

## **Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee**

**Monday 2 March 2026**

### **Agenda Item 6.2**

#### **TO REVIEW THE RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE DRAFT WEALDEN LOCAL PLAN 2025-42**

##### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Further to a full public consultation exercise (known as Regulation 18) undertaken by Wealden District Council in March 2024, Wealden DC are now consulting again on a revised and focused plan. This plan looks ahead to 2042, and reflects the changes to the National Planning Policy Framework in December 2024 and subsequent changes in housing need calculations.
- 1.2 The consultation runs until 20 March 2026, and provides an opportunity for the Town Council along with key stakeholders in Wealden District to consider key areas of focus.  
The full documentation is available to view here:  
<https://consult.wealden.gov.uk/kse/>
- 1.3 Uckfield Town Council's Plans Committee considered the full extent of questions at their Extraordinary meeting on Monday 23 February 2026.
- 1.4 Members of Environment & Leisure Committee are now being invited to share their comments, to formulate a full response on behalf of the Town Council:
- 1.5 The Chair and Vice-Chair of Environment & Leisure Committee have prepared a draft response to the following areas:
  - (i) Chapter 3 (Spatial Strategy);
  - (ii) Supporting documentation (*proposal for creation of additional policies around Local Green Spaces, Neighbourhood plans, and buffers for ancient woodland*).
- 1.6 Members of Environment & Leisure Committee may also be minded to review Chapter 4 (Climate Change) – extract attached in appendix C.

##### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the information provided, and provide further input towards the Town Council's response to the consultation on the Draft Wealden Local Plan.

Contact Officer: Holly Goring

Appendices:           Appendix A: Draft response from Chair & Vice Chair  
                              Appendix B: Comments on development boundary and brownfield sites  
                              Appendix C: Extract of Chapter 4 – Climate Change

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## Question 1 - Policy SS1 Spatial Strategy for Wealden

Do you agree with the spatial strategy?

[ADD COMMENT](#)

### Question 1

- Do you agree with the updated draft Policy SS1: Spatial Strategy for Wealden, and if not, why?
- Is there an alternative spatial strategy that we should be considering through this Local Plan? If so, please set out what the alternative spatial strategy should contain and why?

### Development Boundaries

3. Subject to other policies in the plan, new development will be permitted within those settlements with an identified development boundary as shown on the Policies Map. This includes the following settlements:

Crowborough, Uckfield, Hailsham, Heathfield, Polegate, Willingdon, Stone Cross, Westham, Pevensey, Forest Row, Horam, Mayfield, Wadhurst, Bells Yew Green, Berwick Station, Blackboys, Buxted, Cross in Hand, East Hoathly, Five Ash Down, Framfield, Frant, Groombridge, Hartfield, Herstmonceux, Isfield, Lower Horsebridge, Maresfield, Ninfield and Rotherfield.

4. Within these settlements, development proposals should make the best use of previously developed land, apply an appropriate density to its use, ensure the creation of strong, sustainable, cohesive and inclusive communities including required infrastructure provision. Development proposals should also consider land take and the impact this may have on the natural environment and resources, whilst also relating well to the existing and surrounding character of the area.

Q1 a. No

Q1 b. use the alternative scenario of no more than WDC Figure 7a @ 15109. Therefore reject Owlsbury and Ashdown Business Park - in addition reduce Uckfield and Village developments and re-use brownfield first sites.

- i. In Summary - amendments to Policy SS1 to include Brownfield first sites and further call for brownfield first sites.
- ii. UTC development boundary changed to our recommendation to safeguard against environmental and heritage constraints, inclusion of a “hamlets” definition, provide a settlement green gap policy, remove the Ashdown Business Park and reject Owlsbury using the Wealden proposed “alternative scenario” no more than and reject Owlsbury Farm. Other sites are assessed in other questions.
- iii. Support Fletching Parish previous assessments regarding both sites and review their response from their plans committee for this regulation 18 assessment.
- iv. Recommend no more than 15109 total as a 15-year plan to 2040, therefore 1007 dwellings per annum

### **Question 1 - Brownfield First - Spatial Strategy Policy SS1 - ADD Uckfield policy**

To safeguard environmental constraints and heritage landscapes, development should use all brownfield sites and the register is updated. Proposed brownfield sites (numbers to be discussed if appropriate). Uckfield does not agree with the WDC proposed settlement boundary because a Brownfield first policy has not been adopted, using all brownfield space within the current boundary.

**NPPF para 125.c give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements** for homes and other identified needs, proposals for which should be approved unless substantial harm would be caused, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;

Until brownfields are re-used within Uckfield town, Uckfield will maintain safeguarding against harmful developments impacting environmental constraints and heritage landscapes and encroachment in heritage landscapes, development should therefore use all brownfield sites first.

In addition, Uckfield supports WDC paragraph Vacant Building 5.21 - This policy is intended to incentivise brownfield development, including the reuse or redevelopment of empty and redundant buildings. Redundant buildings increase the number of units available.

Call for WDC to map these brownfield sites, including mapping Bellbrook Business Park as brownfield- refit to current standards rather than extend Ashdown Business Park. West of Uckfield commercial area is included in the Seghers application by the treatment works.

