

Core Strategy Issues and Emerging Options Topic Papers

OTHER KEY ELEMENTS OF THE EMERGING STRATEGY

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 Papers 1 – 5 set out for consultation the characteristics of Lewes District; key strategic issues and challenges that the District faces; a draft vision that seeks to address the issues and challenges; draft strategic objectives for achieving that vision and invites comments on a broad strategy for accommodating and delivering the necessary growth to serve these objectives, along with the requirements of the South East Plan (primarily focusing on housing growth). As the draft vision and objectives for the District are very wide-ranging, and the Core Strategy will cover much more than housing delivery, a number of potential other key elements (strategy/policy areas) have emerged that will need to be addressed in the Core Strategy if it is to meet the wider strategic objectives (as currently drafted).

Further work is required in establishing robust evidence to help identify and appraise options for these other policy/strategy areas. Therefore, this Topic Paper does not attempt to identify any specific options for achieving the objectives in relation to these 'other key elements'. However, it is important to consult on the scope of the specified other key elements at this stage to ensure that we have identified them correctly and to seek opinions on possible options for tackling these policy/strategy areas between now and 2026.



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This Topic Paper identifies the potential additional strategy/policy areas that the Core Strategy will contain. These are set out in no particular order of priority. We recognise that through the emerging work on the evidence base for the Core Strategy it is possible that other strategy/policy areas that require consideration will be identified. Evidence base work that has, will, or is currently being undertaken and is of relevance to informing the policy/strategy area in question has been identified.

It is essential that we do not simply reiterate national or regional planning policy for any strategy/policy area in the Core Strategy, but that where there is local justification we set out appropriate local strategies for achieving the draft objectives. Hence, in developing these additional policy/strategy areas it may become clear that the direction that the Council takes will merely reiterate national or regional policy. In such instances, the Council will not take forward such a policy/strategy and will instead just provide a 'signpost' in the Core Strategy document to the relevant regional and/or national policy.

The following proposed strategy/policy areas make reference to the achievement of a number of the draft strategic objectives. **For further detail on these draft objectives please see Topic Paper 4.**

Sustainable Communities

Although the vast majority of the draft objectives apply to this strategy/ policy area, in this instance it is considered that the following are the most applicable:

OBJECTIVE 3 – To work with other agencies to improve the accessibility to key community services and facilities and provide the new and upgraded infrastructure that is required to create and support sustainable communities.

OBJECTIVE 7 – To reduce the need for travel and to promote a sustainable system of transport and land use for people who live in, work in, and visit the District.

To ensure that the objectives relevant to this policy area are realised it will be essential to develop a strategy for how the existing communities, in terms of the settlements in the District, evolve over the plan period. For instance, the viability of local shops and services may depend upon the numbers of people living locally and able to access them. The strategy for this policy area will therefore need to consider how best such facilities and services can be retained and, where possible, enhanced. Key to this is likely to be the development of a "settlement hierarchy" and establishing the role each settlement in the District should fulfil over the plan period.

We are currently developing the evidence base for this policy area, including a new **Rural Settlement Study** to audit existing services and facilities available in the rural settlements of the District and assess their sustainability. The **Strategic Housing Market Assessment** (and any updates undertaken) along with the **Housing Needs Survey** will also help identify options for this policy area.

Economic Development and Regeneration

The following draft objectives will apply to this strategy/policy area:

OBJECTIVE 5 – To maximise opportunities for re-using suitable previously developed land in urban areas and to plan for new development in the highly sustainable locations without adversely affecting the character of the area.

OBJECTIVE 7 – To reduce the need for travel and to promote a sustainable system of transport and land use for people who live in, work in, and visit the District.

OBJECTIVE 9 – To stimulate and maintain a buoyant and balanced local economy through regeneration of coastal towns, support for the rural economy and ensuring the economy does not become reliant on one or two sectors.

In order to achieve the above draft objectives we will need to identify:

- The future employment needs of the District;
- The types of employment premises and support infrastructure (including broadband etc) required to support the local economy;
- How much additional employment land will be required;
- Where best to provide employment facilities in relation to transport, labour markets, customers etc;
- What will happen to existing employment sites (including any strategic employment sites to be safeguarded from changes to other uses);
- A deliverable strategy for regenerating Newhaven;
- How to use the National Park status of the South Downs to support sustainable local tourism and the local rural economy, both within and outside the National Park boundary.

Key emerging evidence for this strategy/policy area includes the **Lewes District Employment Land Review** (a comprehensive assessment of the existing and future requirements of the local economy currently being carried out by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners), a **Physical Development Vision for Newhaven** (master-planning study currently being carried out by BBP Regeneration), and the **East Sussex Local Economic Assessment** (currently being carried out countywide by East Sussex County Council in conjunction with the District's and Borough Council's).





