel of experts to support high standards of design. Guidance on the Design Review process can be found via the website of Design South East. The requirement for design review shall be determined by Wealden District Council.

6.36   In Hailsham, it is envisaged that major applications for development, as well as smaller schemes in sensitive or important locations, such as within the conservation area, should be subject to design review. This might include residential, commercial and mixed-use development proposals, infrastructure, community facilities, public realm and open space proposals.

6.37   Design review should take place at the pre-application stage to inform the design process and again following submission of the application, helping to inform officer recommendations. The final proposals submitted should show how comments made during the design review have influenced the proposed development.

Project DR-01: Design Review

Emerging schemes for major development should be assessed through design review. Design review of smaller schemes is also encouraged, including those in sensitive or important locations.

It is envisaged that schemes will be referred to the Design South East Design Review Panel until such a time that, and if, Wealden District Council runs and operates a Design Review Panel.

Encouragement is given to early engagement with the Design Review Panel, allowing scope for input into emerging designs. The final schemes submitted to the District Council should include a report on the design review process and show how the scheme has responded to this.

Design Review of live applications is also encouraged.

Housing mix

6.38   Over the past decade the population of Hailsham has grown by around 3,000 people. With new growth likely to take place over the Plan period it can be expected that the population will continue to increase. Despite the development that has taken place Census data indicates that the average house size in Hailsham has remained fairly consistent, at around 2.7 bedrooms per household. This does not though imply that the same house types and sizes should continue to be delivered as account needs to be taken of factors such as the existing housing stock, changing demographics and affordability.

6.39   Through consultation on the Plan a clear preference was made for a greater mix of housing types and sizes being provided within new development. A range of housing types must be provided in new development that meets local needs and requirements so that people can make Hailsham their life-long home. This means a range of housing sizes and affordability, including that suitable for young families and the elderly, as well as other 'products' such as modular home construction, self and custom build opportunities, and flexible homes that are designed around the concept of 'long-life, loose-fit', responding to changing demographic and working patterns, as well as life-cycle stages.

6.40   Census data for Hailsham indicates that the age profile is slightly younger than that for Wealden as a whole but, in comparison with national patterns, it has an ageing population. This needs reflecting in the supply of new homes provided in Hailsham, with a combination of homes suitable for younger families and the needs and requirements of an ageing population being provided.

6.41   Information on the existing stock of homes in Hailsham indicates that the majority (around 72%) comprises 2 and 3-bed properties. This is fairly high. By contrast, only around 61% of properties across Wealden as a whole comprise 2 and 3-bed homes. However, the Census also reports that a large proportion of homes are 'under-occupied': based on a combination of household size and number of bedrooms in the home, there are a large number of unused bedroom spaces in homes across Hailsham. Linked to this, and in comparison with the national position, there are fewer one bed properties, flats and apartments in Hailsham than there are in England as whole. This would suggest that smaller homes should be provided to help better balance household size and housing stock, and which may also provide opportunities for downsizing.

6.42   A review of recent planning applications in Hailsham indicates that while some recent flatted development includes smaller units of 1 or 2 bedrooms, larger schemes, primarily on the edge of the town, have mainly focussed on delivery of detached, semi-detached and terraced homes with 2 to 4 bedrooms. Despite this, and as indicated in the Wealden Local Housing Needs Assessment, house prices across Wealden are high. Although it shows that prices are lower in Hailsham than they are District-wide, the median house price across Wealden is 11.55 times

median earnings, thus making it difficult for first time buyers to enter the market. The Assessment goes on to state that the lower proportion of one bed homes in Wealden has ramifications for supporting young people onto the housing ladder.

6.43   The Wealden Housing Strategy 2020-25 indicates that there is also a growing need for smaller units with 1 or 2 bedrooms across the District, particularly in the affordable sector. In general, there is an increased need for affordable homes, as buying on the private market is too expensive for people with an average income and alternative options like private rented accommodation and shared ownership schemes are limited. This implies that the stock of private rented units needs to be increased to support the growing demand.

6.44   This all suggests that there is a need for a greater proportion of one-bed homes across Hailsham. The potential for windfall development in the town centre and which may include flatted development presents opportunities for delivery of such house sizes. However, a balanced mix should be provided across all housing sites, as appropriate to location, helping to support cohesive and inclusive communities. At the same time, the need for smaller one-bedroom properties does not always reflect lifestyle choices, with extra bedrooms often being needed for visitors and carers, as well as being utilised for home working.

6.45   The population of the Parish is older than the national average, and this pattern is expected to continue. This implies that there will be a growing need for smaller housing units and care or elderly homes in the future. Housing is required in Hailsham that responds to changing demographic patterns and health issues associated with an ageing population, including mobility issues which may hinder the ability to get outdoors, to get up and down stairs and move around the house.

6.46   Planning Practice Guidance (Housing for older and disabled people) notes that there are a variety of specialist housing types that can meet the needs of older people. This includes, but is not limited to, (1) age-restricted general market housing, (2) retirement living or sheltered housing, (3) extra care housing or housing-with care, and (4) residential care homes and nursing homes.

6.47   Where housing for the elderly is to be provided in the Neighbourhood Plan area it should meet the design criteria contained in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code. Further guidance also exists which should be considered. This includes the principles of inclusive design outlined in Planning Practice Guidance (Housing for older and disabled people), as well as those principles set out in the HAPPI (Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation) report which are applicable to housing for elderly people and age-friendly places.

6.48   Planning Practice Guidance notes that:

'accessible and adaptable housing enables people to live more independently, while also saving on health and social costs in the future. It is better to build accessible housing from the outset rather than have to make adaptations at a later stage – both in terms of cost and with regard to people being able to remain safe and independent in their homes.'

6.49   In line with this, opportunities to provide flexible housing types that can be adapted over time in response to changing lifestyles will be supported.

6.50   Flexibility on housing design should also respond to changes in working patterns and lifestyles resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Opportunities for home working are supported in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Indeed, the National Design Guide (2019) states that *"well-designed private places, such as homes and gardens, are designed to be flexible to adapt to the changing needs of their users over time"* and references remote working as an example of such a flexible use.

Policy HaHD 4: Housing mix, size and type

Housing mix

1. Proposals for housing development should contribute to the recommended balance of housing set out in the Wealden Local Housing Needs Assessment and include provision of 1, 2 and 3-bedroom homes, and where the mix includes a supply of affordable rented homes.

2. All affordable housing must be designed to be 'tenure- blind', i.e., they should be integrated into the design of the overall proposal and be of an equal quality in terms of its design and use of materials in comparison with the market housing element.

3. Proposals for community-led housing or from community land trusts where all homes are affordable and will remain so in perpetuity, will be supported, subject to other policies in the development plan.

Homes for an ageing population

4. Proposals for housing that meet the needs of the ageing population, including, where appropriate, bungalows, supported and sheltered housing, and independent living, will be supported.

5. Where proposed, such homes should be located within easy access of shops, facilities and public transport services. Housing should be well-integrated with the wider neighbourhood and be designed in accordance with the HAPPI principles.

Flexible housing types

6. Proposals for flexible residential typologies that respond to changing lifestyles and demographic life cycles, will be supported. This includes the ability for people to work at home separate from the main living space, as well as opportunities for multi-generation homes that enable older children and elderly family members to live independently.

7. Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals which will assist home working within the Neighbourhood Plan area will be supported where the use of the home for employment purposes is ancillary to the main residential use of the building.

Self and custom build homes

6.51   Diversification of the housing offer in Hailsham is supported by the Town Council where it helps provide new routes to home ownership, including more affordable forms of home ownership.

6.52   The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act came into effect in 2015 and places a duty on certain public authorities, in this case Wealden District Council, to keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who wish to acquire serviced plots of land to bring forward self-build and custom housebuilding projects. The Act places a duty on those public authorities to have regard to those registers in carrying out planning and other functions.

6.53   Information published by Wealden District Council indicates that, as of October 2024, 290 individuals were enrolled on the self and custom build register. Around 40% of people on the register have indicated a preference for an urban plot. Nationally, the interest in self and custom-build housing opportunities continues to grow, with Government data published in February 2025 indicating year on year growth in the number of individuals joining the register. However, it also shows that planning permissions for self-build plots declined by almost a fifth in the last calendar year. This may be linked to access to finance but also availability and supply of suitable plots.

6.54   The Neighbourhood Plan encourages self and custom-build housing in appropriate locations across Hailsham. This may involve a small percentage of plots on major development sites being made available for self and custom build, or through applications for smaller schemes, including individual homes. The emerging Local Plan, at Policy HO5, says that 5% of all plots on sites of twenty homes or more should be set aside for self and custom build opportunities, and that these should be taken up within twelve months (or other agreed period) after which the plots can be developed for open market housing.

6.55   Where areas of land are identified for self-build, either as part of a major development or through other smaller scale or windfall development, good design principles will apply.

6.56   Masterplans and plot passports should be prepared that provide the parameters within which these new homes can be designed and built, allowing for individual interpretation but within a framework that establishes the grain, scale and rhythm of new development.

6.57   Plot Passports are a summary of the design parameters for any given plot, helping private homebuilders understand what they are allowed to build on the plot. They capture key information from the planning permission for the site, design constraints and procedural requirements. The passports clearly show permissible building lines within which the new dwelling can be built as well as height restrictions and other

details such as parking requirements. Aspects such as materials, roof styles and fenestration are usually left for the plot owner to decide.

6.58 Where plots are made available for self and custom-build housing they must be 'oven-ready' to facilitate development, with connections to utilities provided direct to the plot.

Policy HaHD 5: Self and custom build homes

1. Proposals for major development that include provision of plots for self and custom-build housing, should meet the following criteria:

   a. Plot passports should be prepared by the applicant for approval by Wealden District Council. These will establish the form of development and building parameters for each plot, including building heights, footprint, frontages, density and parking requirements.

   b. The location of plots for self and custom build on major development schemes will be identified through the masterplan for the overall scheme with the parameters for the plots informed by the overall masterplan.

   c. All plots for self and custom build housing shall be provided with connections to utilities (electricity, water and wastewater) and communication infrastructure at the boundary of the plot.

   d. All plots must have safe and convenient access to the public highway.

2. Proposals for individual plots and information contained within the plot passports shall be informed by the design guidance contained in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code.

Street types, design and hierarchy

6.59 Core to the vison and objectives for Hailsham is the aspiration for it to be accessible to people of all ages and abilities, where it is safe and easy for all to get around. The way in which streets and spaces are designed is key to this. A 'user hierarchy' has been established at national level in respect of movement and street design. This prioritises safe space and movement for pedestrians, followed by those wheeling or cycling, then public transport and other motorised vehicles. This hierarchy underpins policies in this Neighbourhood Plan in respect of movement and quality of the public realm.

6.60 In addition to the ability to support travel choice, good street design can also help enrich the character and quality of place. The made Neighbourhood Plan did not include a specific policy in respect of street design, although it did, at Policy HAIL SD2, establish design and placemaking principles for major developments. These stressed the importance of creating legible development layouts that support walking and wheeling, and where the placemaking function of streets is optimised.

6.61 Through the review of the Neighbourhood Plan and production of the associated Hailsham Design Guide & Code, the importance of street design has been developed further. This responds to messages from consultation in respect of the character and quality of development, the impact of growth on traffic levels in the town, and the need to support and provide wider transport choices for all.

6.62 Across Hailsham new streets should be designed, or existing streets redesigned, to enable safe travel by all, making walking and wheeling more attractive propositions.

6.63 The emerging Wealden Local Plan, at Policy INF2 (Active and Sustainable Travel), states that *'new development will be supported where it delivers healthy places and streets, contributing to complete, compact and connected neighbourhoods'*, and that development should be designed around a *'layout that will deliver and encourage slower driving speeds prioritising non-motorised travel modes as suitable to the scheme'*. These criteria are also reflected in Policy DE1 (Achieving well designed and high-quality places) of the emerging Local Plan. This approach is very much at the heart of the vision and overarching objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan and reflects feedback from consultation expressing support for improved walking and wheeling conditions.

6.64 Proposals for development within Hailsham should, where appropriate, be accompanied by information establishing the street hierarchy in the area and supplemented by a set of illustrative cross-sections through different street typologies. These should reflect best practice guidance established in Manual for Streets and the forthcoming update of that, and as adapted and further developed in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code that accompanies the Neighbourhood Plan. Further detailed specifications, including construction standards, are set out in the ESCC Local Design Guide for Residential Development.

6.65 Proposals for large developments which result in the growth and expansion beyond the current extent of the built-up area should be designed with bus access in mind, with a central street running through these, connecting residents with new local centres, social and community facilities, and employment opportunities. Such streets should be designed to accommodate buses but at the same time balancing the movement function of the street with its place-making role.

6.66 Design features should be incorporated that discourage speeding and give space to pedestrians and cyclists, supporting active and healthy lifestyles. In particular, residential streets within new growth areas should, first and foremost, be places for people. Streets that take the form of 'Home Zones' or 'Garden Streets' (See Glossary) are actively encouraged. Such streets are intended to create greener, safer streets for residents while also creating connections with the surrounding natural environment. These streets typically include shared spaces, greening, traffic calming and low speed limits. A central goal of the concept is to remove the traditional segregation of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians in public spaces and encourage natural human interaction.

6.67 The network of streets in new major developments should also incorporate 'filtered mobility'. Such an approach allows direct access between streets and spaces for pedestrians and cyclists, but limits access for those travelling by car, directing vehicles onto the main road network, limiting through traffic and, by making these journeys longer, encourages travel by foot or by bike for shorter journeys.

6.68 Equally, and across Hailsham as a whole, safer routes to school are encouraged, minimising the impact of the school run. The introduction of the 'Sustainable Travel Recognition and Accreditation for Schools (STARS)' scheme (see Glossary) is supported. This seeks to change the way that children travel to school, promoting a shift towards walking and cycling.

6.69 The retrofitting of existing streets in Hailsham is also supported, with guidance and principles outlined in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code.

Policy HaHD 6: Street types, design and hierarchy

1. Proposals for major development in Hailsham must be based around a permeable street network, creating a strong sense of place that is safe for people who are walking and wheeling.

2. A hierarchy of streets should be integrated within development areas and details of these should accompany planning application material.

3. Street design shall have regard to guidance illustrated in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code. In particular developments should:

   a. Connect to existing streets and paths and create direct, safe and attractive links for all users whilst avoiding 'cul-de-sac' street layouts, other than where cul-de-sacs are well connected to each other and surrounding streets by direct walking and wheeling routes and where the use of filtered permeability restricts through movement by motorised vehicles.

   b. Have streets where buildings rather than the highway are visually dominant, and the impact of parked cars is minimal.

   c. Include trees and soft landscaping that create a distinction in street types / areas.

   d. Incorporate SuDS and raingardens into the street wherever possible.

   e. Consider use of home zone style typologies on lower order streets or other appropriate locations.

   f. Incorporate safe routes to school for pedestrians and cyclists.

Residential parking provision

6.70 The made Neighbourhood Plan, at policy HAIL D5, sought to ensure that where parking is provided in new residential development, that it is conveniently located so that it can be used as intended without causing obstruction to other users of the street and where the visual impact of parked cars is minimised.

6.71 This policy has been carried forward and developed further within the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. It responds to messages through consultation as to the provision, design and impact of parking on the quality and appearance of the street as well as the unintended consequences of poorly designed parking, impacting on those on foot and in particular, those dependent on mobility aids.

6.72 The emerging Local Plan, at Policy INF3 (Parking Provisions) requires development to 'provide adequate and well-integrated vehicular' parking. However, the quality, location and provision of car parking can be a major determinant on the quality of place, particularly in residential areas. If it is not provided in the right place, it is unlikely to be used properly.

6.73 This is recognised in the ESCC Guidance on Parking at New Development which states that *'getting the parking layout right results in a well-functioning development and a better place to live and work… developments must be designed around people not the car.'*

6.74 The ESCC guidance provides information on space and size standards, which are to be adhered to in new development. It also introduces some principles for the provision, location and type of parking which are expanded upon in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code.

6.75 In Hailsham, the location and provision of parking should respond to good urban design and placemaking principles. It is recommended that parking is provided on plot and, where possible, to the side of the property to minimise the visual impact of parked cars on the street scene. Where driveway parking is to be provided at the front of the property this should, in all cases, be combined with high quality soft landscaping to minimise the visual impact on and dominance of parking on the street.

6.76 In some cases, courtyard style parking arrangements may be appropriate. However, these should be designed as a place, at the front of and being overlooked by adjacent properties. Such spaces should be designed as communal squares integrating landscaping that can also take the form of doorstep green and play space.