Ridgewood Farm West of Uckfield has about 12000sqm expansion to provide Uckfield additional needs and is an approved application (not built). Uckfield TC proposed Brownfield first policy sites (estimate numbers to be discussed if appropriate) :-

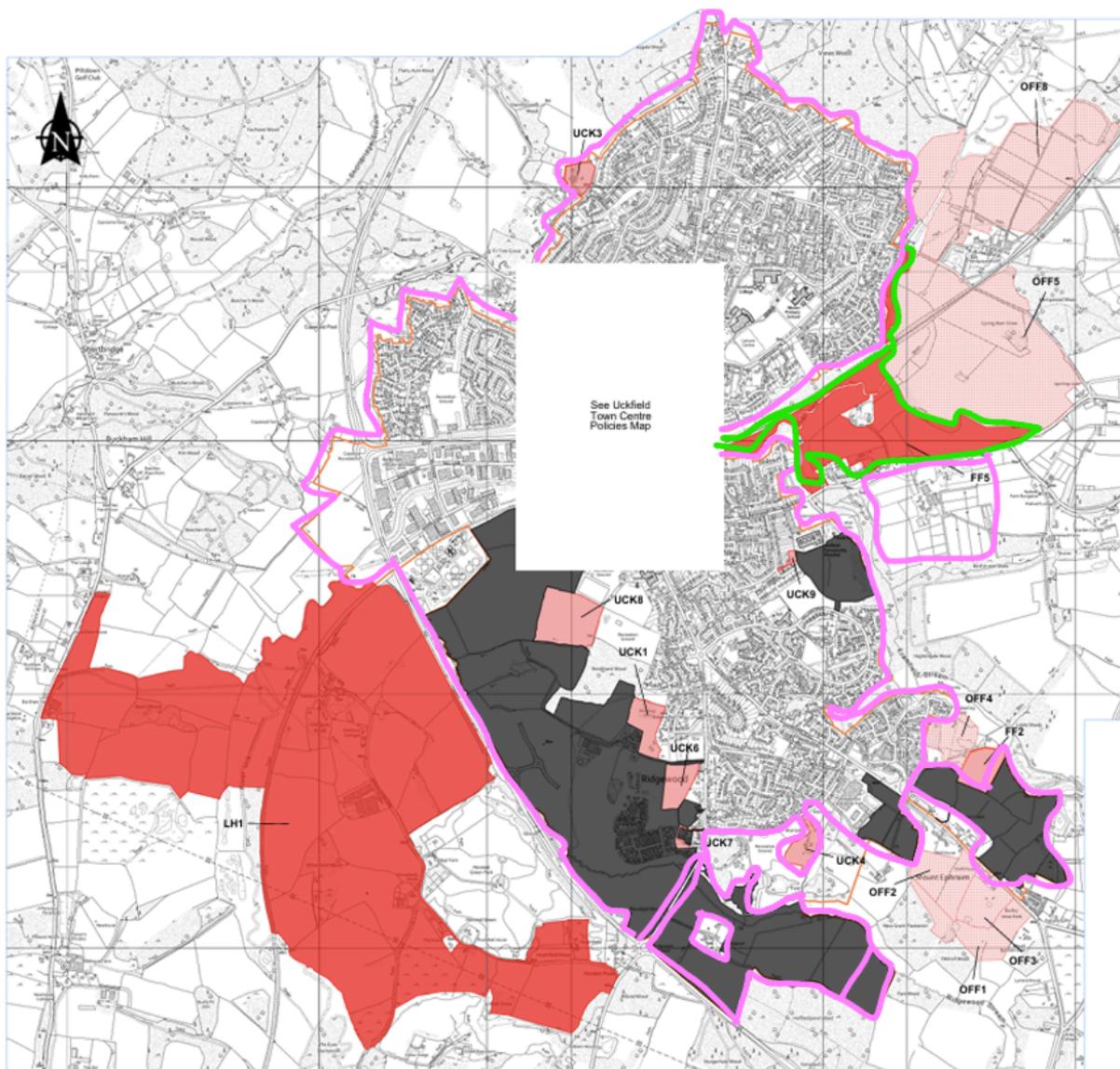
<b>Brownfield First - no new greenfield until town centre regeneration brownfield first</b>				
<b>Town Centre</b>				Conservation Area sensitive designs
BT Building		45		parking underneath
Mojavo area regeneration - and area behind		35		
Behind Freeman Foreman		9		
Natwest Civic Approach		21		parking underneath
Community Hub area		15		parking underneath, with hub
Dominoes area		15		parking underneath
Behind Hartfields 1970s block regeneration and town square		21		parking underneath/beside
Road by Civic Centre, Bell Farm Lane		21		Brownfield , parking underneath - well designed to inform heritage
<b>Other areas</b>				
Lewes Road - derelict house/garden		9		listed building. Degraded and fire
New Road - Public House		9		public house, non designated heritage asset
Care Home - New Town		9		brownfield, former care home - residents requested bungalows, or a much reduced size of care home - live application
Holy Cross School		45	0	no more than, may need to be reduced due to scale and site. Closed primary school also had nursery provision - assess nursery needs to town and family / workers
		<b>209</b>	<b>Brownfield - estimate</b>	<b>Brownfield FIRST - no more than. Policy no green fields until brownfield used</b>

**Question 1 - Policy - Do you agree with the Development Boundaries**

Q1.a No

Q1. b. Why? E&L proposes development boundaries to safeguard against harm to heritage, our natural green and blue infrastructure and reserves, or merge Buxted, Framfield, Maresfield or Little Horsted into Uckfield parish boundaries. The proposed development boundary that extends into open rural countryside is not supported. Our **common-sense boundary** for Uckfield (the pink outline proposed on the plan below) should be retained, together with a **Settlement Green Gaps** policy to prevent coalescence and protect the separate identities of neighbouring parishes. Other sites within the pink boundary will be assessed by Uckfield plans, taking full account of environmental and heritage constraints, material planning considerations, and other consultee responses. Development that would cause over-development or harm to environmental sustainability, ancient woodland, ecological green-blue infrastructure, heritage assets, Local Green Space, or settlement gaps will be refused.

