

Core Strategy Issues and Emerging Options Topic Papers

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR ACCOMMODATING AND DELIVERING GROWTH

Background and Aims

The Introductory Topic Paper provides the background to the Local Development Framework (LDF), the progress made on the Core Strategy for Lewes District to date and how the content of all the Topic Papers has been formulated. This included engagement with District Councillors and representatives from Town and Parish Councils.

The aim of this consultation stage is to present the emerging work on the Core Strategy and seek the views of the public and key stakeholders on the various elements of this work. The consultation will last **8 weeks**, running from the 21st May 2010 to the 16th July 2010. At the end of this paper there are a number of questions that we are keen for individuals and organisations to respond to. Details on how to respond can also be found in this part of the paper.

Purpose of this Topic Paper

Topic Paper 4 sets out a number of draft strategic objectives that have been devised with the aim of being achieved through the Local Development Framework. In order to achieve these objectives the Core Strategy needs to set out a deliverable spatial strategy that will need to be achievable by 2026. A key element of this spatial strategy will be identifying how and where growth will take place in the District during the plan period. This will include housing, employment, retail, transport infrastructure, recreational facilities and all other community services and facilities. Due to the strategic nature of the Core Strategy, only a broad high-level approach to how growth will be distributed will be set out in the document. Many of the actual sites that will be brought forward for development will be done so through the 'Site Allocations Development Plan Document' (to be prepared subsequent to the Core Strategy) or through Area Action Plans¹.

¹ The exception to this would be if the Council wish to allocate a strategic site(s), as allowed by PPS12. A strategic site is classed as a site that is considered central to achievement of the strategy.

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Using the emerging evidence base, as well as having regard to a number of key policies and strategies (detailed in this paper), the District Council has begun the process of identifying options for how growth (new housing, employment, retail, etc) could be distributed in the District. With regards to retail and employment growth, at this stage the Council is working on how much, if any, additional provision that we should be planning for and where it should be located. The Employment Land Review and the update that will be undertaken for the Retail Study will help establish this.

With the above in mind, this paper has focussed on options for delivering housing growth. Despite this, it is important to remember that the creation and support of sustainable communities is a key element of the strategic objectives and therefore housing developments will need to be accompanied, or supported, by the appropriate level of community services and facilities, jobs and infrastructure. Hence, it can be assumed that some options for housing growth will not be solely for housing and would involve the provision of, or contribution to, a number of services, facilities (possibly including retail), local employment and infrastructure.

In some instances, options for housing growth are likely to be dependent on the delivery of specific improvements/new infrastructure that would not be classed as standard contributions/provisions. Such infrastructure requirements will be determined through the Council's emerging evidence base. For instance, the Transport Study will help in identifying where specific improvements or new provision of road infrastructure and/or public transport facilities will be required.

The purpose of this Topic Paper is to highlight the options that have been identified to date, seek views on these and also ask for further options to be put forward (if necessary).

Key policies and influences relating to housing growth

The policy direction that the Council will take, with regards to housing growth, will need to be in accordance with national planning policy, as well as regional planning policy (South East Plan). The Council's evidence base, which is currently being prepared, will also be used to inform this policy area. Annex A to this Topic Paper identifies these key policies and influences (please note that this is not an exhaustive list, it is only intended to provide a brief context).

The main influence on the Council's approach to housing growth is the approved South East Plan. This requires the delivery of 4,400 net additional dwellings in Lewes District in the period 2006 – 2026. The South East Plan identifies a sub-region that partly falls within Lewes District; this is the Sussex Coast Sub-Region. Out of the District's total housing requirement, 3,400 net additional dwellings need to be delivered in this part of the District, although some flexibility over this figure will be allowed. The map on the following page identifies the part of the District that is covered by the sub-region.