6.77 Rear courtyards and garage courts should be avoided wherever possible as these are not often used for parking and occupy valuable space that might be used more effectively for other uses, including living space. Equally, garages integral to the home are discouraged as they make a limited contribution to meeting parking standards established by ESCC. However, there may be instances where street and house design integrates garage parking in such a way that it is used as intended. This will include instances where the street design and layout of development preclude

the opportunity for displacement of parking where it causes nuisance to others, such as through the parking of cars over the footway. Case study development schemes illustrated in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code show instances where such solutions might be utilised, including home zone style street arrangements.

6.78   Innovative approaches to parking provision are welcome and strongly encouraged. Communal parking courts located to the edge of proposed development, but which are well overlooked, as outlined above, might be one such approach. This would provide parking space in line with standards but, being further located away from the front door would provide pedestrian priority space closer to homes, support community interaction and space for children to play, as well as making it more convenient for people to walk, cycle or use public transport to reach their destinations. Such an approach has been utilised in the Marmalade Lane development in Cambridge, as illustrated in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code. Should car use and ownership fall over time because other transport modes are more attractive, then the opportunity may exist for the communal parking spaces to be adapted, potentially becoming pocket parks, community food growing gardens or new development sites.

6.79   On street parking, including that for visitors, can be provided, but should be well-integrated into the street, including insert bays, landscaping and use of different street materials to define the space. Wherever soft landscaping is integrated with parking provision, this should be protected from over running vehicles through the use of kerbs and other up stands as appropriate, and where the opportunity is also taken to incorporate SuDS and other surface water flooding mitigation measures.

Policy HaHD 7: Parking in new residential development

1. New development shall be designed such that it reduces informal parking that undermines the quality of the street environment. Parking should be unobtrusive and in locations that benefit from natural surveillance.

2. The provision of parking should adhere to space and size standards established by ESCC and respond to key principles illustrated in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code, including:

   a. On-plot parking should be set back form the main building line or, where provided in front of the home, integrated with areas of soft landscaping.

   b. Where garages are provided on-plot these should reflect the architectural style of the house and be well-integrated into the overall design of the property.

   c. Where it can be shown that on-plot parking is not achievable, parking spaces can be accommodated in the street (including unallocated visitor parking).

   d. Where parking is provided on-street it should comprise part of a comprehensive public realm strategy including tree planting and use of materials to define parking spaces and soften the visual impact of parked cars.

   e. Courtyard style parking to the front of the home should be overlooked by active frontages. Areas of parking should incorporate soft landscaping.

3. Parking provision should be designed in relation to street hierarchy and circulation plans to support the creation of walking and wheeling friendly streets with low volumes of traffic within residential areas and which minimises through traffic.

4. Where parking is integrated with areas of soft landscaping, kerbs and other upstands as appropriate should be provided, that protect the landscaping from over running vehicles. Permeable surfacing materials should be used for parking areas, hard-standing areas, and paths where it is practicable and safe to do so.

5. Proposals for homeowner extensions or the conversion of buildings should be designed to safeguard existing off-road parking spaces, or to provide the number of off-road spaces for any new use created.

7. Movement

Introduction

7.1 The made Neighbourhood Plan puts a strong emphasis on the importance of walking and cycling, and shaping development in such a way that these become attractive propositions for short everyday journeys. It also promotes and encourages use of public transport, integrating bus services with development and supporting delivery of improved services between Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne.

7.2 The aspiration was to see real, attractive transport choices provided for all, with everybody being able to get around, safely and enjoyably, by foot and by bike, and having access to frequent, fast and reliable public transport services. In line with national guidance, this would see investment in sustainable modes of travel prioritised.

7.3 These aspirations remain. Consultation undertaken on the review of the Neighbourhood Plan highlighted the need to provide improved travel choices for all and to address concerns in respect of traffic volume, congestion and speed. Key priorities identified included:

- Provision of better walking and cycling routes, including safe cycle lanes and secure bike shelters, and walking routes that are well maintained for use by people of all abilities.

- Improved bus services, including more reliable and extended timetables, and better bus waiting facilities.

- Delivery and implementation of traffic management measures, including actions that address congestion and improve the maintenance of roads. Coupled with this, ideas such as introducing a park and ride scheme were suggested.

7.4 The priorities outlined above reflect the 'user hierarchy' established at national level, which prioritises safe space and movement for pedestrians, followed by those wheeling or cycling, then public transport and other motorised vehicles. It underpins policies in the Neighbourhood Plan is respect of movement and quality of place. The design of streets and spaces in Hailsham, including the retrofitting of existing streets as appropriate, should reflect the Healthy Streets Indicators and which are intended to make streets attractive, inclusive and accessible places for all. Such an approach is advocated by East Sussex County Council in Local Transport Plan 4 and should be embedded in a good approach to placemaking across Hailsham.

Active and healthy travel

7.5   The Wealden Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan promote sustainable transport, walking and cycling as being attractive and viable choices for people. This is reflected in national guidance, with the Government's Cycling and Walking Investment strategy, for example, pointing to the importance of and need for new infrastructure investment to support active travel.

7.6   Although travel by car will continue to be important, efforts are required to encourage a shift towards greener and healthier travel choices. Within Hailsham efforts should be made so that walking and cycling become attractive propositions for short, day-to-day trips.

7.7   This is reflected in the East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which has a strong focus on 'people' and 'places', such that active travel is convenient and easy for people to use. The LCWIP recognises that, with the scale of new development coming forward across the market towns in the County, an approach to good placemaking is required that changes travel behaviours, reducing pressure on the road network and supporting healthy lifestyles.

7.8   High quality walking and cycling routes should be integrated within new developments. Development proposals should help create a safe, pedestrian friendly environment, following the principles outlined in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code. This can be achieved through the orientation of buildings, creating well-defined and overlooked public spaces, safe routes that avoid concealed spaces and hidden corners, and human scale buildings with well-defined entrances that enable people to walk into these and make use of stairs to access different storeys, supporting healthy lifestyles.

7.9   Good practice principles outlined in Building for a Healthy Life, for example, show how new developments should incorporate walking and cycling networks. Applicants will be expected to refer to these principles and, where new cycling infrastructure is to be provided, design this in accordance with Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance (LTN 1/20) published by the Department for Transport. The 'Cycling Level of Service Tool' contained within this should be used to assess existing and potential routes to help deliver optimal route choices.

7.10   However, the quality and attractiveness of the walking and cycling network is only as good as the missing links or gaps in the routes. Funding identified by ESCC through the LCWIP, as well as CIL receipts payable from new development, should be directed to an improved area wide walking and cycle network for the benefit of existing and new residents. This includes the projects identified in the LCWIP as well as those identified in this Neighbourhood Plan: specifically, a safe crossing of the A22 (see Project AHT-01) and a new all-weather walking and cycling route alongside the A22 (Project AHT-02). Other key routes for improvement are those that make short, everyday journeys easy and enjoyable. This will involve the retrofitting of

existing streets and spaces and includes improving links to parks, the town centre, schools, healthcare and other community facilities. The Cuckoo Trail is recognised as a key asset for active travel in Hailsham, and south Wealden as a whole, and the LCWIP encourages development to provide new and improved connections to this. Within the town centre the LCWIP notes the importance of providing for wider footways, more and better crossing points on busy roads.

7.11   It is important that pedestrian and cycle routes are designed to be accessible to all, including those with mobility issues. Use should be made of the Healthy Streets tool and ten indicators established within it (as illustrated in Figure 14) and reflect guidance within 'Inclusive Mobility: A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure'. This report provides best practice advice on a range of relevant design considerations, including but not limited to advice on footways and pedestrian crossings, how to create safe shared routes, appropriate gradients and how to make cycling infrastructure safe for disabled people.
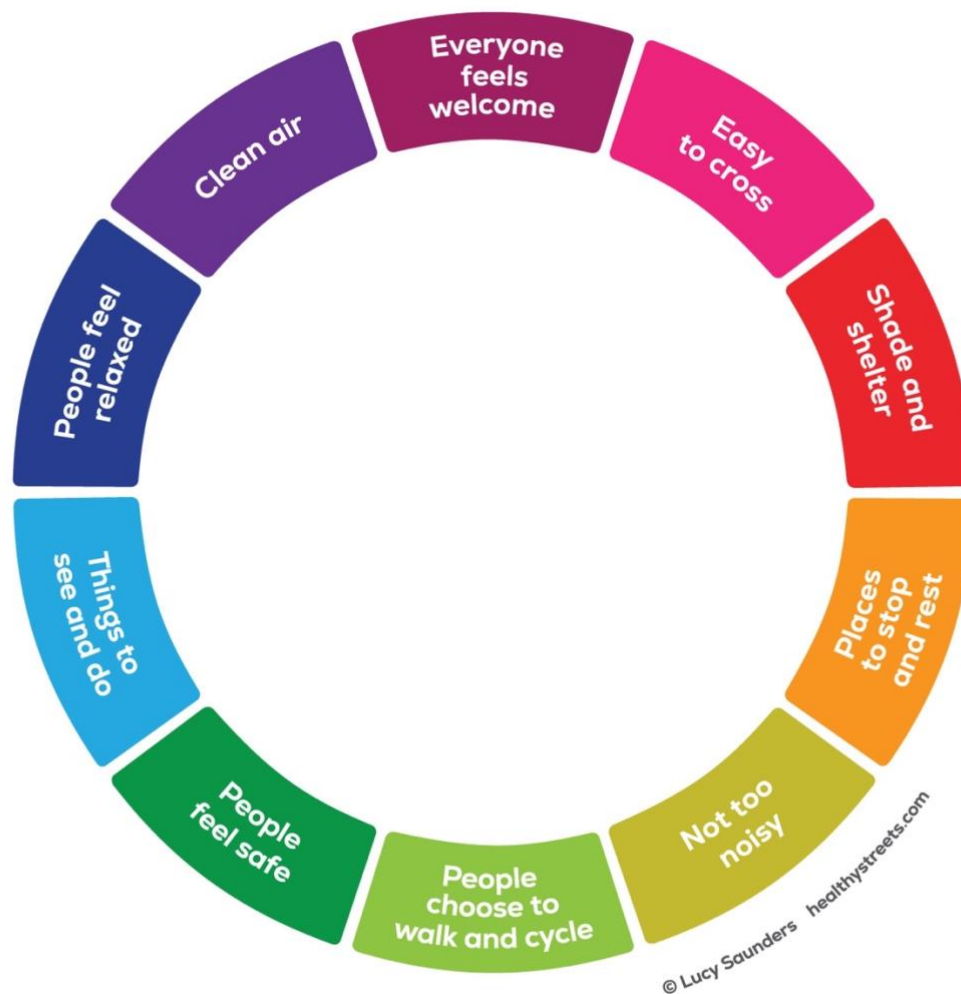

Figure 14: The ten indicators of a Healthy Street (source © Lucy Saunders, healthystreets.com)

7.12 Alongside delivery of improved active travel routes, other interventions that make these more attractive to people should be investigated. A combined public art and wayfinding strategy delivered along key routes, including, for example, the Cuckoo Trail, might help bring the history and heritage of the town to life whilst supporting orientation. Efforts that 'nudge' people into making use of active travel modes should be incorporated within the delivery of new infrastructure. This might for example include information on the number of steps covered in a certain distance or calories burned. Other interventions that make active travel more attractive propositions include:

- Provision of direct, traffic free routes, including use of techniques such as filtered permeability that support direct walking and cycling routes.

- Routes that are well overlooked by adjacent development, such that they benefit from natural surveillance and support personal safety.

- Introduction of 'trim trails' (typically comprising low-level equipment that encourages exercise in an outdoor setting).

- Provision of 'Copenhagen style crossings' on side roads, where the footway continues across the carriageway and gives priority to pedestrians.

- Segregation of cycling on main traffic routes and at key junctions, and careful design of cycling infrastructure at and around bus stops.

- Provision of safe, secure and, ideally, covered cycle parking at the home and destination, along with showers and lockers at places of work for people who have chosen to commute by bike.

- Installation of 'green wave' traffic lights on cycle routes, allowing cyclists to judge their speed to enable them to pass through lights without needing to stop, thus saving on the energy and momentum lost from the actions of stopping and starting.

- Provision of coordinated street furniture that reduces street clutter and provides information for people walking and cycling, as well as places to sit and rest. Furniture designed specifically for those cycling should be incorporated into specific furniture zones along the street. This might include for example, footrests provided by the kerb at traffic lights or provision of foot-pumps and other essential cycle maintenance tools in the public realm, preferably close to or associated with areas of cycle parking.

7.13 In addition to provision of safe cycle routes for commuting and leisure purposes, the role of the bicycle in delivering freight and other packages should be captured, presenting a more sustainable and 'town-friendly' approach to delivery than offered by larger motorised vehicles. The use of the cargo-bike for 'last mile' delivery is encouraged.

Policy HaM 1: Active and healthy travel

1. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should help to facilitate infrastructure improvements identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

2. Proposals for major residential and commercial development should, as appropriate:

   a. Help deliver healthy, inclusive and accessible streets for people of all ages and abilities, and which embody the principles of a pedestrian friendly, walkable neighbourhood, as set out in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code.
   b. Provide new walking, wheeling and other non-motorised travel routes that are direct, safe and convenient to use, and where those routes support permeability.
   c. Demonstrate how such proposals will integrate satisfactorily into existing adjacent walking, wheeling and cycling networks, without reduction of capacity or safety of those routes.
   d. Provide development layouts with active frontages which allow for the natural surveillance of routes through overlooking.
   e. Reduce street clutter and remove unnecessary street furniture.
   f. Make use of high-quality materials appropriate to the location.
   g. Reflect best practice principles for active travel design, utilising the Healthy Streets Indicators and reflecting guidance in DfT LTN 1/20 (or subsequent update of this) and DfT guidance on Inclusive Mobility.

3. Where cycle infrastructure is proposed the quality of provision must be assessed using the Cycling Level of Service Tool in DfT LTN 1/20 (or subsequent update of this).

4. Cycle parking must be provided and designed in line with DfT LTN 1/20 and standards established by East Sussex County Council:

   a. Proposals for residential development shall provide secure cycle storage assigned to the dwelling and located within or immediately adjacent to the property, fully enclosed and at ground-level. Proposals for flats should include communal areas for cycle storage.
   b. Proposals for commercial, leisure and community use should support and enable active travel through inclusion of safe, secure, dry and convenient cycle parking and changing facilities where appropriate.

5. Proposals for major development will be expected to incorporate measures that enable 'last-mile' freight and servicing trips via cargo-bike.

6. Proposals for development that involve the retrofitting of existing streets to include active travel infrastructure will be supported where they reflect best practice principles summarised in the Hailsham Design Guide & Code.

7. Proposals should not result in the loss of existing walking or cycling routes, nor reduce the capacity of that infrastructure.

Project MHT-01: Crossing the A22

The A22 forms a major barrier to movement, dividing residents of Hailsham from the network of natural areas and leisure facilities found to the west of the town, including Abbot's Wood, Knockhatch and the Bushy Wood Activity Centre. Crossing the road is dangerous and thus limits enjoyment of these to those with access to a private car.

A disused tunnel exists under the A22 in the proximity of the Hailsham Country Park. The Town Council is keen to work with partners, including East Sussex County Council, to explore the feasibility and costing of reopening and reusing the tunnel for pedestrians and cyclists (Figure 15). It may need increasing in width and height as well as structural support to enable safe (and attractive) use.

Access to and from the tunnel is immediately adjacent to land in the ownership of the Town Council and, via the Country Park, is close to land within the Diplocks Estate which the Town Council aspires to using as a Mobility Hub / Park and Ride facility, linked with wider aspirations for improved intra-urban bus routes and more local walking and cycling access. The route would thus comprise an important hub or gateway for Hailsham.

As an alternative to a tunnel, and subject to design, costing and land availability, a green bridge across the A22 may be appropriate at this location.

Figure 15: Artists' illustration of the refurbishment of an existing tunnel under the A22.

Project MHT-02: The 'Hailsham Country Line'

The Town Council is supportive of improvements to the walking and cycling network across Hailsham, including those projects identified in the East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). In the main these involve the retrofitting of existing streets to accommodate new infrastructure and require further testing, design and analysis.

In addition to the routes in the LCWIP a further opportunity has been identified, which the Town Council is referring to as the 'Hailsham Country Line'. This would be a north south connection on land mainly in the ownership of the Town Council running alongside the A22 (Figure 16). It would provide a connection between various leisure, recreation and community uses in Hailsham, providing safe and attractive access to these for all ages, being segregated from traffic for much of its length.