## Map 1 - Uckfield Settlement Boundary-



### Proposed Targets.

Uckfield E&L requests targets of no more than 20%-22% growth in uplift in housing and parish targets.

Census 7033 houses a 20% growth uplift is 1406, a 22% growth uplift is 1546. Brownfield first sites should have been selected before encroaching on sensitive landscapes or green field development. Population 2024 is 15666. The committee proposes no more than 20-22% uplift (less is preferred), a brownfield first policy, and to safeguard environmental sustainability and safeguard Uckfield services/infrastructure.

**E&L propose to support the WDC Alternative Scenario** - reject Owlsbury and reject Ashdown Business Park, remove sensitive site allocations and realign site allocations to support town centre regeneration and brownfield first sites.

Redirect development in local plan “allocations” to the brownfield town centre sites identified, not in addition to green field allocations. Environment and Heritage landscape sensitive sites will be requested for removal and rejection from regulation 19..

## **Question 1 - ADD Requesting a policy on Hamlets Local Plan Spatial Strategy**

**Introduction.** The Local plan states - *Overall, our location, as well as our high-quality environment, landscape and heritage makes Wealden a very attractive place to live, work and visit.*

**Context and Issue** In the local plan paragraph **2.2 reg 18 2026**, it states *“We have 75 defined settlements, ranging from our larger towns of Hailsham, Crowborough, Uckfield, Heathfield and Polegate to a range of large villages, such as Forest Row and Wadhurst, as well as many other smaller villages and **hamlets**. In general terms, just over half of our residents (55%) live within our towns, with the remainder of our population (45%) living in our more rural areas. Overall, our location, as well as our high-quality environment, landscape and heritage makes Wealden a very attractive place to live, work and visit. “*

**Current shortcoming (Settlement Hierarchy)** In paragraph 3.46 Sustainable Settlements and the Settlement Hierarchy – **hamlets** are not currently defined. This is an evidence gap that we feels needs to be addressed to ensure the Plan is sound, fully justified and effective to recognise the historic interest of hamlets.

The Table 3 Draft Settlement Hierarchy is updated to clarify how hamlets are treated (for example, as part of the open countryside) and to set out clear criteria for their treatment in the settlement hierarchy.

**Representation.** Uckfield Town Council welcomes a landscape-led environmental approach. To ensure the Plan is effective and consistent with national policy, we request a short, principle-led policy recognising hamlets as part of the open countryside and a commitment to a phased programme to map and, where justified, designate hamlets and associated non-designated heritage assets during the plan period. This approach is proportionate, evidence-based and will provide clarity for communities, applicants and decision-makers while safeguarding the district’s distinctive historic landscapes where hamlets are identified. Leading to proportionate and sound policy making. Propose Policy wording to be assessed by Chair of E&L

## **Question 1 - ADD Improve Spatial Strategy with Settlement Green Gaps**

Policy requested **Settlement Green Gap wording**

Q1. B- sustainable development protects and conserves heritage and the natural environment. Landscape-led natural constraints planning should not be at the expense of overdevelopment and the labour led targets for Wealden. Wealden should be fighting to represent the parishes as the representatives of the parishes.

#### Development Boundaries

3. Subject to other policies in the plan, new development will be permitted within those settlements with an identified development boundary as shown on the Policies Map. This includes the following settlements:

Crowborough, Uckfield, Hailsham, Heathfield, Polegate, Willingdon, Stone Cross, Westham, Pevensey, Forest Row, Horam, Mayfield, Wadhurst, Bells Yew Green, Berwick Station, Blackboys, Buxted, Cross in Hand, East Hoathly, Five Ash Down, Framfield, Frant, Groombridge, Hartfield, Herstmonceux, Isfield, Lower Horsebridge, Maresfield, Ninfield and Rotherfield.

4. Within these settlements, development proposals should make the best use of previously developed land, apply an appropriate density to its use, ensure the creation of strong, sustainable, cohesive and inclusive communities including required infrastructure provision. Development proposals should also consider land take and the impact this may have on the natural environment and resources, whilst also relating well to the existing and surrounding character of the area.

**Short policy summary - Uckfield requests Settlement Green Gaps as a suitable and justified policy, used by other districts.**

**Settlement Green Gap principle:** The Local Plan should recognise and safeguard **Green Settlement Gaps** — defined areas of predominantly undeveloped land between settlements where development would materially reduce separation, harm landscape or heritage setting, or interrupt ecological connectivity. Gaps are part of the open countryside and are not normally locations for general housing or increased growth; the Plan will publish objective criteria and a phased, parish-led mapping programme at Regulation 19 to identify candidate gaps for validation and work with parish councils to secure these important green gaps, often as local green space. (Lewes Local Plan evidence here

[https://planningpolicyconsult.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/LP\\_SpatialStrategyandSites/viewCompoundDoc?docid=16596660&partid=16598548&pfv=y](https://planningpolicyconsult.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/LP_SpatialStrategyandSites/viewCompoundDoc?docid=16596660&partid=16598548&pfv=y) )

Propose Policy wording to be assessed by Chair of E&L

**Question 2 and 11 - see separate table for sites.**

Answer - No. See each site description

**Question 6 - Partially, remove Ashdown Business Park ( or answer No?)**

**Question 9 - Housing - not yet reviewed any comments from E&L**

**Question 14 Policy Request improving the local plan - Local Green Space policy**

Check question 14 to apply policy response - Wealden local plan appears not to include a local green space map, register or policy.

