

Introduction

- 14.1 This section of the Local Plan contains the specific proposals which relate to individual villages and settlements within Mid Sussex. Most of the villages have specific policies and proposals relating to them. Some of the smaller villages and settlements do not have specific proposals relating to them but have defined built-up area boundaries and/or Conservation Areas.
- 14.2 The village and settlement chapters are set out in alphabetical order within this section of the local plan as follows:

Albourne
Ansty
Ardingly
Ashurst Wood
Balcombe
Birch Grove
Bolney
Clayton
Copthorne
Crawley Down
Cuckfield
Fulking
Handcross
Highbrook
Hurstpierpoint
Horsted Keynes
Keymer and Hassocks
Lindfield
Pease Pottage
Poynings
Pyecombe
Sayers Common
Scaynes Hill
Slaugham
Staplefield
Turners Hill
Warninglid
West Hoathly/Sharpthorne

All villages also have a proposals inset map relating to them.

- 14.3 The final chapter in this section entitled 'The Rural Area' relates to sites within the District to which specific policies apply, but where the sites are located within the Countryside Area of Development Restraint.
- 14.4 The 'Rural Area chapter' also contains a description of the smaller settlements of Brook Street, Furnace Wood, Twineham, Twineham Green, Hickstead and Newtimber. These settlements do not have defined built-up area boundaries. They lie within the Countryside Area of Development Restraint where new development will be restricted to that complying with the policies relating to that designation. They also have no specific policies relating to them. These settlements do not have Inset Maps.
- 14.5 It is important that this section of the Local Plan is read in conjunction with the first section of the Local Plan which contains the topic chapters. These set out the general

policies which apply across Mid Sussex.

Strategy

- 14.6 The villages and settlements of Mid Sussex are set in attractive countryside, much of which is designated as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The underlying aim of this Plan is to safeguard the countryside for its own sake and to secure its protection and enhancement, preventing development which does not need to be there. The policies in the Countryside Chapter of this Local Plan give special protection to AONBs together with sites of ecological importance, the best and most versatile agricultural land and to the gaps between villages.
- 14.7 The attractiveness of the built environment is also reflected in the number of designations, including Conservation Areas, numerous listed buildings and archaeological sites. The special quality of the rural and built environment acts as a significant constraint on the amount of new development which can be accommodated in the District. This is a major influence on the strategy for future development.
- 14.8 As far as new housing is concerned, the Local Planning Authority considers that the rural part of the District can make only a very modest contribution to the overall provision in Mid Sussex over the Plan period. The villages are not regarded as suitable for new large scale housing development. As a result, only a very limited amount of land has been identified in the villages where development can be integrated satisfactorily into the existing settlement pattern, and where it meets a number of sustainability criteria. Accessibility by public transport is an important criteria and improvements will be sought where development takes place. Access to local facilities is another important criteria. The decreasing number of village shops, banks and post offices is a concern. Where possible the Council will seek to retain and encourage local shopping, health and community facilities in order to retain viable and accessible village centres.
- 14.9 A large number of villages and settlements within Mid Sussex suffer from traffic problems of some kind. Such problems include high volumes of through traffic, the high speed of vehicles, road safety and Heavy Goods Vehicles using roads which are unsuited to such traffic. These issues can have detrimental effects on the character of the villages and the amenities of those living in them. The District Council will continue to work with the Highway Authority to investigate ways to reduce levels of traffic through the villages and the problems that this brings. The Rural Transport Plan which forms part of the West Sussex Local Transport Plan seeks to identify and address the problems experienced in the villages and rural areas of the County.
- 14.10 No new designations for employment are included for the villages but where existing opportunities are appropriately located these will be encouraged.