The route would provide a connection with the new outdoor sports hub being provided by Wealden District Council to the north of Hailsham and run south towards the James West Centre, Hailsham Country Park and eventually to the Cuckoo Trial to the south of Hailsham via the existing network of public rights of way (and including upgrades to these as appropriate). The route would connect with the Diplocks Mobility Hub / Park and Ride and thus also connect with the Town Centre and, west, across the A22, to the Bushy Wood Activity Centre, Knockhatch Adventure Park, Arlington Stadium, Abbot's Wood and Michelham Priory. It would supplement the Cuckoo Trail in terms of opening up Hailsham to visitors.

It should be an all-weather path, enabling use in all conditions (examples include that shown in Figure 17). Lighting should be unobtrusive and new planting provided, as appropriate, between this and the A22 to screen the route from traffic.

Opportunities that are taken to improve the quality of leisure and recreation facilities along the Country Line will be supported by the Town Council. These include investigating delivery of a new pump track (Figure 18) and or Mountain Bike trail at an appropriate location along the Country Line.
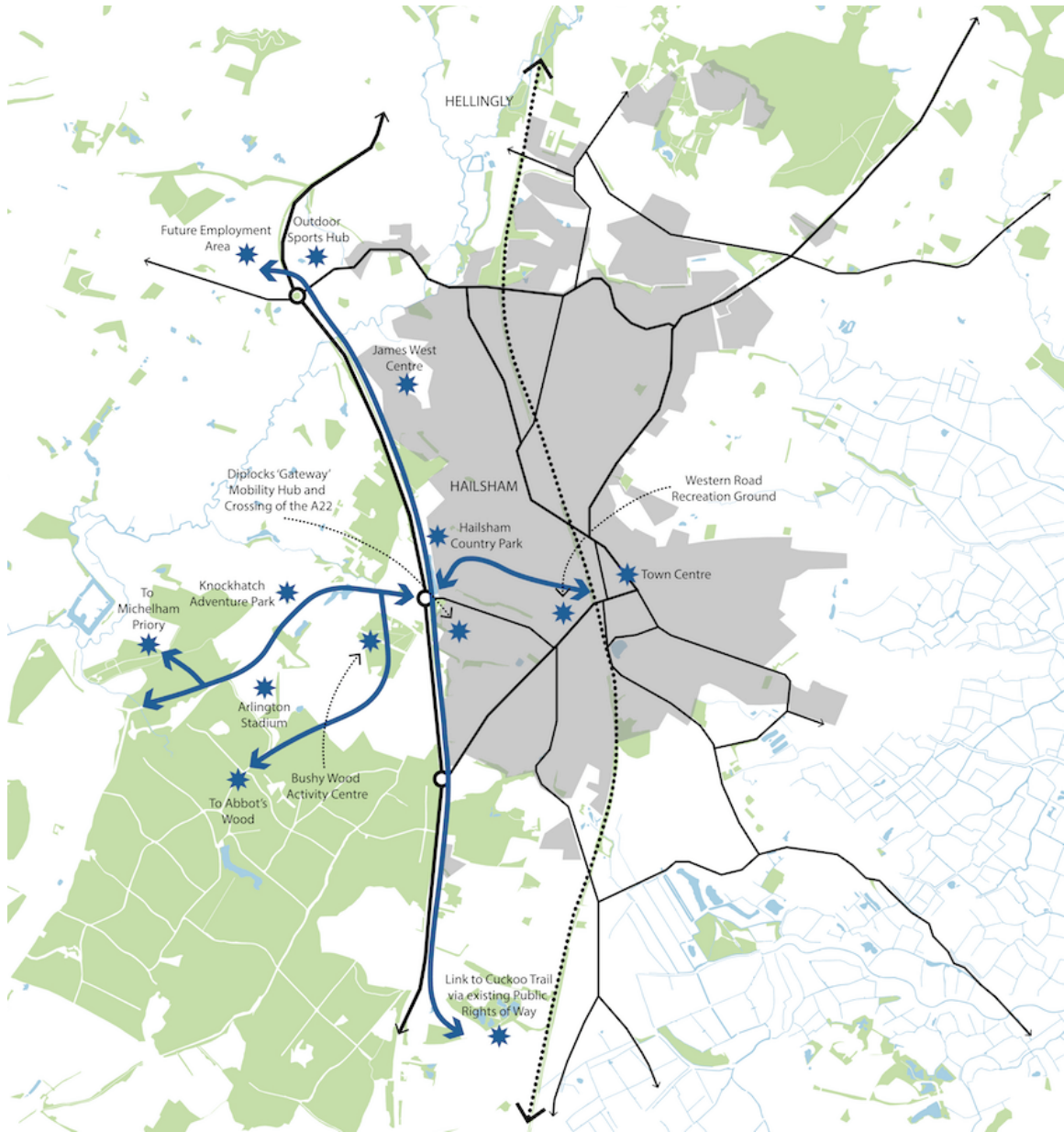
Figure 16: Potential route of the 'Hailsham Country Line', and off-road, segregated walking and cycling route linking various leisure, recreation and community use in and adjacent to Hailsham.

Figure 17: Example of segregated off-road footway and cycleway

Figure 18: Example of a pump track and skatepark (source: Kimber Park BMX Track and Skatepark)

The Cuckoo Trail

7.14   The Cuckoo Trail is a key asset for Hailsham and surrounding communities. It is the route of the former Eastbourne to Tunbridge Wells railway and now forms a fourteen-mile, mainly off-road, route for walking, cycling and horse riding (with horse riding primarily limited to that part of the route between Maynards Green and Hellingly to the north of Hailsham).

7.15   The route is well used and enjoyed on a regular basis. User Research undertaken on behalf of Wealden District Council in June 2021 by Resources for Change found that people value the traffic-free, peaceful and natural feel of the Trail, and that it offers a chance for exercise in an attractive, natural setting. However, it is considered to have greater potential. In particular, the User Research indicated that:

- The trail is in good condition overall, but the infrastructure is tired and in varied states of repair.
- Benches, tables and artwork need repair or replacement.
- There is little sense of the Trail having once been a railway, with little by way of historical, cultural or natural heritage interpretation along the Trail.
- There are few amenities along the Trail.

7.16   A set of recommendations to improve the quality of the Trail are set out in the User Research, some of which are already underway. These include:

- Protecting and enhancing the Cuckoo Trail's existing characteristics.
- Implementing a plan to improve the behaviour of trail users and manage the accumulation of litter dropped.
- Make more of the trail's railway heritage.
- Consider sites to develop as 'hubs' on the Trail.
- Make more of the Cuckoo Trail as a cycling 'spine' route.
- Promote the Trail as a 'destination'.
- Repair and renew the Trail's infrastructure.
- Targeting specific groups and activities to more of the use of the trail.

7.17   Subsequent to the User Research report WDC adopted a [Cuckoo Trail Strategy](). This seeks to enhance the Trail, in a sympathetic way, while ensuring it remains a valuable community asset. The vision for the Trail, as set out in the Strategy document, is that it:

'will become an even greater natural, economic, tourism and health and wellbeing asset. It will continue to be accessible to everyone and a resource everyone is proud of'.

7.18   Proposals that help support and facilitate improvements to the Cuckoo Trail as identified in the User Research and that help deliver the Vision for the Trail as set out in the Strategy document are welcome.

7.19 In Hailsham, opportunities which improve the connectivity between the Cuckoo Trail, town centre and residential areas will be supported, enhancing the network of active travel routes for residents and visitors to the town, and where the economic benefit of expenditure from visitors can be captured. The opportunity for a 'hub' along the Cuckoo Trail in the town centre incorporating visitor facilities was identified as a project in the first Neighbourhood Plan (Figure 19).

7.20 Much of the Cuckoo Trail in Hailsham runs off-road along the former railway line. However, parts of this have been built over, with sections of the Trail running on-road and through areas of development. Wherever possible, opportunities should be taken through development to help reconnect these sections, providing a continuous and uninterrupted route. Where this takes place, development should be set back from the Cuckoo Trail, allowing space for green infrastructure alongside this, but with development fronting onto this to create active frontages that provide natural surveillance of the route.

Figure 19: Artist's illustration of a combined visitor and mobility hub along the Cuckoo Trail, incorporating public realm improvements, wayfinding and active travel infrastructure.

Policy HaM 2: The Cuckoo Trail

1. As appropriate to their site and location, development proposals should take opportunities to deliver improvements to the quality of the Cuckoo Trail as recommended in the Cuckoo Trail User Research report and Cuckoo Trail Strategy. Proposals should:

   a. Maintain and enhance the environmental and natural landscape character of the Trail.

   b. Conserve and enhance biodiversity, including potential for connecting habitats.

   c. Improve the quality of the surface of the Trail and access to this for all users in all weather conditions.

   d. Improve existing or provide new points of access to the Cuckoo Trail that are inclusive and accessible to all, including pedestrians, people with pushchairs, people in wheelchairs and mobility scooters, and cyclists.

   e. Recognise and reinforce the railway heritage.

   f. Provide wayfinding, public art and information boards.

   g. Provide unobtrusive lighting along the Cuckoo Trail and which minimises impacts on biodiversity.

2. Opportunities that are taken through development to reconnect missing sections of the Cuckoo Trail will be supported. This should incorporate provision of new green infrastructure along the route and where development is orientated to front onto this.

3. Proposals for a 'hub' along the Cuckoo Trial in the town centre should, as appropriate to site and location, incorporate visitor and cycle facilities, including a café and toilet. The design should be sensitive to context.

Public transport

7.21 The provision of good public transport services is essential to the creation of a socially inclusive community, providing opportunities for all to access services and employment opportunities. Within Hailsham, bus links between the residential areas and town centre are important, as are those to surrounding towns and their rail services. Policy DE1 of the emerging Local Plan supports compact forms of development that prioritise safe and sustainable travel choices, including public transport.

7.22 Policy HAIL AT3 of the made Neighbourhood Plan set out the approach to public transport provision in Hailsham. This reflected the clear preference expressed through consultation for improved non-car-based transport options. This message has been reiterated through consultation on the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. Indeed, the growth of Hailsham and adjacent areas over recent years has led to an increase in traffic and parking across the town and in the town centre specifically, and this threatens to detract from the quality and character of the centre.

7.23 The quality and frequency of bus services is limited across parts of Hailsham at present (Figure 20), with many of those who can, travelling by car instead. Whilst it is accepted that people will continue to travel by car, the Neighbourhood Plan aims to create the conditions that encourage safe, attractive and efficient travel by alternative modes, and which provide people with the choice and opportunity to travel by foot, bike or public transport.

7.24 Public transport, walking and wheeling should become attractive propositions for people to use. The quality of infrastructure, as well as routes and services, should be enhanced. This means, for example, wider and better pedestrian crossing facilities, improved street furniture and less street clutter, dedicated cycle lanes, comfortable and informative bus shelters. Indeed, providing for good walking and wheeling conditions, and improved public transport services, helps reduce congestion (see, for example, research by Civitas for the EU) and carbon emissions from vehicles, bringing environmental benefits. In terms of good quality bus provision, a frequent service, in the context of Hailsham, is one that operates every twenty to thirty minutes (or more frequently) throughout the day and which is also supported by provision of live travel information and bus waiting facilities.

7.25 Given the potential for significant residential development in Hailsham arising from the emerging Local Plan, there is likely to be a particular need for the delivery of new bus routes that connect new growth areas to the existing town centre and wider neighbourhoods. In these circumstances new routes within residential developments should incorporate sustainable, safe, and effective infrastructure that supports bus use. Where it is practicable to do so, bus stops should be located such that they are within walking distance (400m) of all residents and have sheltered waiting facilities with real-time updates on bus times.
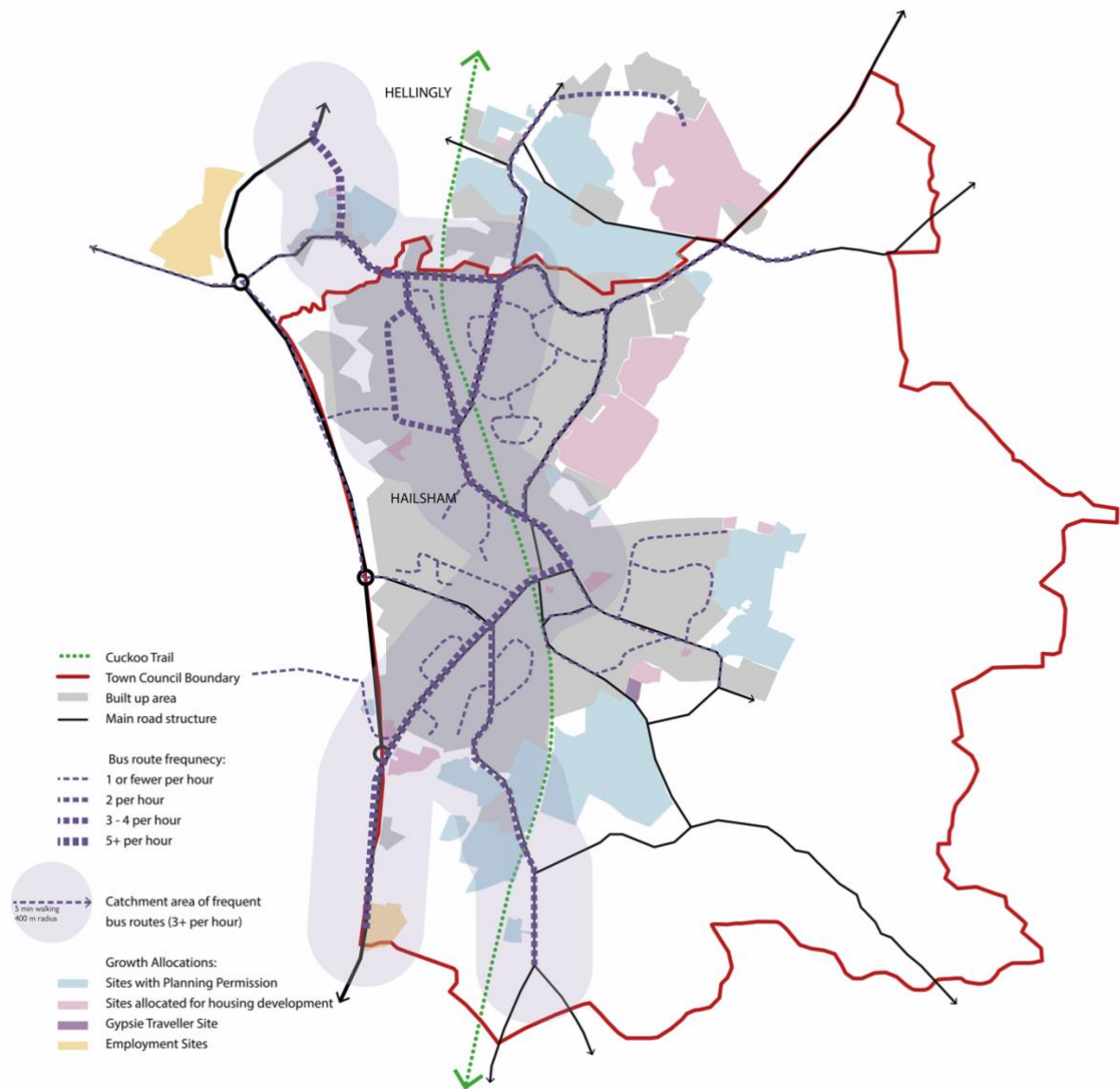
Figure 20: Plan showing the bus network in Hailsham and the walking catchment (equivalent to a distance of 400 metres) around the most frequent services. This indicates that, despite recent and proposed growth, the southeast and northeast of the town are lacking in services and are thus areas where interventions are required to help support a move to sustainable forms of travel.

7.26   Existing bus services in the south and east of Hailsham are relatively infrequent. It is an area that has amongst the highest proportion of households ranked as being within the indices of deprivation in the Neighbourhood Plan area and is thus an area where good public transport services are needed. However, the street network is narrow in places and, combined with the scale of growth that has taken place, is an area where it may be difficult to accommodate improvements. Alternatives to traditional bus service models may need investigating, including extension of community-based bus services.

7.27   Cuckmere Community buses operate three routes four days-a-week around Hailsham. This is a highly valued resource, albeit the frequency of services is fairly limited. Ongoing support for and investment in these services is essential.