**Policy title:** Local Green Space Designation and Call for Sites **Policy text:** This policy prevents harmful coalescence, protects settlement identity, and maintains ecological corridors. Wealden District Council are asked to consider a Local Green Space (LGS) Call for Sites (as exemplified by neighbouring authority Lewes District Council increasing community engagement in the local plan consultation by identifying potential LGS, to identify and also map green areas of particular local importance. Sites submitted through the Call for Sites will be assessed against the NPPF tests

and the Council's LGS designation methodology. Local Green Spaces will be treated as part of the open countryside and are not normally appropriate locations for general housing growth; allocations that would cause harmful coalescence or materially reduce ecological connectivity will be avoided. Local Green Space may be designated through local plans, or neighbourhood plans.

**Neighbourhood Plans.** In addition to the district-wide Call for Sites, neighbourhood plans remain a vital and complementary route for nominating Local Green Space under the NPPF; communities progressing neighbourhood plans should be encouraged to identify, evidence and map locally valued sites so designations can be secured through examination and referendum. This dual approach ensures parishes that are actively preparing neighbourhood plans retain direct control over nominations while also allowing those not preparing plans to participate via the Wealden Call for Sites, promoting consistency of evidence, boundaries and GIS mapping across the district. This strengthens the case at Regulation 19 and demonstrates clear cooperation between parish stakeholders and Wealden council.

Lewes District Council also provided a summary of their districts Local Green Space (LGS), UTC encourages Wealden to adopt the [arcGIS.com](https://planningpolicyconsult.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/LDC_LGS) mapping portal and place all these LGS on the maps (link here [https://planningpolicyconsult.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/LDC\\_LGS](https://planningpolicyconsult.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/LDC_LGS))

## **Question 14 - Improved Policy Request - Ancient Woodland 50m starting buffers**

New evidence. We support adjacent neighbouring authority Lewes District Council with 50m buffers for ancient woodlands, who have recently concluded their regulation 18 second consultation (link here [https://planningpolicyconsult.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/LP\\_DefiningPolicies25/viewCompoundDoc?docid=15665236&partid=15668436](https://planningpolicyconsult.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/LP_DefiningPolicies25/viewCompoundDoc?docid=15665236&partid=15668436)) and request the same in the Wealden proposals at regulation 19 for the Natural Environment, trees and woodlands policy for sites with more than 9 dwellings.

**Improving Natural Environment Outcomes for Wealden.** In our opinion and direct experience, standard 15 or 25m is insufficient in our locality and Wealden now requires more than 50m to address direct and indirect impacts which is proportionate to the experience of Uckfield Town Council and the rangers managing the impacts of site developments in close proximity to ancient woodland. It is deemed that 25m is inadequate in our experience managing ancient woodlands impacted by development, also 15-25m does not address heights of ancient woodland trees, fall zones, management required, or the type of edge effects to the edges of our ancient woodland, such as those described by Richard Hellier ([Why woodland edge matters – Forestry Commission](#))

Additional Evidence - [Unleashed: walking dogs off the lead greatly increases habitat disturbance in UK lowland heathlands | Urban Ecosystems | Springer Nature Link](#)

**Recommendation from E&L - Uckfield plans committee request 50m safeguarded starting buffers on major applications of more than 9 dwellings as standard policy.**

## **Request a further updated policy proposal — 50m buffers for ancient woodland**

Uckfield Town Council requests that Wealden District Council adopt a 50 metre buffer policy for ancient woodland as the preferred district standard. This measure is proposed as a sound and proportionate update to the Local Plan to prevent edge effects, avoid fragmentation and protect irreplaceable habitats during a period of growth, protecting light noise direct and indirect disturbance or trampling of important ancient woodland ground flora. No new footpaths will be added to ancient woodland, the preference being to remove the indirect impacts of increased visitor disturbance and dog walking.

The 50m buffer is proposed as the **preferred starting point for development sites of more than 10 dwellings**, with larger buffers applied where site-specific assessment demonstrates impacts extend beyond 50m. This approach follows neighbouring practice and provides a clear, consistent basis for decision-making that reduces repeated debate about variable buffer distances and strengthens the plan's defensibility at Regulation 19 and examination.

**Policy wording Ancient Woodland Buffer Policy.** Development proposals must provide a minimum **50 metre buffer** between new development and the boundary of ancient woodland, unless a site-specific ecological assessment demonstrates that a different distance is required to avoid harm. Any buffer should be designed to contribute to wider ecological networks and form part of the area's green infrastructure. SuDS, drainage features and other engineered interventions must be located outside the buffer where they would create hydrological connectivity with ancient woodland habitats. Rights of way and recreational access that would materially increase visitor pressure, dog disturbance or other recreational impacts within the buffer will be resisted, and are preferred outside the 50m buffer. Where development proposals are likely to affect bat foraging or commuting routes, buffers should be designed to maintain and enhance linear connectivity and include the irreplaceable habitat and a core sustenance zone linking GBI, Functionally Connected Land and ensure ancient woodlands are not surrounded, fragmented or further isolated by development.

The Lead Local Flood Authority will assess SuDS proposals on the basis that drainage features must not create direct or indirect hydrological impacts within the buffer zone, including groundwater to ancient (wet) woodlands and ghyll habitats.