Against the Council's housing requirements, a significant proportion of the required dwellings can already be accounted for. These are either dwellings that have been built in the period since 2006, or dwellings that are 'committed' to being developed (i.e. allocated housing sites, houses under construction or unimplemented planning permissions for housing). Table 1 (below) summarises the most recent position on completions and commitments and what level of housing the Core Strategy needs to plan for².

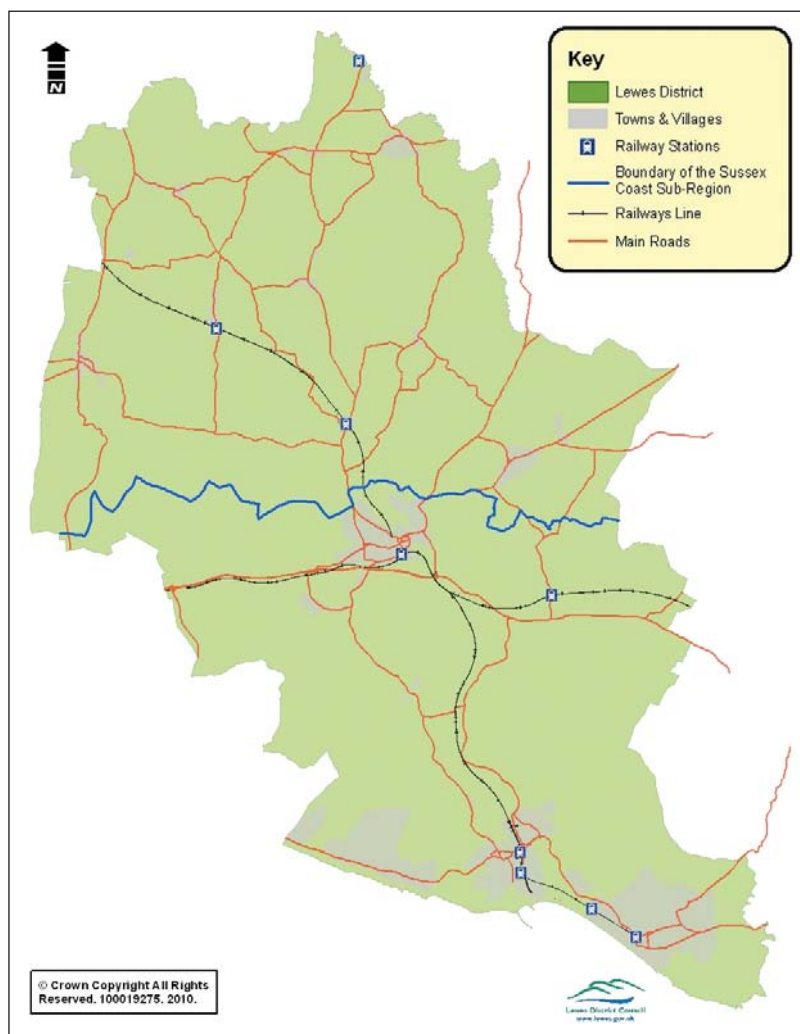


Table 1 – Housing requirements for Lewes District

	District-wide	Part of the District covered by the Sussex Coast Sub-Region	Rest of the District
Total requirement	4,400	3,400	1,000
Completions (up until 31st March 2009)	969	736	233
Units under construction	181	134	47
Allocations without permission	497	427	70
Unimplemented permissions	761	623	138
Remaining requirements up until 2026	1992	1480	512

² Note: the figures for completions, commitments and remaining requirements may be adjusted following completion of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).