7.28   Other gaps in the network include those to the northeast of town, along Battle Road. As a major growth area for development in the emerging Local Plan (at this stage), this represents an opportunity for improving the frequency of service and integrating development and public transport services. Other gaps include the link north from Hailsham into neighbouring Hellingly, serving the Academy, Country Park and Community Hub, and where provision of new and extended bus routes may help relieve pressure on the traffic network in Hailsham.

> ## Policy HaM 3: Public transport
>
> 1. As appropriate to the size, nature and location of development, proposals should support improvement to bus services and/or associated infrastructure.
>
> 2. Major new development should be:
>
>   a. located within walking distance (400 metres) of a frequent bus service, with the 400-metre distancing referring to the actual walking distance as opposed to as the crow flies distances, or
>   b. where proposals for major development are outside of the 400-metre walking distance of a bus stop, they are able to incorporate new bus routes and services for residents.
>
> 3. Streets designed for bus use in new development will be required to optimise the placemaking function of the street. Proposals for street design should have regard to the Hailsham Design Guide & Code.
>
> 4. Where new bus shelters are provided these should incorporate green roofs and real time travel information, powered by solar panels or micro wind turbines incorporated into the structure of the shelter. The co-location of bus stops with new or improved walking and cycle infrastructure is encouraged.

Community mobility hubs

7.29   Consultation responses supported a need for improved travel choices and solutions across Hailsham, including an integrated network of sustainable travel that enables people to move around safely and easily by bus, foot and bike.

7.30   The most recent iteration of the East Sussex County Council Local Transport Plan (LTP4) identifies Hailsham as an important local centre serving a mainly rural area and where improvements to intra-urban as well as rural bus services are to be delivered. Improvements to intra-urban bus services identified in LTP4 include those between Hailsham and Tunbridge Wells, between Hailsham, Lewes and Eastbourne, and between Hailsham and Hastings. The aspiration set out in LTP4 is that Hailsham will become an important hub for wider transport services, alongside which improvements to the local walking and wheeling network are supported, making these a safer and more attractive proposition for shorter, everyday journeys.

7.31   To support use of sustainable travel modes (e.g., bus, walking and wheeling), and help realise the wider aspirations in LTP4, a network of strategically located mobility hubs across the county is proposed. These will allow for improved interchange between different modes of travel, including use of the car, and enhance the experience of using public transport, making greater use of real time travel information and designing the hubs to best reflect the character of the local environment and needs of local users.

7.32   Mobility hubs can be broadly defined as:

A place where a variety of travel modes are provided, often co-located with community services, providing a range of day-to-day services, supporting easy interchange between sustainable travel options.

7.33   LTP4 envisages two strategically located mobility hubs in Hailsham associated with the delivery of intra-urban bus routes. However, to support their use, they need to be supplemented by a network of more localised hubs, supporting connection with and movement between the home and other important destinations and places of interest, such as the town centre, places of work, social and community facilities.

7.34   Alongside LTP4 the County Council has also published a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). It presents more locally specific projects (than in LTP4) and initiatives that are intended to help make walking and wheeling the mode of choice for people, particularly for shorter, everyday journeys. Delivery of local interventions in the LCWIP thus go hand-in-hand with more strategic initiatives established in LTP4.

7.35   In Hailsham the concept of the mobility hub be scaled up, or down, depending on location, and extend to a network of hubs across the area providing a range of travel choices for all, reducing reliance on private car ownership and use, and the impacts of this on congestion, air quality, health and well-being.

7.36   Beyond their main transport related focus, the concept of the mobility hub can be expanded to include a range of social and community services and facilities, functioning as a community hub/kiosk and including, as appropriate, facilities such as parcel collection points, community rooms, toilets, changing place facilities, share points or similar, waste and recycling facilities.

7.37   The expansion of the mobility hub as a community space can provide an opportunity for residents to meet and liaise with neighbours, to find out more about activities, events and proposals in their area, and to become more involved in helping shape these. This can act as a 'living room' for the neighbourhood in which they are located, allowing residents to actively participate in decision making that effects their area. They can help contribute towards meeting the need for community facilities across Hailsham as a whole.

7.38   In Hailsham, mobility hubs should be safe and accessible spaces which act as a focal point for car and bicycle sharing and hire (as well as other personal micro mobility forms of transport), bicycle repairs, travel information and bus stops. The hubs may take the form of a kit of parts, being scaled up or down according to location and community needs.

7.39   Key locations for mobility hubs in Hailsham (Figure 21) potentially include:

- A site adjacent to the A22 Hailsham Bypass and Diplocks Way roundabout, acting as a potential 'Park and Ride' facility, connecting people with intra-urban bus routes and improved 'last-mile' connections between this and immediate surrounding area including (a) local bus services via Diplocks Way into Hailsham Town Centre and (b) new and upgraded walking and wheeling routes potentially involving reuse of the foot tunnel under the A22 and creation of a well-defined route into the town centre via Western Road, avoiding conflicts with heavy good vehicles in the Diplocks Way employment area (Figure 22). This is closely aligned with ideas consulted on by East Sussex County Council in the A22 Active Travel consultation undertaken in late 2024.

- A site in the town centre, possibly along North Street or involving the reconfiguration of the South Road car park. This is located at the confluence of the Cuckoo Trail and other walking and bus routes, and which would allow for interchange between various modes, as well as being in close proximity to the town centre, sports and leisure facilities. Provision of a mobility hub here would represent a reinterpretation of its former role as the location of Hailsham railway station. It would act as a welcoming arrival point into the town centre and could be combined with an integrated visitor centre, café and toilet, maximising the role and potential of the Cuckoo Trial as a recreational visitor route to and through Hailsham.
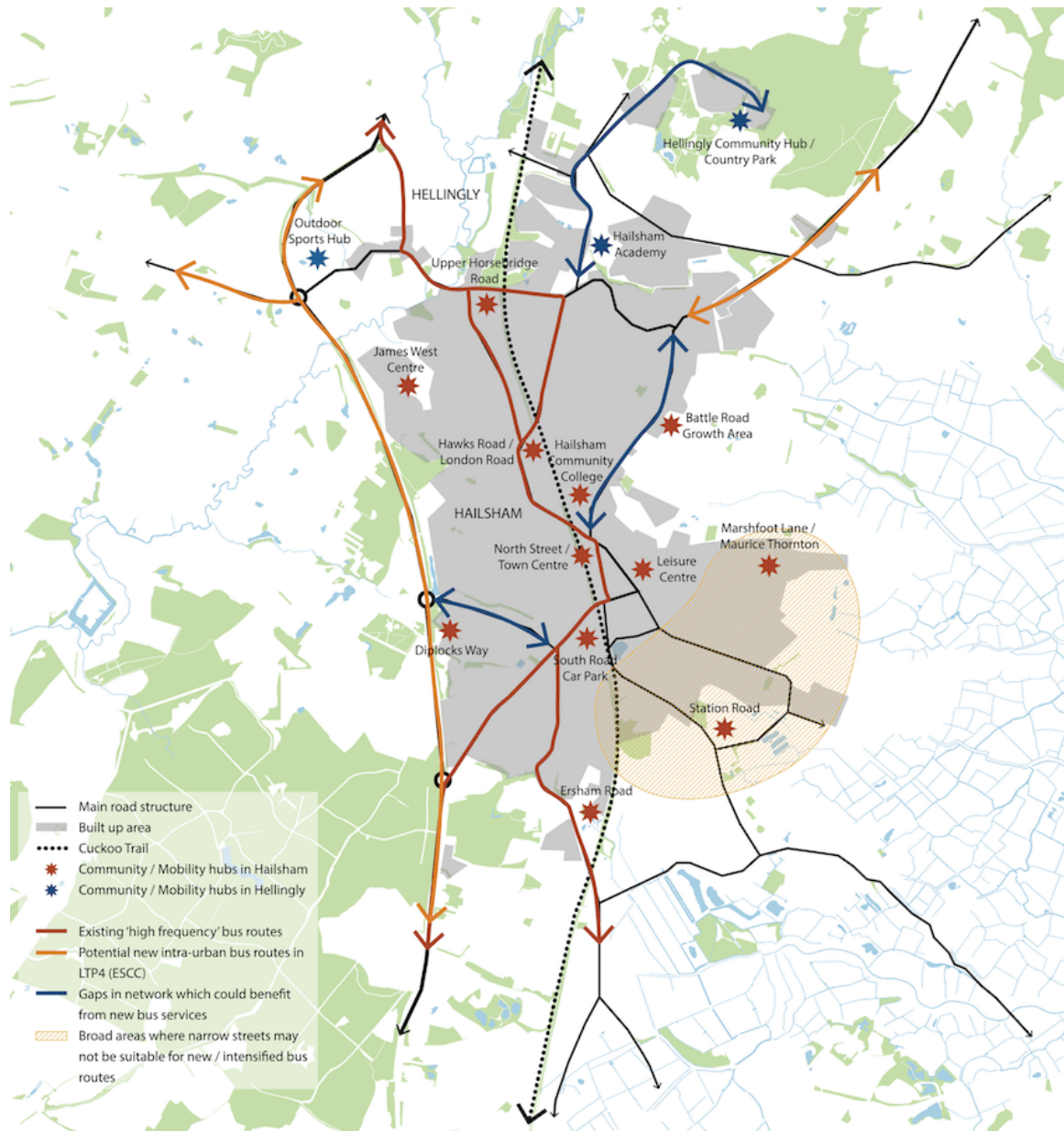
Figure 21: Potential mobility hub locations in Hailsham and neighbouring Hellingly, and which also indicates existing 'high' frequency bus service routes as well as potential for additional interventions, including new bus routing and community bus services that supplement the network.

Walking and cycling
route via Western Road

Town Centre 'Mobility Hub' on
North Street combined with
cycle routes, Cuckoo Trail, bus
services and car parking

HOMES

COUNTRY
PARK

TOWN
CENTRE

SPORT &
LEISURE

LEISURE &
RECREATION

LOCAL
JOBS

'Mobility Hub'
Uses and destinations

Bus service
Cycle route

Park and Ride
'Mobility Hub'

Walking and cycling route
across (or via tunnel) A22

'Inter-urban' bus route via
Diplocks and Town Centre

South Road / Cuckoo Trail
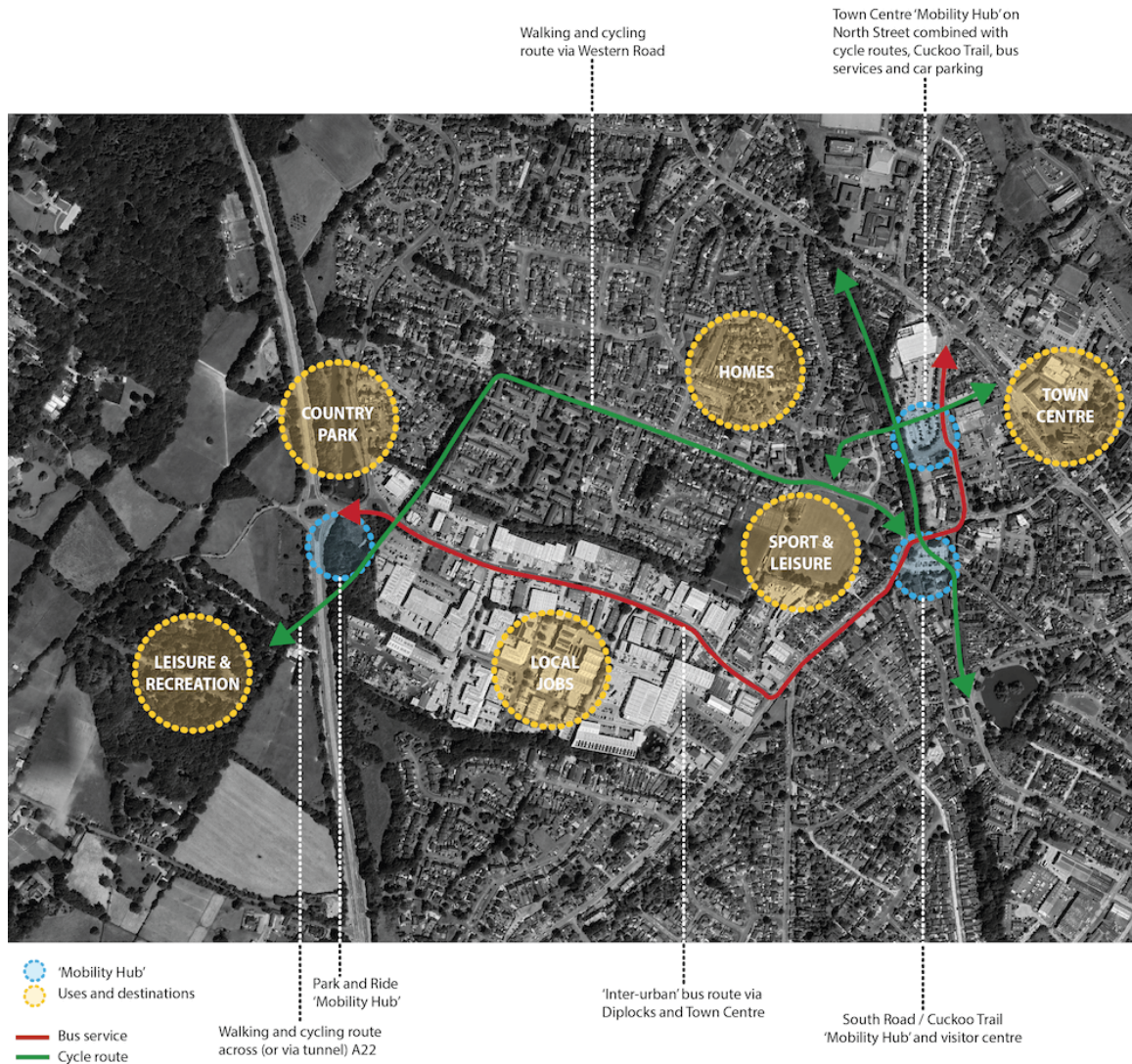'Mobility Hub' and visitor centre

Figure 22: Plan indicating the potential for linking a combined mobility hub / Park and Ride facility at the A22 with mobility hubs in the town centre and which serve a range of uses and activities.

7.40   Other potential locations for mobility hubs in the town centre include the Leisure Centre. Various locations along the Cuckoo Trail may also offer scope for introductions of mobility hubs, particularly where opportunities exist to integrate the walking and wheeling network with frequent bus routes and community facilities. Other existing community facilities and areas of new growth may also be a focus for provision of mobility hubs.

7.41   To the south and east of the town, mobility hubs could be located within existing communities and or close to new growth areas, particularly where existing bus services are limited, and the nature of the street network means provision of such services may be difficult to achieve. As such, community mobility hubs that provide alternative transport choices to the car will be important to prioritise. Other transport solutions, including community-based bus services could also be investigated.

7.42 Opportunities for smaller scale hubs could also be provided across other parts of Hailsham, particularly where space might exist to expand existing bus waiting facilities with bicycle parking and other facilities. All such locations should be tested in the first instance, through the use of trial projects or 'Pop up Mobility Hubs'. These would help understand how the hubs might be used, the mix of components to provide and scale of demand, long-term, for implementation across Hailsham. Pop up Hubs would be similar in concept to a parklet that can easily be reconfigured and moved to different locations, incorporating features such as planting, seating, cycle parking, wayfinding and information about transport wider transport choices.

7.43 Mobility hubs are often designed as part of a public realm programme, creating new public space and greenery. The redesign and reallocation of space (and where that might also help address concerns about on-street parking raised during the initial consultation) is intended to enhance the experience of travellers as well as benefiting local residents and businesses. Where such hubs are to be provided, they should be designed to avoid conflict between users of different transport modes, and where any technology or cabling associated with e-vehicles or similar is incorporated, should avoid causing obstruction or hindrance to pedestrian movement. The Mobility Hub Guidance published by CoMoUK provides advice on the components of a mobility hub and how they might be implemented, drawing on a range of case studies.

7.44 The siting and design of mobility hubs and combined community facilities should ideally be developed in partnership between the Town Council, County Council and infrastructure service providers, facilitating a coordinated approach to delivery.

7.45 In order for the shift towards micro and personal mobility to be successful the delivery of new mobility solutions should go hand in hand with the provision of new infrastructure, such as safe cycle lanes and walking routes. The LCWIP supports delivery of a series of new and improved walking and wheeling route across Hailsham, with the Cuckoo Trial being the central spine, supported by a network of routes between this, the town centre and surrounding residential areas. The design and delivery of these should accord with best practice principles set out in national guidance.