### **Why 50m is justified and necessary**

- **Evidence from local experience:** Uckfield's rangers report repeated instances where development brought hard edges and recreational pressure too close to ancient woodland, requiring remedial management (tree pollarding, removal of hazardous trees, and visitor management). Local experience demonstrates that 15m and 25m buffers have not prevented direct or indirect harm in practice.
- **Ecological function and species needs:** Ancient woodland contains long-lived trees and structural features (including standing and fallen deadwood) that require a wider fall and root protection zone; mature oaks commonly have crowns and root protection needs that extend well beyond 25m. A 50m core sustenance zone better protects these features and the species that depend on them.
- **Preventing fragmentation and edge effects:** A 50m buffer reduces the risk that woodlands become isolated or developed on multiple sides, which increases edge microclimate effects, invasive species colonisation, and disturbance. Maintaining a continuous green infrastructure (GBI) and functional ecological corridors is essential to long-term resilience.
- **Recreational disturbance:** Peer-reviewed evidence shows off-lead dogs substantially increase disturbance to sensitive habitats; increased visitor pressure from nearby development is a demonstrable pathway of harm. A 50m buffer provides a more robust separation to reduce disturbance and protect core woodland functions.
- **Hydrological protection:** Wet ancient woodlands and ghyll habitats are particularly sensitive to changes in drainage and groundwater. Locating SuDS and drainage outside a 50m buffer reduces the risk of altered hydrological regimes that can degrade these irreplaceable habitats.
- 50m will provide a fall protection zone for ancient woodland trees, for example, oak trees reach maturity of 30-40m and should be allowed to thrive and not be managed. Ancient woodland requires dead and dying trees and falling dead trees for biological ecosystems and ground flora.

**Practical implementation and tests. Trigger threshold:** Apply the 50m buffer as the preferred default for proposals of **more than 9 dwellings** and for any development that would materially increase recreational access or

hydrological load near ancient woodland. For smaller proposals, apply the same assessment tests and require proportionate mitigation where necessary. 25m is the preferred option for less than 9 houses- unless the height of the nearest ancient woodland trees requires a fall zone such as 30-40m for established oak trees, or its drip line/canopy.

**Core sustenance zone and impact risk zone:** Define the buffer as a **Core Sustenance Zone (minimum 50m)** with an adjacent **Impact Risk Zone** where further assessment is required. The Impact Risk Zone distance should be set by local evidence and site assessment. **SuDS and drainage:** Require LLFA sign-off demonstrating that SuDS and drainage features are sited and designed so they do not create hydrological connectivity into the buffer or ancient woodland. SuDS features should be located outside the buffer unless independent hydrological modelling demonstrates no adverse effect. **Rights of way and visitor management:** No new rights of way impacting ancient woodland, or intensified access routes that would increase dog disturbance or trampling within the buffer. Where access is a permitted right of way, it requires management measures (signage, dog control measures, defined routes, seasonal restrictions) and monitoring and will be supported by the development to improve outcomes outside the red line boundary where likely effects of visitor harm are identified. New pathways may be requested to prevent further encroachment / visitor impact in ancient woodland. **Hedgerows and linear habitats** linking ancient woodland will not be fragmented as linear habitats provide foraging and commuting for rare species reliant on the connectivity of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland. **Assessment and evidence:** Require a proportionate ecological impact assessment for any proposal within the Impact Risk Zone, including the height of the trees of the ancient woodland impacted, the canopy size will often require bigger buffers, the tree root protection plans should be from the drip line of the canopy, hydrological assessments will not flow into ancient woodland or ghylls or wet woodlands, recreational impact assessment and bat activity surveys where relevant. The CSZ protects local or county relevant populations of endangered bats, and will be assessed as part of the developable area outside the 50m zone. **Mitigation hierarchy and avoidance:** Demonstrate avoidance and minimisation before considering mitigation or compensation or reducing the 50m buffer area. Where harm cannot be avoided, proposals should be refused unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated in line with national policy. **BNG of 20%** on site can also be directed to these important 50m buffers where relevant and suitable for the edge habitats supporting the ancient woodland.

**Conclusion.** Adopting a 50m minimum buffer for ancient woodland is a proportionate, evidence-led policy update that will reduce edge effects, protect irreplaceable habitats and provide consistent, defensible policy for plan-making and development management. It aligns with the Local Plan's vision of **people and nature thriving together**, supports the integrity of nature networks and gives officers, parishes and inspectors a clear, practical test to apply when assessing proposals adjacent to ancient woodland. Uckfield Town Council can supply the local evidence necessary to demonstrate why smaller buffers have failed in practice and why a 50m approach is now required in Wealden for sound plan-making. Uckfield found this policy proportionate and sound for our experiences managing ancient woodland impacted by cumulative developments in the area, and reducing or removing potential direct and indirect effects is important for irreplaceable habitats. **Evidence - the Lewes District Council Local Plan includes 50 metre ancient woodland buffers as a starting point (here <https://democracy.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/documents/s33812/20241122%20Local%20Plan%20PPAC%20version%20appendix%201.pdf>).**