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Key issues that need to be addressed in a housing delivery strategy

By examining the key policies and influences relating to housing growth, as well as identifying the issues and challenges that the District faces (see Topic Paper 2), it has been possible to identify the following specific issues that will need to be addressed in setting a strategy for distributing housing growth;

- The key issues are whether or not the Council is able to accommodate its housing requirements, as set out in the South East Plan, and, if it is able to meet the requirement, where this housing can be delivered. Particular attention needs to be given to how new housing can contribute towards sustainable economic growth and regeneration of the Sussex Coast sub-region.
- Although the South East Plan requires most of the residential development in the sub-region to be directed to the towns, this will need to be considered against the fact that the towns in the Lewes District (all of which are in the sub-region) have many significant constraints to development, including significant areas at risk from flooding, contaminated sites and the National Park either immediately bordering or, in the case of Lewes, including the town.
- Anticipated pressure/proposals of neighbouring authorities to accommodate development adjoining and/or near to the Lewes District.
- In the short-term, an issue is the current economic climate and the implications this may have on housing delivery as well as the viability of a number of potential housing schemes.
- The need to ensure that housing is directed to the locations where a need exists.
- The requirement to ensure that the Core Strategy addresses the issue of housing land supply in the short-term (i.e. the Council must demonstrate a 5 year supply) and the longer term. In accordance with PPS12, there is also the need for the Council to have a contingency in place that would be implemented in the event of an under-supply of housing (generally as a result of sites not being delivered as and when expected).
- PPS3 requires a Core Strategy document to identify broad locations and specific sites for housing that will enable a continuous delivery of housing 15 years from the date of adoption of the document. As the District Council envisages the Core Strategy not being adopted until 2012, the strategy for distributing housing growth therefore has to plan for the period up until 2027³.

Options for a housing delivery strategy

The following options have been identified and influenced by the early engagement work, the Council's emerging evidence base and national and regional policy and guidance. It should be made clear that no appraisal of the options has been undertaken and, therefore, no decision has been made as to what the Council's preferred policy option will be⁴. At this stage, the Council is keen to identify as many reasonable and

³ In this regard the District Council has taken the annual average provision of net dwelling completions from the South East Plan (220 dwellings per annum) and assumed that this will also be the required annual housing delivery rate beyond 2026.

⁴ The Preferred Strategy document, due to be published in late 2010, will identify the preferred approach, along with all other options considered, including their appraisal.

relevant policy options as possible and seek any initial views on the emerging options identified to date. The options that have so far been identified for this policy area are set out in the remainder of this paper (it should be noted that the options could be combined with each other and that more than one of the options could be required in order to deliver the housing requirements for the District).

For **the part of the District outside of the Sussex Coast Sub-region**, 3 options have been identified to date in order to meet the residual 562 dwellings required to 2027 (512 dwellings until 2026 and 50 dwellings for the year 2027);

1. Focus the majority of housing growth on sites immediately adjoining Haywards Heath and/or Burgess Hill. Minimal growth (probably infill development and redevelopment⁵) would take place in the settlements elsewhere in this part of the District.
2. Focus a significant proportion of the growth at Plumpton Green and Cooksbridge (i.e. where mainline train stations currently exist), and possibly Wivelsfield/Wivelsfield Green, due to its relative close proximity to Wivelsfield train station (within 2 miles). The remaining growth required would be directed to the other settlements in this part of the District (a few allocations to the larger villages with the greatest range of services and facilities).
3. Growth in this part of the District is directed on a proportional basis, in that the larger villages take the largest proportion of growth (site allocations for housing) and the smaller villages/hamlets take minimal growth (likely to be infill development and redevelopment, along with a degree of development that is social housing required to meet local needs).

For **the part of the District covered by the Sussex Coast sub-region**, which includes all four towns that are within the District, the options that are currently emerging are set out below (note: a combination of a number of these options will almost certainly need to be taken forward in order to meet the housing requirement in this part of the District – the residual requirement up to 2027 is 1,650 dwellings (1,480 dwellings until 2026 and 170 dwellings for the year 2027));

4. Growth within the existing built up area of Lewes town (i.e. no greenfield extensions to the town). This will involve infill development and the redevelopment of certain sites (to be informed by the SHLAA), one or two of which could be significant in size (i.e. all/part of the North Street area of the town⁶. If such a site were to be identified it would be on the condition that the development could be appropriately defended against flood risk).
5. As above, but allow for small-scale housing developments on land immediately adjoining the town (note: all such sites would be within the National Park).