Policy HaM 4: Community mobility hubs

1. Proposals for Community Mobility hubs in Hailsham should support active and sustainable travel.

2. Community Mobility hubs may be designed as a kit of parts and incorporate some or all of the following features:

   a. Bus waiting facilities and travel time information.
   b. Secure cycle parking facilities, including space for cargo bikes and docking points for cycle and scooter hire as appropriate.
   c. Facilities for the basic maintenance of bicycles.
   d. Car club parking and communal EV charging points.
   e. Parcel delivery and collection points.
   f. Community kiosks and associated facilities, including toilets, changing places, share points, community rooms, waste and recycling facilities, and small retail space.
   g. Areas of planting and seating.

3. Proposals for 'Pop up Mobility Hubs' on a trial basis should help establish appropriate locations and facilities to be provided on a permanent basis.

4. Proposals that integrate mobility hubs with existing bus stops should be designed to retain the operational requirements of the bus service.

5. All Community Mobility Hubs are required to meet the accreditation standards established by CoMoUK. They must be of a high-quality design appropriate to the townscape and located to avoid hindrance to pedestrians.

Electric vehicles

7.46 Policy HAIL AQ1 of the made Neighbourhood Plan was set in the context of the increasing use of electric vehicles, the phasing out of the sale of non-electric (internal combustion engine) vehicles, and the desire to improve air quality in Hailsham. This is reflected in the emerging Local Plan which supports development that incorporates electric charging facilities as required under Part S of the Building Regulations.

7.47 Guidance on [Parking at New Developments](#) published by East Sussex County Council outlines design considerations for provision of charging points in residential and non-residential developments, and in communal areas. The County Council supports the provision of charging hubs in key destinations, such as town centres and where the clustering of charging points will help reduce street clutter.

7.48 In Hailsham, the roll out of electric vehicle charging points in the public realm and communal areas is supported by the Town Council, particularly where provided alongside walking, wheeling and public transport services, including integration within community mobility hubs, and where technology can be upgraded in future to allow for rapid (or faster: see Glossary) or wireless charging.

7.49 Where such technology is provided, either as part of a mobility hub or as a stand-alone charging point, it must be sensitively sited and designed such that it does not cause obstruction within the public realm (i.e.: the charging points and cables should not be placed where they would cause obstruction to and impede pedestrian movement, wheeling and cycling).

Policy HaM 5: Electric vehicle charging points

1. Proposed electric vehicle (EV) charging points should be located sensitively to avoid harmful impacts on pedestrian circulation and the immediate appearance of the street scene and townscape. Infrastructure shall be designed to minimise visual clutter, hindrance and hazard to pedestrians, cyclists and other street users.

2. Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for the retrofitting of existing on and off-street parking to include EV charging points is welcome.

3. Wherever possible, EV charging infrastructure, such as cabling, should be provided in such a way that it can be expanded in the future to provide additional charging points as appropriate, and where it can be upgraded to incorporate faster than rapid and or wireless charging technology.

Street maintenance

7.50   During consultation the maintenance of streets was raised as a concern by many people, referring to the presence of potholes in the carriageway as well as uneven pavements, causing particular hindrance to those with mobility impairments and others undertaking some form of wheeling (e.g., pushing a buggy).

7.51   East Sussex Highways is responsible for the maintenance of public roads and footpaths in Hailsham. Services include the repair of potholes, drains, road markings, signage and streetlights. Private or unadopted roads are the responsibility of the owner to maintain.

7.52   Funding for maintenance is derived form a combination of council tax, business rates and government grants (i.e., capital funding). Problems can be reported direct to East Sussex Highways.

7.53   Responsibility for collecting litter and sweeping streets falls to Wealden District Council. The District Council also installs, maintains and empties the majority of litter bins in Wealden. Problems can be reported direct to the District Council.

8. Green and blue infrastructure

Introduction

8.1 Green infrastructure generally refers to the network of multi-functional green space which includes natural open space, parkland, woodland, sports fields, gardens, allotments and the like. Blue infrastructure refers to water-related features in urban and rural landscapes, including rivers, ponds, lakes, streams and wetlands. The combination of green and blue infrastructure provides an inter-connected network supporting biodiversity, access to nature, water quality, and general health and wellbeing.

8.2 The NPPF, through Chapter 15, recognises the importance of conserving and protecting the natural environment. This importance is also reflected through the passing of the Environment Act which, coupled with the declaration of the Climate Emergency by Wealden District Council, has raised awareness of the value and importance of biodiversity and natural habitats.

8.3 The Wealden District Core Strategy notes that the district, as a whole has significant biodiversity and geodiversity interest, and that the network of existing green infrastructure across the district should be protected, improved and enhanced. This is expanded upon in the emerging Local Plan, which emphasises the diverse and distinctive landscape of the district. It establishes a 'mini vision' that seeks to: protect and enhance biodiversity, as well as delivering net gains; protect and improving water environments; and maintain and improve the quality and connectivity of green and blue infrastructure, functional habitats and access to nature.

8.4 The network of accessible open and green space in Hailsham is illustrated in Figure 23. The Wealden Open Space Study (see Parish Summaries) indicates that, in Hailsham, there is sufficient access to all types of open space, but that the quality of many of these falls below established thresholds and that the overall quantity of provision falls well below standards. In particular, there is a significant shortfall in the provision of natural and semi-natural green space across Hailsham. This is highlighted in the Green Infrastructure mapping published by Natural England which shows that, against Access to Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt), the majority of Hailsham lacks access to natural green space at the doorstep, local and neighbourhood scales. This is particularly pronounced in the town centre where the 'greenness grid' map layer indicates that a high proportion of the land is man-made. Limited provision of and lack of access to nature and green infrastructure has implications for health and well-being, leisure and social exclusion.

8.5 The need for new and improved green space was identified as a key message in the consultation across all age groups. Key priorities were highlighted as protecting and enhancing green spaces, planting more trees and creating areas for wildlife and

nature. Targeted engagement with younger members of the community also drew attention to green space, with a clear desire expressed for better and more varied leisure, recreation and play space.

8.6   The Hailsham Design Guide & Code establishes principles in respect of natural green space and how this should be successfully integrated within development. It also points to good practice guidance in respect of retrofitting existing streets and spaces to introduce green infrastructure. This also extends to the retrofitting of existing buildings to incorporate aspects such as green walls and roofs, the introduction of swift bricks, nest boxes and bat bricks, and making space in gardens for hedgehog highways. Proposals that involve new development or which retrofit existing streets and buildings will be expected to have regard to the Design Guide & Code.
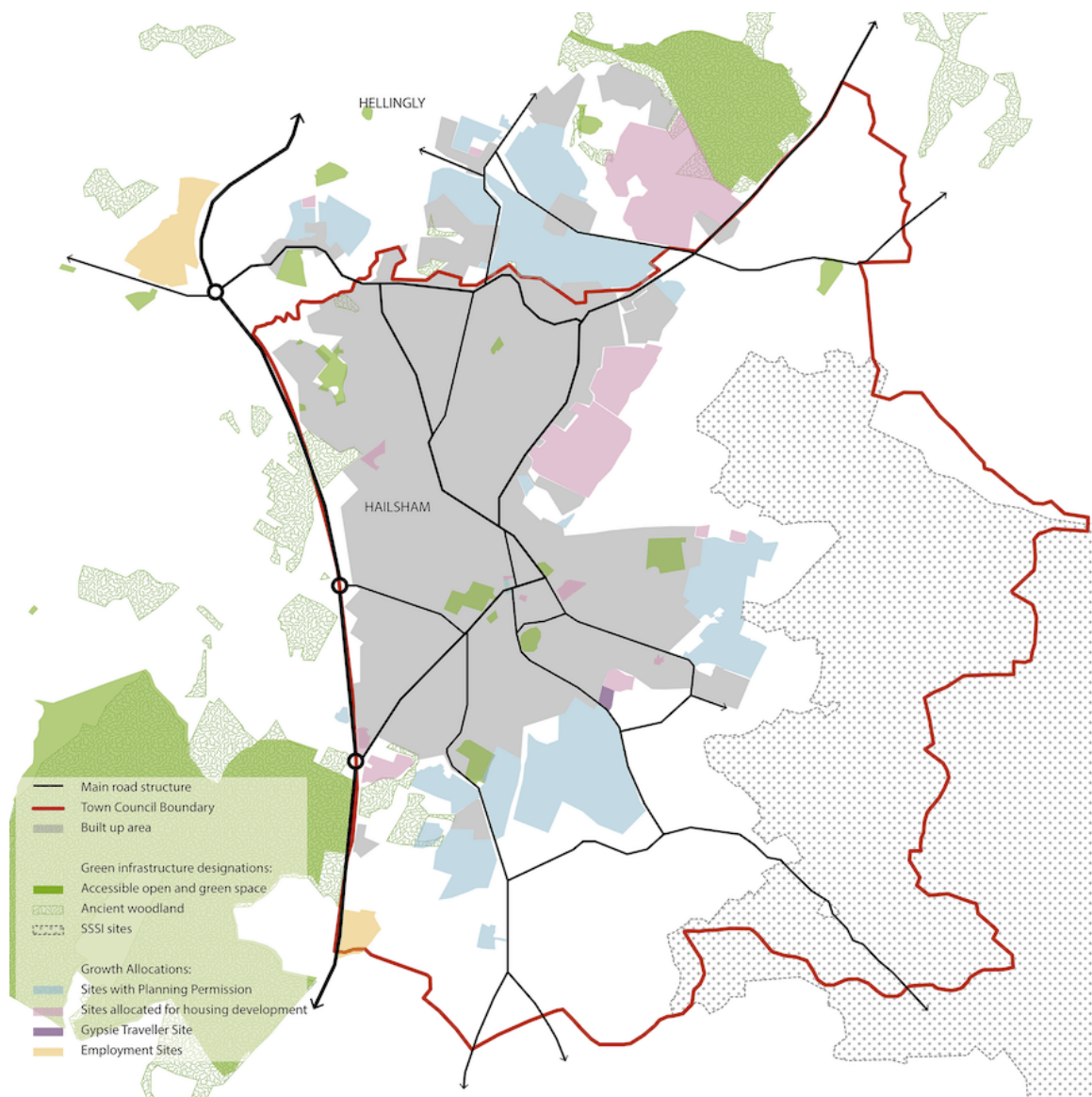
Figure 23: Plan showing network of accessible open and green space in Hailsham, areas of Ancient Woodland and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Biodiversity

8.7   The Environment Act requires developers to deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity net gain, measured through application of the Natural England Biodiversity Metric. This applies to all proposals for development, other than where exempt by national guidance. Exemptions include, but not limited to, householder applications, and self or custom build schemes of less than ten homes and on a site no larger than 0.5 hectares.

8.8   Where net gains are provided it is important that they are appropriate to the local landscape, support landscape continuity and create high quality habitats. The Wildlife Trusts envisage creation of a Nature Recovery Network, with greenery integrated into all development and resulting in a net gain for wildlife. It is proposed that nature is brought back into the places where people live their lives, also having a positive impact on health and wellbeing.

8.9   Development should be planned in such a way that avoids habitat loss and fragmentation, and opportunities should be taken to improve ecological connectivity where appropriate. The retention and provision of green and blue Infrastructure should ensure permeability for wildlife through development and provide sufficient beneficial habitat to support target species, independent of its connective function.

8.10   Within Hailsham, existing green spaces present opportunities to create a network of connected green corridors. These are illustrated on Figure 24 and reflect opportunities previously identified in the Wealden Green Infrastructure Study. They include existing routes and corridors which could be enhanced through additional planting and diversification of green space, including the Cuckoo Trail and, on the boundary of the Plan area, the Cuckmere River and the green corridor running alongside the A22. These follow established landscaped corridors and, in respect of the A22, also connect important and well-established wildlife habitats and natural spaces along the corridor, including Hailsham Country Park and Abbot's Wood.

8.11   The network of green spaces in Hailsham also presents an opportunity to use these as stepping stones to create a connected east west corridor that connects town with country, strengthening the relationship with the landscape setting of the town. Opportunities that are taken to introduce biodiversity on site, or which take the form of street greening interventions, would help link these spaces and the ability of species to move between them. This would help connect the Pevensey Levels with Abbots Wood via the Country Park, Western Road Recreation Ground, Cuckoo Trail and green spaces in the town centre, including the grounds of the Church, and incidental green spaces in between.

8.12 New (and existing) development might help create connected green corridors through:

- Provision of generous front and back gardens, with permeable surfaces and including the planting of locally native trees and shrubs.

- Alignment of back gardens where possible to provide for continuous wildlife corridors, with bird boxes or bricks in walls installed to enhance biodiversity and wildlife.

- Protection and enhancement of existing green spaces, including provision of new spaces in development, and which should be carefully located in order to maximise their potential as a habitat for wildlife.

- Retention of and planting of new trees and hedgerows, supporting the resilience of green network.

- Extension of green infrastructure through provision of green walls and roofs.

- Protection and safeguarding of natural open spaces from necessary or potentially damaging human interaction.

8.13 Provision of biodiversity net gain should follow the biodiversity gain hierarchy established by Defra and, ideally, be accommodated on site or, if that is not feasible, as close as possible to the application site. Applicants are encouraged to consult with WDC and the Town Council as to proposed sites for any biodiversity net gain measures, including off-site measures, and which may involve improvements to the wider green infrastructure network. Opportunities for off-site biodiversity net gain may potentially present themselves through the diversification and remodelling of existing streets and spaces, introducing green infrastructure into these (see, for example, Projects PAS-01, PRG-01 and SGI-01), and through the diversification of existing green spaces which are currently little more than areas of mown grass (see, for example, Figure 27).

8.14 Research published by Wildlife and Countryside Link has found that, nationwide, the amount of land secured for offsite habitat creation and enhancement is well below that expected by the Government: only 13% of the land area that Defra had estimated as being generated annually for net gain purposes has actually being secured. The cascade approach set out in the Neighbourhood Plan thus directs net gain to the site in the first instance, followed by delivery close to or elsewhere within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary. This is to reduce the risk of non-delivery and or net gains being made remote from the actual site and location where change is taking place.

8.15   Lighting within and around development is expected to respect the ecological functionality of movement corridors. Certain species of invertebrate and mammal are highly sensitive to inappropriate lighting. In these circumstances surveys are expected to determine where these movement corridors are and measures put forward that demonstrate how these will be protected and enhanced.
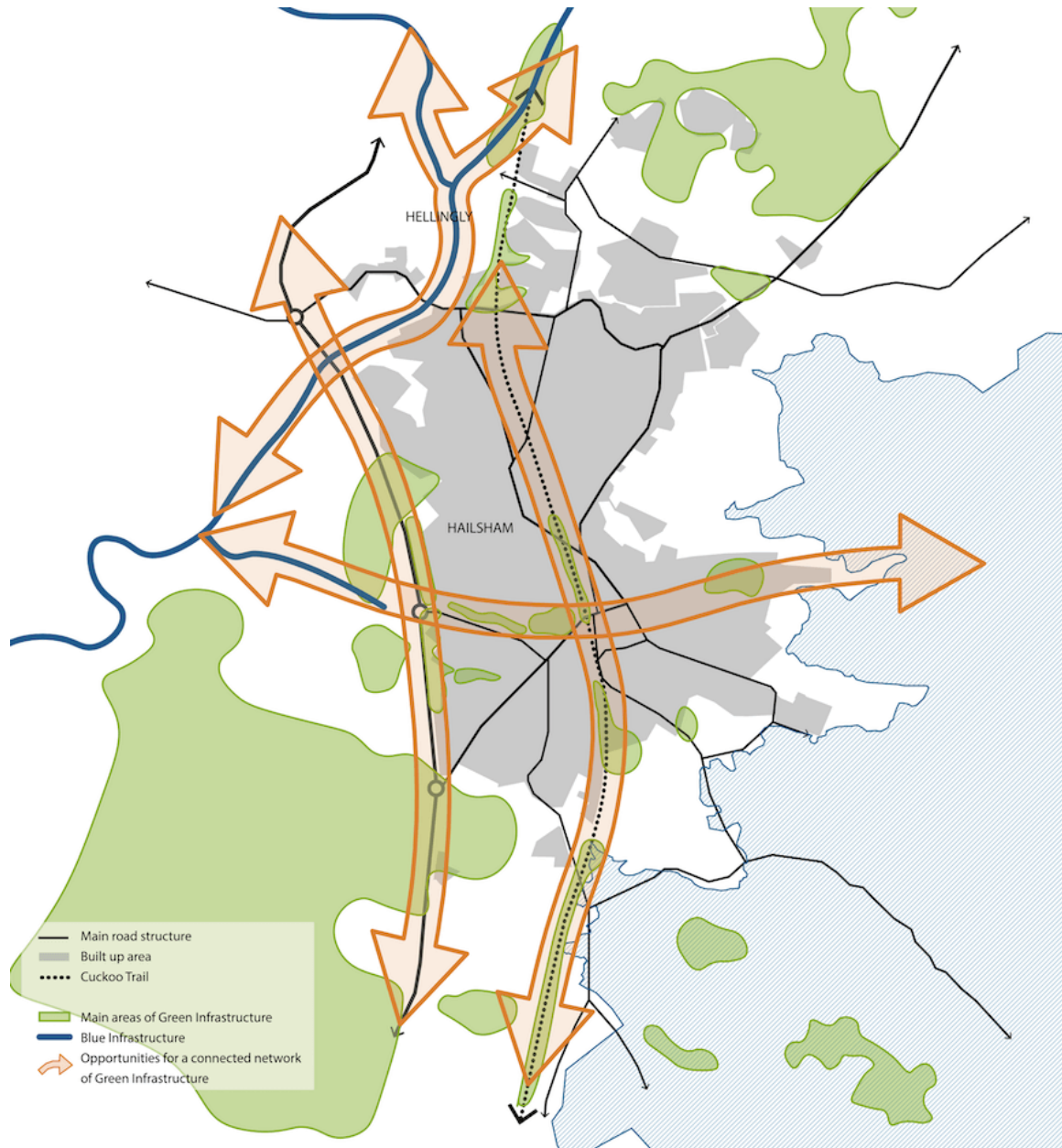

Figure 24: Map showing town-wide green corridors in Hailsham

Policy HaGI 1: Biodiversity

1. Other than where exempt by national guidance, proposals for development must secure a minimum biodiversity net gain of 10% (or greater, subject to minimum requirements established through the emerging Local Plan) following a cascade approach:

    a. Opportunities should be taken to provide and enhance biodiversity on-site in the first instance.

    b. Where on-site delivery is not feasible off-site enhancements should be delivered as close to the site as feasible within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

    c. The purchase of statutory biodiversity credits in lieu of biodiversity net gains or delivery elsewhere in Wealden will only be supported where the applicant has been able to demonstrate that both on and off-site delivery in the Plan area is not feasible.