## Question 15 - supporting information - Local Geological Report

ADD COMMENT

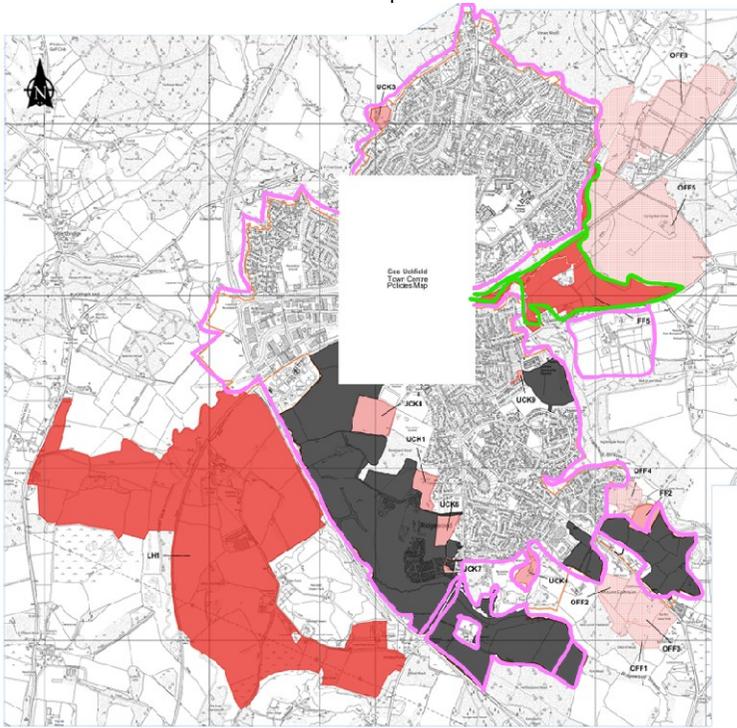
### Question 15

- a) Please use this box to upload any documents to support your previous answers, you may upload as many document as you need to.
- b) Please use this box to add any comments that you may want to make about the documents that have been uploaded.

To attach a copy of the local geological report as part of the Uckfield TC response to the local plan. This report is important for Uckfield and geological habitats. <https://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/council-services/open-spaces/>

Uckfield TC received a copy of a Case Study produced by consultants on behalf of Natural England, which illustrates the benefits and value of integrating geodiversity into nature recovery, using the High Weald of Sussex and Kent as an example. The study covers the whole of the High Weald but, in order to provide a more detailed analysis, focuses in particular on a local study area between Ashdown Forest and Uckfield, in East Sussex [Geodiversity and Nature Recovery in the High Weald](#).

Therefore, the case study pdf to be submitted in the local plan regulation 18 consultation at question 15.



**Map 1 - Uckfield Settlement Boundary**

Green Settlement Gaps required as per policy suggestion papers

Pink line Proposed development boundary and green gap policy

- North Snatts Road - LUC 2022 and 2017 Green Infrastructure Study
- East Manor Park
- South 1 field in Framfield parish - no further encroachment into Framfield proposed
- South & Cysleys in Framfield parish - no further encroachment
- West A22 bypass

**Uckfield TC Environmental and Heritage Sustainability Assessment - current and future generations**

Key - Proposed outside development boundary

Red = Reject site

UTC Plans Assessment

Which Question to answer for which sites	Policy Ref.	Parish	Qty	Name	E&L Review	Notes	Counted in plan numbers	Green Settlement Gap - Policy as per Lewes Plan
Question 2	OFF8	UCKFIELD PARISH	200	Hempstead Farm	* Reject	unsuitable - remove from plan possibles	No	<b>Green Settlement Gap - Unsuitable.</b> Policy as per Lewes Plan. Uckfield-Buxted Green Gap and SSSI. Development boundary Manor Park edge. Open rural countryside, unacceptable heritage impacts.

Question 2	OFF5	FRAMFIELD PARISH	300	Hempstead Lane	* Reject	Unsuitable - urban sprawl	No	<b>Green Settlement Gap - Unsuitable</b> . Policy as per Lewes Plan. Uckfield-Framfield - Buxted Green Gap and SSSI. <u>Development boundary</u> . <u>Manor Park edge</u> . <u>Prevent coalescence of parishes</u> . <u>Open rural countryside</u> . Unacceptable harm to heritage assets and landscape
?	UCK1	UCKFIELD PARISH		Care Home? New Town	Brownfield	Support brownfield within material considerations. Live Application not supported, material harm		Brownfield FIRST policy should apply in Uckfield and Town Centre Regeneration before urban sprawl into open countryside - identify brownfield sites
Question 11	UCK4	UCKFIELD PARISH	30	Table 13 Allocations. Sunview	-	in boundary. only with suitable planning	Y	
Question 11	UCK6	UCKFIELD PARISH	55	Table 13. Land South West Of Ridgedown, Lewes Road, Uckfield. 1144/1410	-	in boundary. only with suitable planning, mitigation, green space and stakeholders (material planning considerations) prefer remain as green space offsetting the 1000	Y	
Question 11	UCK7	UCKFIELD PARISH	8	Table 13. Cress Farm, 20 Lewes Road, Ridgewood, Uckfield. 539/1410	-	in boundary. only with suitable planning	Y	
Question 11	UCK8	UCKFIELD PARISH	100	Table 13. Taylor Wimpey 346/1410	Reduce qty	in boundary, only with suitable planning. Live planning application	Y	Impact Ancient Woodland and Beacon, Biodiversity concerns, additional footpath redirection from Boothlands required - indirect/direct visitor impacts, access to UTC land not agreed - see plans cttee notes. No further dwelling development on remaining green spaces / pitches on local spaces. Ancient Woods 50m buffer and reduce quantum - cumulative harm
Question 11	UCK9	UCKFIELD PARISH	6	Table 13. Land rear of Oakley Court, Selby Road, Uckfield	-	in boundary. only with suitable planning	Y	Concerns impacts Selby Meadows nature reserve, established trees and root protection area, valued space, light and noise impact to reserve
Question 11	UCK10	UCKFIELD PARISH	10	Table 13. Uckfield Police Station - Brownfield	10	in boundary. only with suitable planning	Y	keeping building as non-designated heritage asset , in keeping with area