Retail and Town Centres

The following draft objectives will apply to this strategy/policy area:

OBJECTIVE 3 – To work with other agencies to improve the accessibility to key community services and facilities and provide the new and upgraded infrastructure that is required to create and support sustainable communities.

OBJECTIVE 4 – To conserve and enhance the high quality of the District's towns, villages and rural environment by ensuring that all new development is designed to a high standard and maintains and enhances the character, separate identity and 'sense of place' of individual settlements.

OBJECTIVE 5 – To maximise opportunities for re-using suitable previously developed land in urban areas and to plan for new development in the highly sustainable locations without adversely affecting the character of the area.

OBJECTIVE 7 – To reduce the need for travel and to promote a sustainable system of transport and land use for people who live in, work in, and visit the District.

OBJECTIVE 9 – To stimulate and maintain a buoyant and balanced local economy through regeneration of coastal towns, support for the rural economy and ensuring the economy does not become reliant on one or two sectors.

In order to achieve the above draft objectives, the Core Strategy will need to provide a clear strategy for the future of retail provision and the role of town centres in the District.

In 2009 a simple audit of retail premises in the urban areas of the District was undertaken, which identified problem areas and vacancy rates in the face of the economic recession. The **Retail Study of Lewes District** (GVA Grimley), a comprehensive assessment of retail activity and town centres, was published in 2005. Due to significant changes in the economic climate having taken place, this Retail Study needs to be reviewed in due course to inform a strategy for retail and the town centres for inclusion in the LDF Core Strategy.



Affordable and appropriate Housing

The following draft objective will apply to this strategy/policy area:

OBJECTIVE 1 – To deliver the homes and accommodation required to meet the needs of the District and to ensure that the housing growth requirements of the South East Plan to 2026 are accommodated in the most sustainable way.

Affordable and appropriate housing also has implications for ensuring our communities are sustainable, as set out in draft objective 3, although this objective does not refer specifically to affordable and appropriate housing provision.

A viable strategy for the delivery of affordable housing will be required in order to meet the draft objective relevant to this policy area. A strategy will also be required to ensure that the right kind of housing is provided. Hence, a strategy/policy area on housing mix will be essential in order to ensure that the appropriate level of starter homes, family homes, smaller units for single person households, housing for the disabled and for an ageing population etc, is provided. A strategy to ensure the provision of appropriate sites to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will also need to be set out.



The Council's Housing Section will be carrying out a revised **Housing Needs Survey** in 2010, which will form part of the evidence base for affordable housing requirements in the District. Demonstrating the viability of the affordable housing strategy that emerges and any targets for provision levels will be vital for delivery. We will therefore also need to carry out an up to date viability assessment of any potential policy directions for this area. We have a **Strategic Housing Market Assessment** (SHMA) (DTZ, 2008), which will be used to help identify policy approaches for securing the right type of housing. It is likely that the SHMA will need updating in light of the recent significant changes in the economic climate and housing market. We are also currently undertaking a **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment** (Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners), which will inform the emerging strategies for open market and affordable housing delivery. For the part of the strategy that will be concerned with Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, the Council's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2005, which is likely to be updated once the Housing Needs Survey has been undertaken, will assist in the identification and appraisal of emerging policy options.



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Climate Change, Flood Risk and Environmental Resource Management

The following draft objectives will apply to this strategy/policy area:

OBJECTIVE 6 – To ensure that the District reduces locally contributing causes of climate change, including through the implementation of the highest feasible standards of sustainable construction techniques in new development.

OBJECTIVE 7 – To reduce the need for travel and to promote a sustainable system of transport and land use for people who live in, work in, and visit the District.

OBJECTIVE 8 – To reduce the District's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, particularly by seeking to reduce the number of properties that are at an unacceptable risk of flooding.

OBJECTIVE 10 – To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.

In order to achieve the above draft objectives the Core Strategy will need to set out a strategy/policies that seek to reduce the District's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, including flood risk and the impacts on biodiversity habitats, and reducing locally contributing causes of climate change (i.e. seeking to reduce the District's carbon footprint). Close liaison with the Environment Agency and Natural England, amongst others, will be very important in developing such a strategy/policies.

The need for the Core Strategy to include specific policies on the protection, and possible enhancement, of landscapes and biodiversity will be considered against whether or not such policies would be merely repeating national and/or regional policy and legislation. If it becomes evident that a locally distinctive approach is required for these policy areas then it is likely the Core Strategy will set this out in order to help achieve the above mentioned objectives.