2. New green infrastructure should provide functional permeability for wildlife through and around development, and allow for movement of nocturnal wildlife, with the impact of lighting and glare minimised, having regard to Guidance Note 08/18 published by the Institute of Lighting Professionals.

3. Development must not cause fragmentation of existing green corridors and, where appropriate to the site, should take opportunities to deliver missing links that connect the network green spaces within a corridor.

4. Plant species should be appropriate to the microclimatic conditions of the proposed location over the longer term and, as appropriate, support habitats for local wildlife.

5. Wherever practicable, and as appropriate to the site:

    a. Development proposals should safeguard existing trees and hedgerows in their layouts and, where appropriate, incorporate them within green areas, open spaces and alongside walking and cycling routes.

    b. Landscaping should consist of species appropriate for the site's growing conditions wherever practicable.

    c. Swift bricks, bat boxes, hedgehog corridors and similar should be integrated into new buildings and gardens, as well as extensions to homes and other buildings.

    d. Development should incorporate new street planting and provide new green infrastructure within the existing street, including the remodelling of existing streets and diversification of existing green spaces.

    e. New street planting and other green infrastructure should help link existing green spaces to create a connected network of spaces and habitats.

Access to green and blue infrastructure

8.16 Major areas of green infrastructure include Abbots Wood and the collection of leisure and recreation facilities to the west of the A22. The A22 however forms a major barrier to movement, particularly for those without access to a car. The Hellingly Country Park and new outdoor sports hub being delivered by Wealden District Council to the north of Hailsham also represent assets for use by the Hailsham community but where access is also limited.

8.17 The Neighbourhood Plan area does benefit from an extensive network of public rights of way and permissive footpaths, as illustrated on the East Sussex public rights of way map (a definitive print version if also available). All such routes should be retained, incorporated and enhanced, wherever possible, within proposals for development. This includes new crossing points which break highways barriers.

8.18 The County Council is currently in the process of preparing a new Public Rights of Way Access Plan, updating the previous Improvement Plan. As appropriate, development should help contribute to improvements identified within this. Any improvements to these or proposed new routes that complement the existing network of public rights of way, should be delivered in accordance with best practice principles for design and maintenance. Handbooks for cycle route design and greenway management published by Sustrans are a source of best practice for implementing and maintaining routes for all. Equally, guidance in DfT LTN 1/20 (or successor document to this) shall be referred to.

> ### Policy HaGI 2: Access to green and blue infrastructure
>
> 1. All development, where practical, should take opportunities afforded by site location to improve access to green and blue infrastructure that supports walking, wheeling and cycling.
>
> 2. Wherever possible, routes should connect, extend or improve existing conditions, allowing for continuous and direct access.
>
> 3. The design of routes should be appropriate to context and the environmental character of the area.
>
> 4. Routes should be suitable for use in all weather conditions, be well signed and clearly defined.

Street greening initiatives

8.19   In addition to improving access to existing green infrastructure so opportunities should be taken to provide new infrastructure closer to home. Strong support was expressed through consultation for street greening initiatives, including planting of new street trees. This importance of trees is specifically referenced in the NPPF, which notes (at paragraph 136) that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, as well as helping mitigate and adapt to climate change.

8.20   The existing network of streets within Hailsham includes, in places, mown grass verges. These provide scope to integrate street tree planting and other landscaping, including raingardens and planting of wildflowers. This would transform the nature of the urban environment, providing a link between the built area and surrounding green space, whilst also enhancing biodiversity and flood management. Replanting mown verges with wildflowers would also bring cost benefits, reducing the need for regular maintenance. Extending the tree canopy cover, through new tree planting, would also provide areas of natural shade.

8.21   The Town centre has been identified as an area lacking in green infrastructure and while other, mainly residential areas in Hailsham feature amenity spaces such as grass verges which can be used to deliver street greening initiatives, the town centre is deficient in these. Opportunities that are taken to make more effective use of the public realm and existing highway space in Hailsham are welcome where they help create new amenity space suitable for accommodating street greening schemes.

Project SGI-01: Street greening

The Town Council is keen to promote delivery of greener streets throughout Hailsham and hopes to work with partner organisations, including Wealden District Council and East Sussex County Council, as appropriate, to explore how underused green spaces and roadside verges might be better used to increase biodiversity value, provide new wildlife habitats and space for local food production. This could also involve the remodelling of large, over engineered road junctions, providing new areas of greenery on otherwise underutilised space and enhancing the setting of the area (Figure 25). This would also help manage local traffic speeds and support safer movement for pedestrians and cyclists.

Reuse of such space for raingardens and wildflower meadows is also encouraged and would also help manage surface water run-off. These may act as a network of 'B-Lines' allowing bees, butterflies and other insect pollinators to extend their range, connecting the built-up area with surrounding green spaces and creating a connected green infrastructure network. The associated management and maintenance regimes would be agreed with the relevant authorities.

Bus shelters fitted with green roofs

Realignment of junction allows road space to be reused as a community garden

Raingardens installed along the street

Soft landscaping introduced within widened footway

Raised crossing improves connections with green space

New tree planting alongside street in existing green space

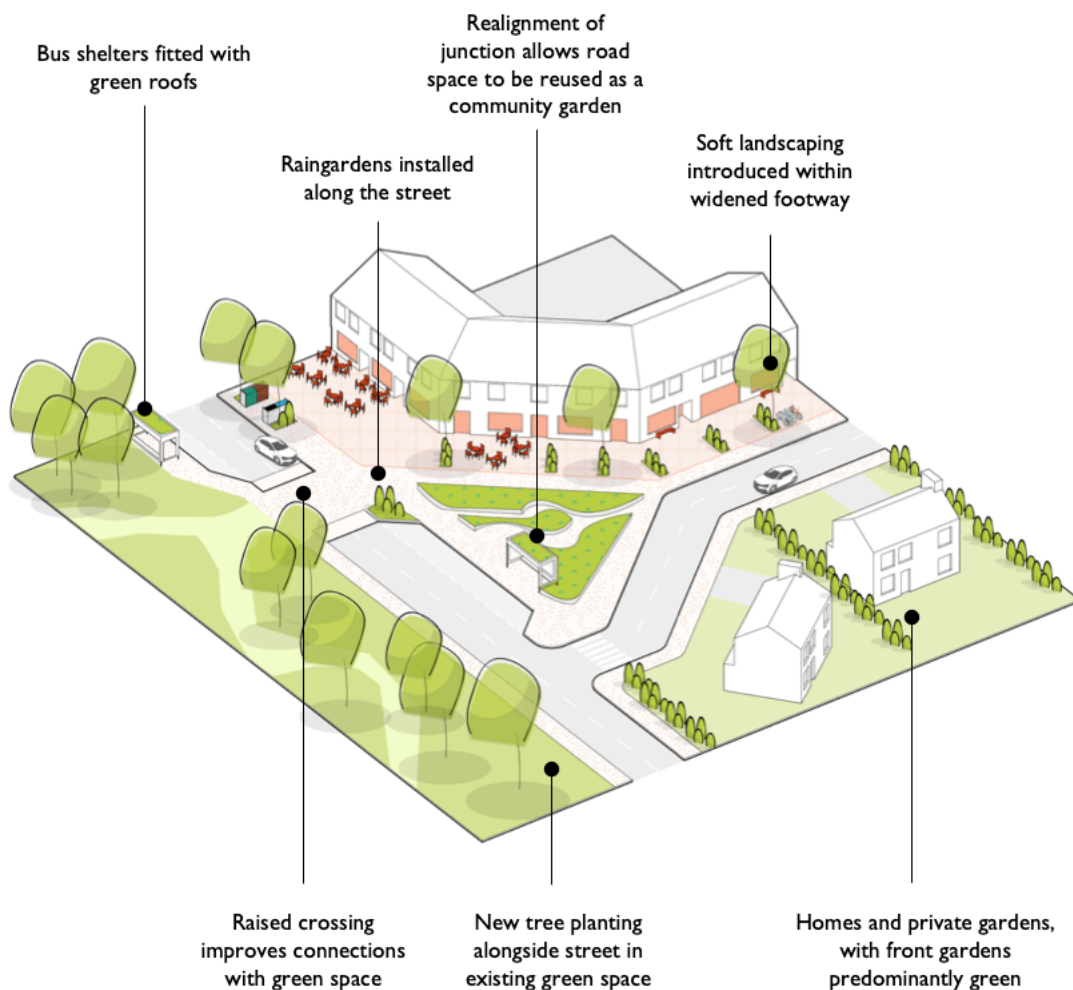Homes and private gardens, with front gardens predominantly green

Figure 25: Example illustration showing how an existing street environment might be remodelled to facilitate the introduction of new green infrastructure

8.22   The Town Farm Estate in Hailsham is one example where opportunities for targeted interventions could take place, improving the network of existing amenity spaces. Although benefitting from extensive areas of greenery integral to the layout of the area, these spaces are mono-functional and offer little value for play or nature. It is an area which ranks highly in terms of inequality and deprivation related to accessible greenspace. Diversification of the green space typologies in the area (Figure 26) would significantly increase access to 'door step' natural green space, including areas of equipped play and natural green space, tree planting, allotments, community gardens, wildflowers and raingardens. This would introduce biodiversity into the area and allow for greater community ownership of and interaction within the spaces. As part of this approach the network of routes through the spaces could be enhanced, supporting walking and wheeling through the area and with surrounding spaces.

New / diversified green infrastructure

Connected green corridors

Figure 26: Concept plan illustrating opportunities for diversification of existing green space in the Town Farm Estate, including a well-connected network of equipped play and natural green space that incorporates tree planting, allotments, community gardens, wildflowers and raingardens (map source: Google Maps).

8.23   An example of how this might be achieved is illustrated in Figure 27 and which could act as a model for similar underutilised green spaces elsewhere across Hailsham.

8.24   The Hailsham Design Guide & Code includes a section on the retrofitting of existing streets to allow for the introduction of green infrastructure and other components, including active travel infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems. The Design Guide & Code points to good practice principles and guidance that should be used to help inform the redesign of existing streets and spaces. Opportunities for specific interventions that are identified (including those opportunities for transformation suggested by the community) should be developed further with the relevant delivery partners and designed in collaboration with the community, using the Hailsham Design Guide & Code as a reference point.
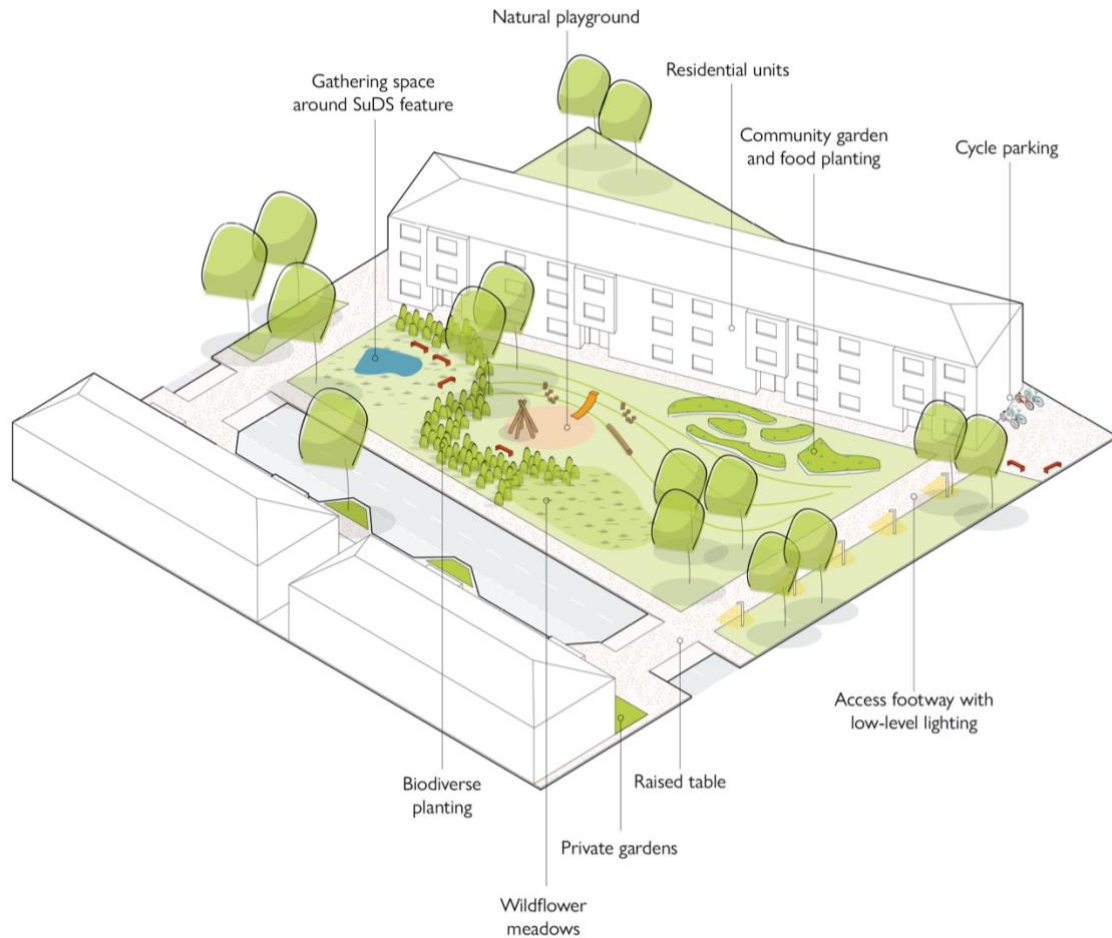
Figure 27: Example illustration showing how existing green spaces could be diversified, introducing play space, food growing opportunities and natural areas that enhance the function and setting of the area.

Policy HaGI 3: Diversifying and improving existing amenity green space

1. Proposals for development should, as appropriate to site size and location, take opportunities to improve existing provision of green infrastructure on-site or in the vicinity of the site and which:

    a. Diversifies existing green space provision.

    b. Incorporates play, landscaping and other features that can be utilised for all ages.

    c. Creates well-activated street frontages that address the green space.

    d. Provides direct and well-overlooked routes through the green space that is safe for people to use. Where lighting is introduced the impact of this on residential amenity will need to be minimised.