Policy Aims

- 14.11 The aims of the policies within the Local Plan relating to the villages and settlements are:
- (a) to restrict new development to within the built-up area boundaries, other than in exceptional circumstances, and to ensure that it relates sympathetically to existing buildings and their surroundings in order to safeguard the character and function of the villages;
 - (b) to seek to preserve or enhance the special character or appearance of the Conservation Areas, and other areas of architectural, historic, or landscape

interest;

- (c) to preserve listed buildings and their settings and to protect and enhance sites of archaeological importance and their setting;
- (d) to protect the identity and amenity of the villages by safeguarding the strategic and local gaps;
- (e) to conserve the character and appearance of the countryside settings of the villages;
- (f) to make provision, where appropriate for small scale employment generating development compatible with the village environment;
- (g) to seek to meet the needs of local firms and to make adequate provision for their expansion;
- (h) to maintain and where possible enhance existing shopping facilities, and in cases where shops cease to be viable allow for alternative forms of activity that add to the commercial vitality of the village, in an acceptable manner;
- (i) to maintain and where possible enhance community and recreational facilities within the villages including the protection of existing areas of open space; and
- (j) to encourage improved access by public transport and to reduce the impact of traffic movement through the villages, by further traffic calming and roads safety measures where appropriate.

Policy Context

14.12 Within the topic chapters set out in the first part of this Local Plan policies relating to the countryside, built environment, housing, employment, shopping, transport and parking, recreation and tourism and community services are set out in detail. These policies and the supporting text should be referred to in addition to the specific village policies. More detailed information regarding a number of the policies is set out below as it applies to nearly all of the villages.

Built-up Area Boundary

14.13 The built-up area boundaries of the villages have been defined to preserve their rural setting and to protect the surrounding countryside from residential development. Within the defined built-up areas boundaries of the villages opportunities for new development may arise through residential infilling or the redevelopment of existing opportunities. Any such proposals will be assessed against the relevant policies in this Local Plan.

14.14 Outside the built-up area boundaries proposals for new development will be firmly resisted and restricted to those forms of development for which a countryside location is necessary or where exceptional circumstances apply. Such development would need to be appropriate to, and not adversely affect, the countryside. The relevant policies are set out in the Countryside Chapter of this Local Plan.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 14.15 The High Weald AONB runs across much of the central and northern part of the district. The Sussex Downs AONB runs across the southern part of the district.
- 14.16 The Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was designated in 1966 and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was designated in 1980. This designation gives formal recognition to the national importance of the landscape character of the area. Such a designation necessarily means that the policies operating within much of the Mid Sussex area are restrictive in terms of new development. The relevant policies are set out in the Countryside Chapter of this Local Plan.

Strategic and Local Gaps

- 14.17 The area between many of the towns and villages in Mid Sussex, has been classified as a strategic or local gap. This is in order to prevent the coalescence of settlements and to retain their separate identity and amenity. The areas where such gaps have been designated are indicated on the Proposals Map.
- 14.18 Development will only be permitted within these gaps in where a countryside location is reasonably necessary for the use, it enhances the landscape and the development would not compromise the objectives of the gap. Supplementary Planning Guidance has been produced by the Council and contains assessments of the Strategic Gaps. Policies relating to gaps are set out in the Countryside Chapter of this Local Plan.

Conservation Areas

- 14.19 To ensure that the special character and appearance of the Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex are preserved and that special features are safeguarded, policies B12 and B15 set out in the Built Environment chapter of this Local Plan will be applied. Detailed guidance for owners of buildings in Conservation Areas is set out in Planning Information Leaflet CD1 'A Guide to Preserving Or Enhancing Conservation Areas'.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

- 14.20 The Local Planning Authority aims to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land, as classified by MAFF, due to its national importance. Proposals which would result in its loss will only be permitted in compelling circumstances in accordance with C8 policy in the Countryside Chapter. The presence of such land will, therefore, be an additional constraint upon development.

Areas of Importance for Nature Conservation

- 14.21 There are many sites for nature conservation which have been designated under statutes and international conventions. These include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNICs). Such sites are indicated on the Proposals Map. Policies relating to these areas are contained within the Countryside Chapter of the Local Plan.

Archaeological Sites

- 14.22 There are over 500 sites of archaeological interest within the District, of which 20 are scheduled Ancient Monuments. The latter are identified on the Proposals Map. Policies relating to Archaeological sites are contained within the Built Environment Chapter of the Local Plan.

Recreation, Sport and Leisure

- 14.23 PPG17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation' was published in July 2002. This was too late for the Guidance to be taken into account when the proposals in this Local Plan were prepared. The Guidance requires Local Authorities to undertake robust assessments of existing provision and future requirements for open space and recreation. This work will be undertaken by the Council as part of the review of this Local Plan. Until this work has been carried out, the proposals set out in the village chapters relating to recreation, sport and leisure will represent the policies of the Local Planning Authority.