⁵ Also known as windfall development (see footnote 31 of PPS3).

⁶ This site has been mentioned as it is the largest potential development site within the town. No decision has yet to be taken as to the policy direction that the Council will pursue on this site. The outcomes of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), Employment Land Review (ELR), Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (completed in 2009) and the appraisal of options identified by and submitted to the Council will assist in this. Further information on this site can be found in Topic Paper 7.



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- 6.** Growth within the existing built up area of Seaford (i.e. no greenfield extensions to the town). This will involve infill development and the redevelopment of sites (to be informed by the SHLAA).
- 7.** As above, but allow for small-scale housing developments on land immediately adjoining the town (note: the National Park boundary is drawn very tightly around the existing built up area of the town, meaning that there are minimal greenfield sites that are not covered by the National Park designation)
- 8.** Infill and redevelopment of sites in Peacehaven/Telscombe (to be informed by the SHLAA).
- 9.** As above, but to also allow for greenfield extensions on land that adjoins the existing built up area boundary of Peacehaven/Telscombe, prioritising sites that do not fall within the National Park.
- 10.** Strategic level development on brownfield land at Newhaven as part of a comprehensive regeneration scheme for the town⁷.
- 11.** Strategic level development on the fringes of Newhaven (land not within the designated National Park).
- 12.** Small-scale housing developments to meet local needs for the villages that fall within the National Park (the amount of development that this could equate to will be dependent on the outcomes of the SHLAA and the update that is due to be undertaken of the Housing Needs Survey).

If there is a development option that has not yet been identified and you feel it merits consideration, this is your chance to let the Council know what this is.

As previously mentioned in this Topic Paper, a number of key pieces of evidence that will inform the policy approach to housing distribution have yet to be completed (in particular the SHLAA). Hence, some of the options may prove to be unrealistic, and therefore not worthy of further consideration, as work on the Core Strategy progresses. However, based on the information and views that the Council has obtained to date, the options presented here can be considered as being realistic.

⁷ Further information on these options can be found in Topic Paper 8.

This is your opportunity to shape your local area and influence how the District develops over the next 15 years. The Council would appreciate and value any comments you have on this document. With regards to this Topic Paper we would particularly appreciate your answers to the following questions:

- *Do you have any views on the options that have been identified to date?*
- *Do you have any information relating to the options, identified to date, that could assist the Council in the appraisal process?*
- *Are there any options, which have not been identified, that the Council should be considering and appraising?*

Obtaining additional copies of the Issues and Emerging Options Topic Papers

Downloading it from www.lewes.gov.uk/corestrategy

Emailing ldf@lewes.gov.uk

Visiting Lewes District Council at Southover House

Telephoning the Planning Policy Team on **01273 484417**

How to respond to the Core Strategy Issues and Emerging Options Topic Papers

Views are invited to the questions that are located at the end of each of the Topic Papers. You need only reply to any part of the questions that are of interest to you, or you may introduce other comments.

Comments may be sent to the Council by:

By email to: **ldf@lewes.gov.uk**

By fax to: **01273 484452**

By post to: Lewes District Council

Planning Policy Team

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Comments must be received by the 16th July 2010





Annex A – Key policies and influences relating to housing growth

National planning policy

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3: Housing

Some of the key messages and policy requirements in this document are;