The Pevensey Levels

8.25   The Pevensey Levels, which are in close proximity to the south and eastern extent of the built-up area of Hailsham, is a highly sensitive location and is afforded the highest levels of protection through the Ramsar convention and the EU Habitats Directive. It is also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). It is described by the JNCC as:

"one of the largest and least-fragmented lowland wet grassland systems in south- east England. The low-lying grazing meadows are intersected by a complex system of ditches which support a variety of important wetland communities, including nationally rare and scarce aquatic plants and invertebrates. The site also supports a notable assemblage of breeding and wintering wildfowl."

8.26   Any future proposed growth and development around Hailsham will need to demonstrate that there are no adverse impacts on the integrity of the Pevensey Levels and build in appropriate mitigation measures where required, particularly in regard to hydrological impacts and biodiversity value. The importance of this is stressed in the North Wealden Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) which indicates that flood risk in the Pevensey Levels is highly sensitive to the impacts of climate change. This is reflected in Policies CC7 and CC8 of the emerging Local Plan.

Policy HaGI 4: The Pevensey Levels

1.   Proposals for development adjacent to the Pevensey Levels will be expected to:

   a.   Maintain and enhance the environment and landscape character of the Pevensey Levels, including waterbodies and water quality.

   b.   Conserve and enhance biodiversity, including the potential for connecting habitats.

   c.   Contribute towards biodiversity net gain and, as appropriate, carbon sequestering through restoration of wetland areas where appropriate.

Flood risk and sustainable drainage

8.27   The NPPF expects that most forms of development will be directed away from areas of higher flood risk, defined as 'flood zones 2 and 3' on Environment Agency mapping. It also clarifies that regard must be given to all sources of flooding.

8.28   The adopted Wealden Core Strategy does not include a specific policy in respect of flood risk. The emerging Local Plan seeks to address this through Policy CC7, which requires flood risk to be considered at an early stage of the design process, subject to application of the sequential and exception tests outlined in the NPPF.

8.29   The North Wealden SFRA indicates that the Pevensey Levels is the most notable area of fluvial flood risk in the district but that risks are also associated with main river corridors, including the River Cuckmere, and that this means fluvial flood risk is of concern in Hailsham. It notes that surface water flood risk is the most common source of flooding across the district. Areas at risk of fluvial and surface water flooding in Hailsham are illustrated in Figure 28.

8.30   There is also a risk of sewer flooding in Hailsham. This occurs where the sewer system capacity is overloaded by heavy rainfall and or where sewers cannot discharge into watercourses due to high water levels. It may also be caused by faults in the system. Where new development takes place, or where there is an increase in paved surfaces, this can overload capacity. The SFRA indicates that Hailsham has amongst the greatest number of recorded severe flooding incidents in Wealden.

8.31   In line with planning practice guidance in respect of flood risk, developments should avoid increasing the risk of flooding and, wherever possible, should take opportunities to help reduce flood risk in Hailsham.

8.32   The use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) is required by East Sussex County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for the area. This reflects forthcoming changes to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 that require SuDS to become mandatory in all new development. The emerging Local Plan also encourages use of SuDS.

8.33   However, the SFRA indicates that large parts of Wealden are within areas of groundwater concern, particularly in the fluvial river basins where high water tables can lead to groundwater flood risk. Depending on the height of the water table at the location of any proposed development site, restrictions may be placed on the types of SuDS appropriate to certain areas, reflecting SuDS guidelines published by East Sussex County Council.

8.34   The LLFA has produced a guide to SuDS and, with other south east authorities, a guide to integrating SuDS within development through the masterplan process. A tool for small site development has also been published. The location and design of SuDS will need to be considered early in the design process to ensure they are well integrated with wider design aspects, including highways, open space provision, and

proposals for biodiversity net gain. This should involve consultation with the County Council, Environment Agency and dialogue with Wealden District Council as the LPA, as appropriate, to advise on the suitability of the drainage solutions being proposed.

8.35 Where SuDS are appropriate to the location, they should be compatible with and contribute to local character. This may involve the use of ponds and wet woodland, biodiverse raingardens within the street environment, and complementary tree and hedge planting.

8.36 Alongside the use of SuDS the SFRA recommends that existing river corridors and habitats could be enhanced and restored, supporting natural drainage, making space for water and promoting biodiversity. This aligns with guidance from the Environment Agency in respect of restricting development within 8m of a watercourse.

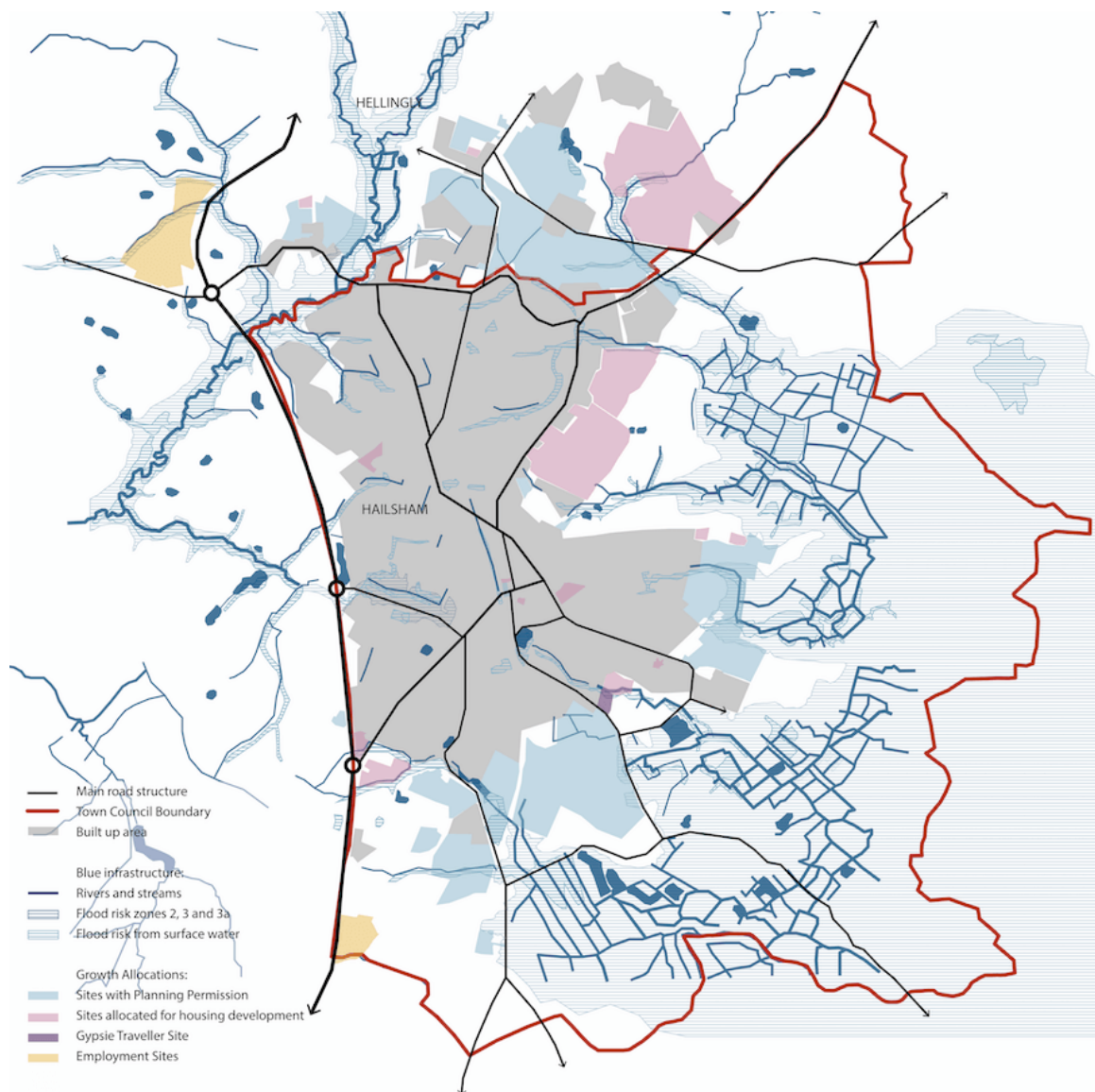*Figure 28: Plan showing extent of blue infrastructure across Hailsham and areas at risk from fluvial and surface water flooding*

Policy HaGI 5: Flood Risk and Sustainable drainage

1. Where SuDS are proposed as part of any development the design of should be informed by guidance established by East Sussex County Council in their 'Guide to Sustainable Drainage Systems' and 'Water, Places, People' (or subsequent successor documents to these) and have regard to the Hailsham Design Guide & Code:

    a. Where practicable, SuDS should be designed to be multi-functional and deliver benefits for wildlife, amenity and landscape.
    b. Swales and attenuation ponds should be designed so that water features and plants are visible from the surrounding area and avoid unattractive and over-engineered boundary treatments. Attenuation ponds on slopes should be avoided if they need deep embankments or bunding.
    c. Where it is proposed to provide SuDS within the public realm these should be designed as an integral part of the green infrastructure and street network, responding positively to the character of the area. Where hard landscaping is needed the use of porous materials should be maximised to enable infiltration.

2. Schemes that incorporate rainwater harvesting to capture, store and reuse grey water will be supported. Where proposed, the design of the tank should complement the building, avoiding unsightly pipework, and, wherever possible, be combined with landscaping or planters with integral water capture systems.

3. Where relevant to the site:

    a. Development should retain, enhance or re-establish watercourses and other surface waterbodies, including ditches, as positive features contributing to the character, sense of place and biodiversity value of development.
    b. Development should restore the functional floodplain where practical and feasible.
    c. Buffer strips of at least 8m to be provided alongside watercourses in line with guidance from the Environment Agency should be designed to maximise natural flood management and include areas of planting to minimise erosion.

Front gardens

8.37   Surface water flood risk can be exacerbated by the paving over of front gardens which, in turn, also impacts on the quality of the street environment, provision of and access to green infrastructure.

8.38   Under Permitted Development Rights homeowners are allowed to pave over a certain amount of their front garden (up to five sqm) without needing to apply for planning permission. Under these rights, planning permission is not needed if a new or replacement driveway (of any size) uses permeable (or porous) surfacing, or if the rainwater is directed to a lawn or border to drain naturally. If, however, the surface to be covered is more than five square metres, planning permission will be needed for the laying out of traditional, impermeable driveways that do not provide for the water to run to a permeable area.

8.39   The conversion of gardens into areas of parking may be appropriate in some places, where, for example, houses have been sub-divided into flats and additional parking is required. However, the cumulative impact of multiple hard-surfaced parking areas can change the character of an area, negatively impact on biodiversity value and significantly increase surface water run-off, which can, in turn, increase local flood risk. It is also important to note that where new or extended drop-kerb access is provided for off-street parking, this can result in the loss of existing on-street parking capacity. The provision of any additional off-street parking will thus need weighing up against the loss it results in elsewhere.

8.40   Within Hailsham, homeowners are encouraged to remove (or 'depave') areas of hard surfacing within their front gardens. This is an initiative that originated in Portland, Oregon. The concept is to work with the local community to return paved surfaces to permeable surfaces. The initiative was set up as a response to the growing problems created by the increasing area of land covered by paved surfaces, resulting in storm water pollution, the degradation of water quality and riparian habitats, as well as the disconnection with the natural environment (see the Depave website for more information).

Policy HaGI 6: Paving of front gardens

1. Where it is proposed to pave over front gardens, and where planning permission is required, all new areas of hard standing must help reinforce the positive character features of Hailsham and should:

   a. Incorporate natural permeable or porous materials that reflect the character of the area.

   b. Seek to maximise the retained area of lawn and vegetation.

   c. Incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

   d. Not direct run-off straight into the drainage system (both to avoid adding to flood risk and to ensure pollutants do not enter the main river system).

   e. Include new planting of non-invasive tree and shrub species.

2. Where necessary to gain vehicular access to allow off-street parking, and where planning permission is required for the installation of dropped kerbs and crossovers, these will only be supported where:

   a. they do not result in the loss of existing on-street parking capacity;

   b. appropriate on-site drainage is provided, using permeable surfaces; and

   c. surface run-off rates do not increase those currently experienced.

Project FG-01: Reinstating front gardens

Encouragement is given to homeowners to 'depave' areas of hardstanding and impermeable surfaces in front gardens, preferably reinstating natural materials, or replacing impermeable surfaces with porous material.

Guidance published by The Royal Horticultural Society (e.g.: Front Garden Guide) should be referred to when considering how best to redesign front gardens, particularly those incorporating parking provision.

The Town Council is keen to work with the County Council to explore whether an approach to 'depaving' might be included in future updates of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and whether opportunities might exist to help fund and deliver such change in order to positively influence the resilience and character of the area.
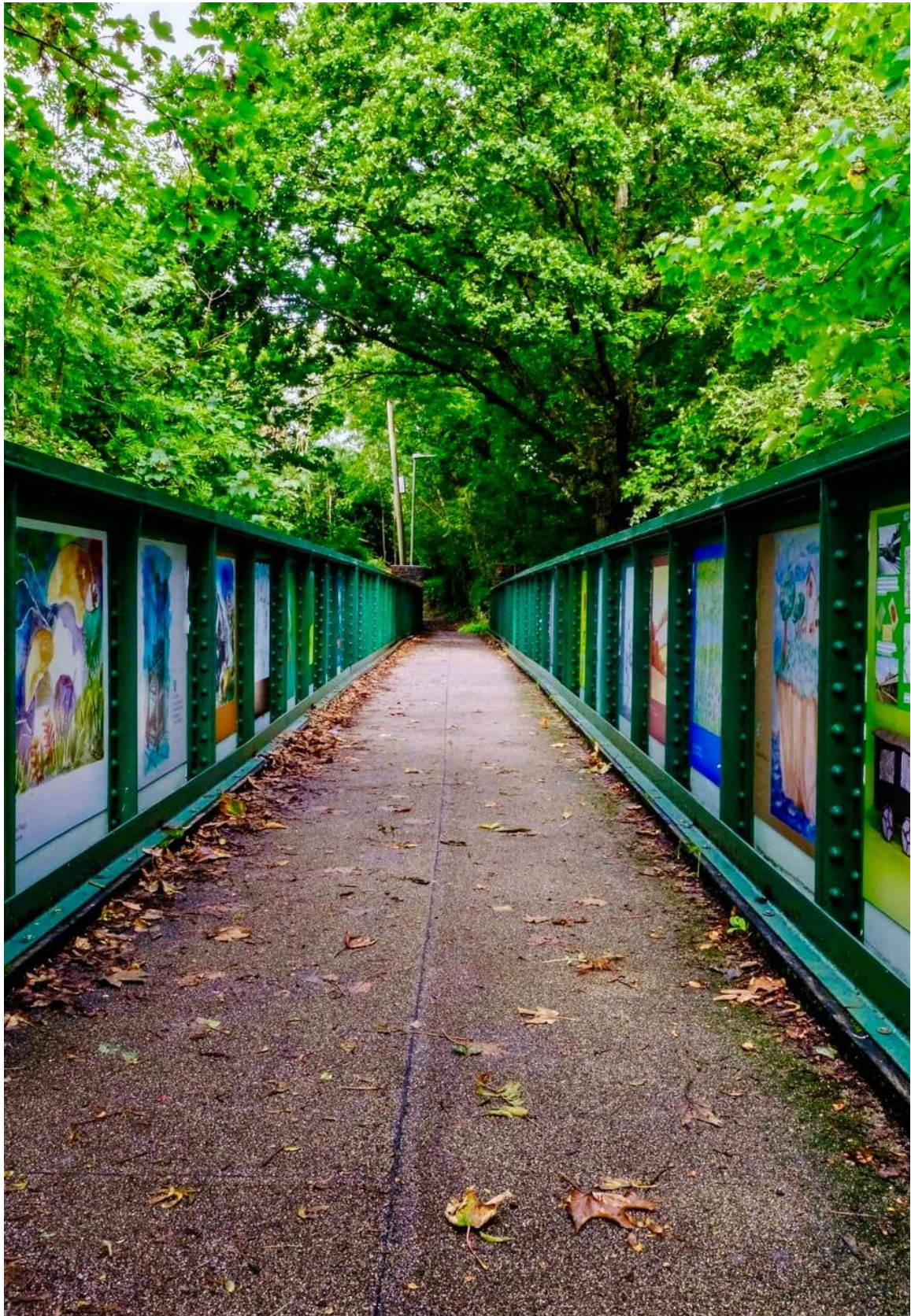
9. Projects and next steps

Community Infrastructure Levy

9.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge levied on development which is payable to the local authority and is intended to be spent on infrastructure projects across the Wealden District Council administrative area that help address the demands placed on it resulting from growth. This might include, for example, spending on new transport infrastructure, health and educational facilities, open spaces and sports facilities.