The evidence base for these areas is currently being established. Key documents will include the published **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment** (AECOM, 2009), the **Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development Study**, currently being undertaken by AECOM, and a **Green Infrastructure Study**. Due to the presence of the Lewes Downs Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Castle Hill SAC in the District, a Habitats Regulations Assessment will also need to be undertaken (this could possibly include an Appropriate Assessment). Outcomes from this work could have implications in requiring potential policy areas to be addressed in the emerging Core Strategy.

We also have a range of documents to inform flood and coastal erosion risk management. These include the **Sussex Ouse Flood Management Plan** (2004), the **Ouse Catchment Flood Management Plan** (2009), the **Beachy Head to Selsey Bill Shoreline Management Plan**, and relevant Coast Defence Strategies.

Design and the Historic Environment

The following draft objectives will apply to this policy area:

OBJECTIVE 2 – To take advantage of the richness and diversity of the District's natural and historical assets to promote and achieve a sustainable tourism industry in and around the District.

OBJECTIVE 4 – To conserve and enhance the high quality of the District's towns, villages and rural environment by ensuring that all new development is designed to a high standard and maintains and enhances the character, separate identity and 'sense of place' of individual settlements.

OBJECTIVE 6 – To ensure that the District reduces locally contributing causes of climate change, including through the implementation of the highest feasible standards of sustainable construction techniques in new developments.

OBJECTIVE 10 – To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.

The District Council will work closely with the South Downs National Park Authority, English Heritage, and other local, regional and national organisations in order to develop a locally distinctive strategy, for this subject area, that meets the draft objectives detailed above.

The **Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development Study** (currently being undertaken by AECOM) will include recommendations on appropriate local strategies and targets for sustainable construction, taking into consideration the special and diverse nature of the built and natural environment of the District. **Extensive Urban Surveys**, which have been undertaken for the settlements of Lewes, Seaford, Peacehaven, Newhaven and Ditchling, along with the 35 **Conservation Area Appraisals** (completed or in preparation) will also be used to inform this policy area.





Infrastructure Delivery (including transport)

The following draft objectives will apply to this policy area:

OBJECTIVE 1 – To deliver the homes and accommodation required to meet the needs of the District and to ensure that the housing growth requirements of the South East Plan to 2026 are accommodated in the most sustainable way.

OBJECTIVE 3 – To work with other agencies to improve the accessibility to key community services and facilities and provide the new and upgraded infrastructure that is required to create and support sustainable communities.

OBJECTIVE 7 – To reduce the need for travel and to promote a sustainable system of transport and land use for people who live in, work in, and visit the District.

OBJECTIVE 9 – To stimulate and maintain a buoyant and balanced local economy through regeneration of coastal towns, support for the rural economy and ensuring the economy does not become reliant on one or two sectors.

The provision of appropriate infrastructure to meet the changing needs of the population of the District and to serve the identified growth requirements will be addressed in the Core Strategy. The extent and nature of such infrastructure requirements cannot be fully determined until the likely levels and locations of growth and the changing needs of our communities have been identified (this is what a number of pieces of our evidence will do).

To help inform this policy area, the District Council is undertaking an Infrastructure Audit to establish the current levels of provision across the District. This Audit will form the basis for establishing the infrastructure that will be required to support the growth that will take place in the District during the plan period. These requirements, together with how they will be delivered, will be set out in an **Infrastructure Delivery Plan**. The issue of green infrastructure will be incorporated into this study, as will a revised **Review of Recreation and Play Space Provision and Requirements**. In order to help establish the requirements for transport infrastructure, the Council will be undertaking a **Transport Study**, and the County Council will be preparing the next **Local Transport Plan (LTP3)**.



Monitoring

The progress of the Core Strategy will be monitored and reported on annually with identified targets and indicators to assess achievements against the objectives. Such targets will be set once the preferred strategies have been established and the evidence base to support them has been completed.

Since 2005 the Council has been producing **Annual Monitoring Reports** on the progress of the emerging Local Development Framework and achievements against a range of existing planning policies and performance indicators. The information being gathered through this monitoring process will in itself be an important element of the emerging evidence base for the Core Strategy and subsequent reviews.

This is your opportunity to shape your local area and input on 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:

- *Given the issues, vision and objectives identified in Topic Papers 2 – 4, do you consider that there are any other key policy areas that the Core Strategy should address (that have not otherwise been covered in Topic Papers 1 to 5)?*
- *What strategy options do you consider should be assessed for the identified key policy areas set out in this Topic Paper in order to meet the relevant draft objective(s)?*
- *Can your suggested strategy option realistically be achieved by 2026?*
- *Are there any other key elements/policy areas set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy that the Core Strategy should be addressing?*



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**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

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Comments must be received by the 16th July 2010



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

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email lewesdc@lewes.gov.uk**