Question 2	n/a	UCKFIELD PARISH	0	DOWNLANDS FARM	* WDC Rejected	Agree Unsuitable, maintain rejection	No	Agree Wealden continue to exclude from Local Plan - protect BOA corridor to Lake Wood, Ancient Woodland, ecological impacts, Woodland Trust(s) site, appeal dismissed site. WDC have rejected as unsuitable (agree)
Question 2	OFF4	UCKFIELD PARISH	60	Outside boundary Between Fernley and Cysleys. Land north of Eastbourne Road	?	see notes in local plan	?	<b>Green Settlement Gap - unsuitable</b> check habitats/ water / woodlands/ near tributary , Uckfield council proposed outside development boundary . Brownfield first policy.
Question 11	FF2	FRAMFIELD PARISH	30	Outside boundary. Land off Old Eastbourne Road, Uckfield. 194/1410. Between Cysleys and Fernley Park	?	see note in local plan	?	<b>Green Settlement Gap - unsuitable</b> check habitats/ water / woodlands/ near tributary , Uckfield council proposed outside development boundary
Question 11	FF5	FRAMFIELD PARISH	215	Bird in Eye North	* ?	Unsuitable - urban sprawl. Masterplan available, planning application expected	Yes	Reduce number or refuse - discuss with Framfield parish. Opposite Bird in Eye South - appeal allowed @ 190. Concerned erosion of settlement identities, not yet assessed by Uckfield Plans cttee - pending application. Risk. Plans Cttee advise
Question 2	OFF1	FRAMFIELD PARISH	90	Land at High Cross Farm, Eastbourne Road, Uckfield - Eastbourne Road	* Reject	Unsuitable - urban sprawl	No	Development boundary remains at Millenium Green and Eastbourne Road 90
Question 2	OFF2	FRAMFIELD PARISH	100	Land by Croft House, Eastbourne Road, Uckfield	* Reject	Unsuitable - urban sprawl	No	Development boundary remains at Millenium Green and Eastbourne Road 91
Question 2	OFF3	FRAMFIELD PARISH	60	Land adjacent to Croft House, Eastbourne Road, Uckfield	* Reject	Unsuitable - urban sprawl	No	Development boundary remains at Millenium Green and Eastbourne Road 92
Add to Question 2 & 11	400/1410	FRAMFIELD PARISH	450	High Cross Farm	* Reject	* Agree with WDC - Unsuitable - urban sprawl - remove from plan	No	<b>Green Settlement gap - unsuitable.</b> between Uckfield, Framfield and Little Horsted Parish - green edge to settlement at HPF, proposed green gap, Horstedpond Farm unacceptable landscape, heritage, highways, environment etc

Question 11	LH1	LITTLE HORSTED	1500	Owlsbury	* Reject	* Unsuitable - urban sprawl - remove from plan	No -use Alternative option - no more than 15109	Remove from local plan. See UTC plans responses, District Councillors , Fletching parish comments. Alternative Scenario.
Question 11	UCK11	UCKFIELD PARISH	240	White House Farm	* Reject	* Unsuitable - urban sprawl - remove from plan	Y - remove allocation	<b>Green Settlement Gap - Unsuitable.</b> LUC study 2022 boundary Snatts Road. Policy as per Lewes Plan. Uckfield-Buxted-Maresfield Green Gap . Prevent 3 parishes coalescence. Caravan Site policy protection. Protect ghylls, streams, BOA and Ancient Woodland, Lake Wood impact, groundwater and aquifer. Open rural countryside ancient landscape, unacceptable heritage impacts. Replace allocation target with brownfield first sites
Question 2	OEH1	LITTLE HORSTED / HALLAND / LAUGHTON	4440	Land at Laughton Park Farm - aka Oakleigh Village		925 in plan period	Yes 925	not Uckfield parish / adjacent - no comment as not Uckfield Town parish boundaries. Deeply concerned A22 and Highways congestion impacting A22 bypass and surrounding areas. No Highways assessments? Propose Settlement Green Gaps between settlements - policy required. Deeply concerned cumulative harm across the Low Weald and industrialisation of sensitive habitats including merging into Ringmer development impacts
Question 1	* urban sprawl into green gaps in open countryside, coalescence of parishes not acceptable to parishes.					Insist on Settlement Green Gaps		Question 1 - No, Disagree. Overdevelopment beyond 20% growth in 15-17 years. Also, WDC provide a Green Settlement Gap policy to prevent coalescence - see Lewes Local Plan. Disagree with WDC development boundary - see Uckfield proposed development boundary Map 1. Brownfield sites first, not additional allocations impacting heritage / greenfields

<p><b>ABP Question 6 - Answer Partialy (no to ABP)</b></p>	<p>OEMP4</p>	<p>MARESFIELD</p>	<p>60,000 SQM</p>	<p>Ashdown Business Park</p>	<p>* Reject</p>	<p>Unsuitable - remove from plan</p>	<p>Bellbrook Industrial Estate should be redeveloped as Brownfield, and updated, go up. Bellbrook expansion West of Uckfield has been approved and not built in ten years, on Ridgewood Farm approved not built. See also previous comments from UTC plans, regulation 18, other parishes including Fletching Parish Comments. Contamination, Shortbridge Stream River. Support Ridgewood Industrial area with vacant units. No greenfields urban sprawl as per environmental sustainability appraisal and harm to other environments and landscape. Severe highways impacts across A272/A22/A26 and bypass . John Lewis distribution hub still remains vacant and unused.</p>
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**Uckfield - no more than** 1532 Proposed development quantum Uckfield Parish - sustainable development

DRAFT FOR REVIEW

<b>Approved</b>	750	Ridgewood Farm / Seghers Place (75% of 1000 unbuilt since 2015 outline approved)
	340	Horstedpond Farm (outline approved)
	90	Eastbourne Road
<b>Allocations</b>	119	Mallard Drive
	100	Taylor Wimpey - reduce
	30	Land at Thorncrest (reduce)
	30	Sunview (reduce)
	10	Uckfield Police Station
	55	Ridgewood Lewes Road (adjacent to 1000 - reduce quantum)
	8	Cress
<b>Windfall</b>		Cysleys-Fernley check site (60 outside preferred development boundary)
		(only in existing settlement boundary if appropriate site)