9.2 The Wealden District Council CIL Charging Schedule was approved in November 2015 and took effect on 1 April 2016. All applications for development that are above the necessary thresholds are subject to this charging schedule, or any subsequent updates to it. Payment is linked to an instalments policy, related to the scale and commencement of development.

9.3 CIL Charging Authorities are required to publish Infrastructure Funding Statements (IFS), which set out the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure which the District Council intends to wholly or partly fund by CIL.

9.4 A proportion of CIL (25%) is payable to Hailsham Town Council for spending on local projects in the Neighbourhood Plan area where planning permission is granted for new development in the Neighbourhood Plan area. In regard to what this money can be spent on, the CIL Regulations (para 59C) state:

"A local council must use CIL receipts passed to it... to support the development of the local council's area, or any part of that area, by funding:

a) The provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or

b) Anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area."

9.5 Through work on the Neighbourhood Plan, a series of projects have been identified, some of which might be appropriate to direct the neighbourhood portion of CIL towards. These are referred to through the Neighbourhood Plan. These projects will be kept under review by the Town Council.

9.6 The payment of CIL is, in some instances, in addition to Section 106 and Section 278 agreements to be agreed through planning applications as appropriate. Guidance is published by East Sussex County Council and used to contribute towards infrastructure that falls under the remit of the County Council, including highways, education and household waste recycling. The County Council are also required to publish an IFS.

Projects

9.7   Projects identified through work on the Neighbourhood Plan are embedded in the main body of the Plan, forming a key part of the narrative and expression of the community's manifesto for the area. For comprehensiveness, and ease of reference, they are collated and summarised here:

Project Reference	Project Summary
PAS-01	Transforming existing residential streets into green streets: This would allow residents to come together to identifying opportunities for redesigning their streets to incorporate green infrastructure.
TCM-01	Town centre concept masterplan: working in collaboration with partners and the public to prepare a concept masterplan for the town centre that will guide potential change and development.
SHS-01	Shop front improvements: Exploring opportunities, in partnership with shop and landowners, to repair and improve shopfronts, reinstating traditional features.
PRG-01	Town centre public realm improvements: Working in partnership with the community, local businesses and partner organisations to explore the part-pedestrianisation of the High Street and wider public realm improvements, including introduction of street greening.
DC-01	Architectural variety and innovation: Encouraging use of architectural competitions on development sites, including multi-ownership and multi-phased developments, introducing variety and interest within an overarching masterplan framework.
DR-01	Design Review: Supporting use of independent design review at the planning application stage to inform proposals and help deliver higher standards of design in new development.
MHT-01	Crossing the A22: Working with partners to investigate opportunities for a new pedestrian and cycle crossing of the A22, potentially making use of the existing tunnel or other solutions, including a bridge, and which would be integrated with a new mobility hub / park and ride facility at Diplocks Way.

MHT-02	The 'Hailsham Country Line': Delivery of an all-weather walking and cycling route on predominantly Town Council owned land alongside the A22 that provides connections with the network of leisure and recreation facilities across Hailsham.
SGI-01	Street greening: Supporting a street greening initiative that introduces green infrastructure into existing streets and spaces, involving the retrofitting and remodelling of streets and junctions as appropriate to help deliver a connected network of green infrastructure.
FG-01	Reinstating front gardens: Supporting an approach to 'depaving' which encourages homeowners to reinstate front gardens and or replace areas of hardstanding with porous material.

Next steps

9.8   This is the draft version of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan. It has been published for the purposes of formal consultation that will last for a minimum of six-weeks (known as 'Regulation 14' consultation). Following this, any necessary amendments will be made as a result of comments received. It will then be submitted to Wealden District Council who will undertake its own consultation process (known as the Regulation 16 consultation) before an independent examiner undertakes the 'examination process'.

9.9   Wealden District Council will formally consult on the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan (known as Regulation 16 consultation) and appoint an independent examiner to review the Plan and any comments made in response to it. Following this, the examiner will issue a report to the local authority advising whether:

- The Plan should proceed to referendum.

- The Plan should proceed to referendum subject to modification.

- The Plan should not proceed to referendum.

9.10   For the examiner to advise that the Neighbourhood Plan proceed to referendum it will need to be demonstrated that it meets what are called the 'Basic Conditions'. These include showing that the Plan is in general conformity with the strategic objectives of the adopted Local Development Plan (i.e., the adopted Core Strategy and saved policies of the Local Plan).

9.11 Wealden District will organise the referendum. All people of voting age residing in the Parish are eligible to vote on whether the Plan should be brought into force ('made') or not. If more than 50% of all people who turnout to vote are in favour of making the Plan, then it will become part of the suite of planning policies used by Wealden District Council to help shape and determine planning applications in Hailsham.

Reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan

9.12 Notwithstanding the defined period of the Neighbourhood Plan to 2042 it is recognised that, with further changes to and review of the Local Plan and national guidance likely, the Neighbourhood Plan will need to be reviewed periodically. This will enable the Neighbourhood Plan to remain 'current' and in conformity with the Wealden District Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework, and any new Growth plans and spatial strategies that might be prepared as part of the Governments devolution agenda.

Appendix 1: Hailsham Design Guide & Code

The Hailsham Design Guide & Code is presented as a free-standing appendix to the Neighbourhood Plan. Applicants for development in the Neighbourhood Plan area must have regard to the Design Guide & Code.

Glossary

Active travel, walking and wheeling – Active Travel refers to journeys made by modes of transport that are fully or partially people-powered, irrespective of the purpose of the journey. It includes walking, people using wheelchairs, and cycling (including e-bikes) to name a few. 'Walking and wheeling' represents the action of moving as a pedestrian, whether or not someone is walking or wheeling unaided or using any kind of wheeled mobility aid, including wheelchairs, mobility scooters, walking frames, prams or buggies.

Adoption – The final confirmation of a development plan by a local planning authority.

Affordable Housing - Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers). A full definition is available in the NPPF.

Blue infrastructure – Refers to water-related features in urban and rural landscapes, including rivers, ponds, lakes, streams and wetlands.

Brownfield Site – see Previously Developed Land (PDL).

Co-design and collaboration – A participatory design process that actively involves key stakeholders and community members and treats them as equals.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.

Conservation Area - An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which is preserved by local planning policies and guidance.

Development Plan - Includes the adopted Wealden Core Strategy and any future adopted Local Plan which may replace it, and Neighbourhood Development Plans which are used to determine planning applications.

EV Charging Speeds – Typically comprise slow, fast or rapid. Slow charging points, typically with a power of around 5kW, allow for overnight charging. Fast charging, with a power of 7kW – 22kW, can enable an electric vehicle to be fully charged within five to twelve hours, depending on make and model of vehicle. Rapid charging, at a power of 25kW - 150kW, can shorten charging time to one hour.

Evidence base - The background information that any Development Plan Document is based on and is made up of studies on specific issues, such as housing need for example.

Green Infrastructure – A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Includes those parts of an area which are occupied by natural open space, parkland, woodland, sports fields, gardens, allotments and the like.

Greenfield site - Land where there has been no previous development, often in agricultural use

Green-space - Those parts of an area which are occupied by natural open space, parkland, woodland, sports fields, gardens, allotments and the like.

Heritage Asset – A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated assets (e.g.: listed buildings) and non-designated heritage assets, which may include a local list of assets.

Home Zone – Home Zones are residential streets in which the road space is shared between drivers of motor vehicles and other road users, with the wider needs of residents (including people who walk and cycle, and children) in mind. The aim is to change the way that streets are used and to improve quality of life, by making them places for people, not just for traffic. Vehicles must be accommodated within the Home Zone as an integral part of daily life, but they must share the space with cyclists and people on foot. Motorists should feel that they are a 'guest' in the street.

Housing Associations / Registered Social Landlords / Registered Providers – Not-for-profit organisations providing homes mainly to those in housing need

Independent Examination - An assessment of a proposed Neighbourhood Plan carried out by an independent person to consider whether a Neighbourhood Development Plan conforms with the relevant legal requirements.

Infill Development – Small scale development filling a gap within an otherwise built-up frontage.

Infrastructure – Basic services necessary for development to take place, for example, roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.

Listed Building – Building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II or II*, with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building.

Local Plan – The Plan for future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority. This forms part of the Development Plan.

Local Planning Authority (LPA) - Local government body responsible for formulating planning policies and controlling development; a district council,

metropolitan council, county council, a unitary authority or national park authority. For Hailsham this is Wealden District Council.

Made – Terminology used in neighbourhood planning to indicate a Plan has been adopted.

Major Development – Development greater than or equal to:

- 10 residential units; or

- 0.5 hectares site area (residential) or 1 hectare (non-residential); or

- Gross floorspace of 1,000 sqm (GIA).

Meanwhile use – A temporary use of a site or building whilst proposals for alternative, permanent uses are being prepared. Examples of meanwhile uses include community meeting spaces, informal training spaces, pop-up shops and exhibition space.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) – Since 2018, this has been the Government department with responsibility for planning, housing, urban regeneration and local government. Was known as the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) from September 2021 to July 2024. Previously known as the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

Mobility Hub – Mobility hubs are generally defined as locations where people can access multiple types of transport modes including, for example, bike share, public transport and other micro mobility travel solutions.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The current version of the NPPF was published in December 2024.

Neighbourhood Development Plan – A development plan prepared by a Parish Council for a particular Neighbourhood Area, which includes land use topics. Once made this forms part of the Development Plan.

Net Zero Carbon Toolkit – Toolkit prepared by Levitt Bernstein, Elementa, Passivhaus Trust and Etude on behalf of West Oxfordshire, Cotswold and Forest of Dean District Councils, funded by the LGA Housing Advisers Programme. The Net Toolkit is licensed under Creative Commons Licence 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) and, in line with the LGA Housing Advisers Programme, is made available for other local authorities to use and adapt.

Outline Application – A general application for planning permission to establish that a development is acceptable in principle, subject to subsequent approval of detailed matters. Does not apply to changes of use.

Parklet – Kerbside spaces, often used for car parking, which have been repurposed for community use, often including planting and areas of seating.

Passivhaus development – Passivhaus is the world's leading fabric first approach to low energy buildings. The core focus of the Passivhaus standard is to dramatically reduce the requirements for space heating and cooling, whilst also creating excellent indoor air quality and comfort levels. See http://www.passivhaus.org.uk for more information.

Perimeter block – A parcel of land surrounded on all sides by streets and where each street has an active development frontage. In residential areas, the front of homes will face the street, with back gardens adjoining each other in the centre of the perimeter block. This helps define public and private spaces.

Permitted Development – Comprises certain categories of minor development as specified in the General Permitted Development Order, which can be carried out without having first to obtain specific planning permission.

Planning Permission - Formal approval granted by a council (e.g. Wealden District Council) in allowing a proposed development to proceed.

Play Street – A street closed to traffic, either permanently or during certain hours, so that it can be used as a safe area of play for children.

Pop-up / Meanwhile uses: A 'pop-up' shop or other similar activity is one that opens for a short period of time on a temporary basis, taking advantage of an empty retail space. Equally, a 'meanwhile use' refers to the short-term use of temporarily empty buildings, such as retail units, until they can be brought back into commercial use. Both provide an opportunity to maintain the vibrancy of an area.

Previously Developed Land (PDL) - Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

Public Open Space - Open space to which the public has free access, and which fulfils, or can fulfil, a recreational or non-recreational role (for example, amenity, ecological, educational, social or cultural uses).

Public Realm – Those parts of a city, town or village, whether publicly or privately owned, which are available for everyone to use. This includes streets, square and parks.

Public Right of Way (PRoW) – Paths on which the public has a legally protected right to pass and re-pass.

Ramsar Site – A wetland of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention

Regenerative Design – An approach to the design of buildings that creates a net positive impact on the environment. Buildings designed this way mimic restorative biological systems found in nature.

Registered Social Landlords (RSL) – See Housing Associations

School Street – Defined by the School Streets Initiative as a road outside a school with a temporary restriction on motorised traffic at school drop-off and pick-up times. The restriction applies to school traffic and through traffic.

Section 106 Agreement – Planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, secured by a local planning authority through negotiations with a developer to offset the public cost of permitting a development proposal.

Settlement Development Limits Boundary – Settlement or development boundaries (village envelopes) seek to set clear limits to towns and villages. They are designed to define the existing settlement and to identify areas of land where development may be acceptable in principle, subject to other policies and material planning considerations.

Soundness – The soundness of a statutory local planning document is determined by the planning inspector against three criteria: whether the plan is justified (founded on robust and credible evidence and be the most appropriate strategy), whether the plan is effective (deliverable, flexible and able to be monitored), and whether it is consistent with national and local planning policy.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – Areas given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive, which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010.

Special Protection Area (SPA) - Areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the Birds Directive.

Stakeholder – People who have an interest in an organisation or process including residents, business owners and national organisations and government departments.

Superblock – Referring to a large development, often in single use and ownership, occupying a large part of the urban fabric with limited routes through and permeability for people. There is limited flexibility for incremental change over time, with development opportunities requiring the entire block to come forward. Examples of a superblock may include a shopping centre.

Sustainable Development – An approach to development that aims to allow economic growth without damaging the environment or natural resources. Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainability Appraisal – An appraisal of the economic, environment and social effects of a Plan to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development.

Sustainable Travel Recognition and Accreditation for Schools (STARS) – An accreditation scheme for schools and nurseries that seeks to facilitate a mode shift in the way that pupils, their parents, carers and staff, travel to school, championing walking and wheeling

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs) – Sustainable drainage systems slow the rate of surface water run-off and improve infiltration, by mimicking natural drainage in both rural and urban areas. This reduces the risk of "flash-flooding" which occurs when rainwater rapidly flows into the public sewerage and drainage systems.

Urban Design – The art of making places. It involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, in villages, towns and cities, to create successful development.

Use Classes Order – The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) regulations 2020 puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'. These regulations came into force on 1st September 2020 and effectively nullify the former use class definitions used within the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.

It is generally the case that you will need planning permission to change from one use class to another, although there are exceptions where the legislation does allow some changes between uses. It should be noted that the recent regulation changes led to former Use Class A (shops, financial and professional services and food and drink establishments) becoming part of the new Use Class E.

B2 use class: Refers to general industry

B8 use class: Refers to storage and distribution

C1, 2, 2A, 3, 4 use class: Refers to hotels and residential institutions, secure residential institutions, dwellings and House in Multiple Occupations (HMOs)

E use class: Refers to shops, restaurants, financial and professional services, indoor sport, recreation or fitness (not involving motorised vehicles or firearms, health or medical services, creche, nursery or day centre principally to visiting members of the public, an office, research and development, or any industrial process that can be carried out in any residential area without detriment to amenity. The breakdown of uses in Class E is:

E(a): Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food.

E(b): Sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on premises.

E(c): Provision of (i) Financial services, (ii) Professional services (other than health or medical services), or (iii) other appropriate services in a commercial, business or service locality.

E(e): Provision of medical or health services (except the use of premises attached to the residence of the consultant or practitioner).

E(f): Creche, day nursery or day centre (not including a residential use).

E(g):Uses which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity, including (i) offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions, (ii) research and development of products or processes, (iii) industrial processes.

F1: Learning and non-residential institutions, including (a) provision of education, (b) Display of works of art (otherwise than for sale or hire), (c) Museums, (d) Public libraries or public reading rooms, (e) Public halls or exhibition halls, (f) Public worship or religious instruction (or in connection with such use), or (g) Law courts.

F2: Local community uses, including (a) Shops (mostly) selling essential goods, including food, where the shop's premises do not exceed 280 square metres and there is no other such facility within 1,000 metres, (b) Halls or meeting places for the principal use of the local community, (c) Areas or places for outdoor sport or recreation (not involving motorised vehicles or firearms), or (d) Indoor or outdoor swimming pools or skating rinks.

Sui Generis: 'Sui generis' is a Latin term that, in this context, means 'in a class of its own'. Certain uses are specifically defined and excluded from classification by legislation and therefore become 'sui generis'. Public houses, wine bars, or drinking establishments (previously Use Class A4) are classified as Sui Generis.

Windfall development – Sites and development which have not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process. They normally comprise previously developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.

Neighbourhood Plan, 2025 - 2042

Review and update of 'Made' Plan:
Pre-submission Regulation 14 version, December 2025

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