- New housing needs to be developed in suitable locations that offer a range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure.
- New housing should contribute towards cutting carbon emissions by focusing it in locations with good public transport accessibility and/or by means other than the private car.
- The priority is that new housing is developed on previously developed land. Opportunities for housing provision on surplus public sector land need to be considered.
- There is a need to provide housing in rural areas, which includes villages as the housing can enhance or maintain their sustainability.
- Planning Authorities need to develop policies and implementation strategies that ensure sufficient and suitable land is available to achieve the housing objectives. This includes identifying deliverable sites to deliver housing in the first five years of the plan period and to identify broad locations and sites that will enable continuous delivery of housing for at least 15 years from the date of adoption.
- Sites identified for housing within the first five years of the plan need to be available now, be a suitable site within a suitable location and have a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years (i.e. viability issues do not prevent it from being delivered). Sites and broad locations identified beyond the first five year period will also need to meet these criteria, with the exception that they will only need to have a reasonable prospect of being available for development.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

Some of the key messages in this document that are relevant to this topic paper are:

- It is essential that local planning authorities plan to meet housing requirements in rural areas, based on an up to date assessment of local need.
- Major development, including housing, within a National Park should not take place, except in exceptional circumstances.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 12: Local Spatial Planning

Some of the key messages in this document that are relevant to this topic paper are:

- A Core Strategy can allocate strategically important sites. This could include large-scale housing sites, or sites for a mixed-use development.
- Evidence will need to be prepared that will demonstrate how and when the physical, social and green infrastructure, which will need to accompany new housing, will be developed.

Regional Planning Policy

South East Plan – Policy H1

- The policy requires Lewes District Council to prepare a plan to enable the delivery of an annual average of 220 net additional dwellings. This equates to a total of 4,400 net additional dwellings in the plan period (2006 – 2026).

South East Plan – Sussex Coast sub-region (Policies SCT1 – SCT7)

- Policy SCT5 requires that a significant proportion of the Council's housing requirement is met in the part of the District covered by the Sussex Coast sub-region (this sub-region includes all the main towns within the District). Across this sub-region an annual average of 170 net additional dwellings (3,400 across the plan period) will need to be provided. Some flexibility will be allowed in relation to these requirements.
- Most of the residential development in the sub-region should be focussed on existing towns by optimising the use of previously developed land and, where necessary, by making new land allocations as sustainable urban extensions. New housing to help with the regeneration of the coastal towns is seen as key.

The Council's own documents and evidence base

The Council has already produced a number of documents and prepared a number of pieces of evidence that will inform the emerging policy on housing distribution. Further evidence is also currently being, or will be, prepared to inform the emerging Core Strategy. The majority of this evidence will be in place to inform the Preferred Strategy stage of the document.

Lewes District Sustainable Community Strategy (2008)

- One of the priority themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy is "Decent and Affordable Housing for All". Two shared aims underpin this priority theme, which are; "decent, affordable and sustainable housing for all, regardless of tenure" and; "meeting the housing needs of everyone in the District".

Annual Monitoring Report (2008/09)

- There have been 969 net dwelling completions between the 1st April 2006 and the 31st March 2009. The residual requirement for the District is, therefore, 3,431 dwellings, which equates to 202 net additional dwellings per annum.
- The Annual Monitoring Report identifies that the Council's current 5 year housing requirement is expected to be met and can be identified at this stage.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (to be completed in summer 2010)

- The 'call for sites' and initial screening has resulted in a significant number of sites that will be assessed through the SHLAA, some being strategic in nature.



Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2008)

- The SHMA considers that there are significant constraints, such as the National Park designation and significant areas at risk from flooding in urban areas, which could impact upon the timely delivery of housing.
- The SHMA has also concluded that the District Council may need to develop proposals for reasonably significant land releases in the north of the District and outside the proposed National Park to secure the long term delivery of housing.

Other key facts and figures

- The population of the District is growing steadily, due to inward migration rather than natural increase (i.e. births exceeding deaths).
- In line with the national trend, the average household size in the District is decreasing.
- House prices in the District are relatively high, driven by commuting and the District's status as a popular retirement location.
- Over 2,000 households are currently on the Council Housing register, with a need for affordable housing being identified in all settlements within the District.

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audiotape,
disk or in another language upon request.**

**Please telephone 01273 484141 or
email lewesdc@lewes.gov.uk**