**Brownfield First - no new greenfield until town centre regeneration brownfield first**

<b>Town Centre</b>		
BT Building	45	Conservation Area sensitive designs parking underneath
Mojavo area regeneration - and area behind	35	
Behind Freeman Foreman	9	
Natwest Civic Approach	21	parking underneath
Community Hub area	15	parking underneath, with hub
Dominoes area	15	parking underneath
Behind Hartfields 1970s block regeneration and town square	21	parking underneath/beside
Road by Civic Centre, Bell Farm Lane	21	Brownfield , parking underneath - well designed to inform heritage

<b>Other areas</b>		
Lewes Road - derelict house/garden	9	listed building. Degraded and fire damaged
New Road - Public House	9	public house, non designated heritage asset
Care Home - New Town	9	brownfield, former care home - residents requested bungalows, or a much reduced size of care home - live application
Holy Cross School	45	no more than, may need to be reduced due to scale and site. Closed primary school also had nursery provision - assess nursery needs to town and family / workers

**Total Development Uckfield Parish. NO MORE THAN** 1532 22% growth (7033 dwellings 2021 Census)

17-year to 2042 Bellbrook Industrial Estate

**Approved commercial** 12000sqm Land West of Uckfield (Commercial) Ridgewood Farm (not built in 10-years)

**254 Brownfield estimate** - green fields until brownfield used . Replace allocations with brownfield sites in 15-17year plan

## Introduction

**4.1** One of the Council's key strategic aims is to respond to and deliver outcomes that help combat the impacts of climate change. The Council has produced a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan<sup>61</sup> (2025-2030) detailing some of these measures, which is an important consideration for the emerging Local Plan. The climate change policies within the Local Plan will seek to support and facilitate the Council's decarbonisation plans, address climate change impacts as well as support the Council's overall Climate Emergency Actions that can be seen below.

**Figure 11 Wealden's Climate Change Emergency Actions**



**4.2** A suite of policies was presented in the previous Regulation 18 Local Plan in March 2024 in relation to climate change and it is the Council's ambition to bring such policies forward within the final version (Regulation 19) of the Local Plan. This will include further consideration of the responses received to the previous Regulation 18 Local Plan in March 2024 on those policies.

**4.3** However, this updated climate change chapter sets out our approach for only two specific areas; namely, sustainable drainage and coastal change management, which help to strengthen the Council's position in response to the impacts of climate change. The sustainable drainage policy provides a revised policy approach to that presented previously in the draft Regulation 18 Local Plan (March 2024), and the proposed Coastal Change Management policy is a new policy based on up-to-date evidence on coastal change planning and erosion data and mapping. Coastal change is required to be considered for Local Plans under the NPPF (2024), specifically paragraphs 183-186.

## Sustainable Drainage

### Why are we reconsulting on this Policy?

Policy CC8 (Sustainable Drainage) is included in this focused Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation as it is necessary to update the mapping and boundary in relation to the Pevensey Levels Hydrological Catchment Area. This now accurately reflects the area in which this policy is to be implemented and is consistent with neighbouring local planning authorities (notably Rother District Council (RDC)) and the Habitats Regulation Assessment. The update also provides an opportunity to respond to key feedback received during the previous public consultation on the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan (March 2024).

The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and the Pevensey & Cuckmere Water Level Management Board (P&CWLMB) have recommended amendments to the policy to improve clarity and technical accuracy. These are reflected in this revised draft version of the Local Plan.

The policy now includes distinct sections on sustainable drainage, water quality and treatment, the protection of the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar site and implementation and maintenance, with the final section providing clarity on the implementation and management of surface water schemes.

Additionally, reference to surface water entering foul drainage has been removed, as this is prohibited under the Water Act 1981. In addition, rainwater reuse has been added to the discharge hierarchy.

## Sustainable Drainage

**4.4** Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are designed to maximise the opportunities and benefits that can be secured from surface water management practices and provide a means of dealing with the quantity and quality of surface water and can also provide other benefits:

- Reduce the risk of flooding from surface water run-off;
- Reduce the risk of sewer flooding during heavy rainfall;
- Recharge groundwater to help prevent drought;
- Prevent water pollution by filtering runoff;
- Provide valuable habitats for wildlife; and
- Create and provide green and blue spaces for people.

**4.5** Given the flexible nature of SuDS they can be used in most situations within new developments as well as being retrofitted into existing developments. SuDS can also be designed to fit into most spaces. For example, permeable paving could be used in parking spaces or rainwater gardens as part of traffic calming measures.

**4.6** National planning policy states that SuDS should be incorporated where development could affect site drainage, with major development schemes expected to meet standards for design, operation and maintenance. There is also a requirement for development in flood risk areas to also incorporate SuDS unless inappropriate.

**4.7** In January 2023, the government stated that SuDS will become mandatory for all new development from 2024<sup>62</sup>. In advance of this, they stated that they would consult on the scope, threshold and process. Whilst the outcome of the consultation is not yet known, depending on its outcome, changes may affect the Council's proposed approach to SuDS and subsequently the SuDS policy. At this stage, SuDS is not mandatory for all development. The Council will continue working with our neighbouring authorities on cross boundary issues, including SuDS, as well as the Lead Local Flood Authority(LLFA) to ensure a consistent approach to SuDS requirements.

The remainder of this Chapter focused on coastal management and Pevensey Levels.