



Development and Site Allocations Local Plan



Employment Sites Review

Background Paper

CONTENTS

	Page
1. Background and Purpose	2
2. Local Plan Core Strategy	3
3. National Policy Context	6
4. Local Economic Context	8
5. Approach and Methodology	12
6. Existing Business Estates/Areas	21
7. Committed, Allocated and Vacant Sites	28
8. Business Land Supply From Existing Sites	36
9. Potential Employment Sites	40
10. Conclusions and Recommendations	49

Appendices

1. Existing Industrial Estates/Areas – proforma
2. Call for Sites - Website extract and site identification form
3. Existing Industrial Estates/Areas – Assessments

1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 This Study has been carried out to inform the Council's forthcoming Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) Local Plan in relation to meeting the identified need for land and premises to support the economic well-being of the District. It considers the continued suitability of both existing and allocated industrial estates/areas and sites, as well as the potential of further sites, for business use.
- 1.2 The Council has already set out its spatial strategy for development across Rother District in its Local Plan Core Strategy ('Core Strategy'), adopted in September 2014. Economic growth is a key objective and a theme of this Strategy, not only to balance the planned housing growth but also to increase job opportunities and prosperity for the existing population.
- 1.3 As well as the strategies for different parts of the District, chapter 16 of the Core Strategy contains policies for economic activity and growth across Rother. Particular attention is given to ensuring that there is a suitably broad and readily available supply of land and premises, with targets for additional business floorspace across the District over the plan period (2011-2028).
- 1.4 The Core Strategy recognises the important role that existing business areas and sites play in providing an established base for business activity to take place and grow. At the same time, it commits, through policy EC3, to review existing and potential sites for employment use¹, in order to ensure that they are not being unnecessarily or inappropriately held for such use.
- 1.5 Hence, the purpose of this Study is to both fulfil this commitment and to determine the most appropriate options for increasing the supply of sites and premises to meet business floorspace needs in line with the minimum requirements of the Core Strategy.
- 1.6 The report firstly sets out the national and local policy framework for the review, including the employment land requirements of Core Strategy (which are adopted and not themselves being reviewed), then looks firstly at the more significant estates and areas, to determine their role and potential for contributing to the range of business requirements. It then looks at the potential of committed, allocated and vacant sites and, finally, at options for providing additional land.

¹ In the context of policy EC3 and for this study, 'employment sites' are those that provide for a range of business uses falling with Use Class B of the use Classes Order as well as similar 'sui generis' uses. 'Employment floorspace' is similarly defined.

2. LOCAL PLAN CORE STRATEGY

- 2.1 Employment growth is a fundamental part of the [Core Strategy's](#) overall strategy for the District, as reflected in both the overall spatial development policy, OSS1, related objectives and policies for different parts of the District and in the 'core policies' in the Economy chapter, notably policy EC2.
- 2.2 These policies provide for some 100,000sq.m. of business floorspace across the District over the plan period. set out in Figure 8 of the Core Strategy, which is reproduced below:

Figure 8: Approximate Development Levels

	Approximate development levels 2011-2028	
	Housing	Employment
Bexhill	3,100 dwellings	At least 60,000sq.m.
Hastings fringes	100-250 dwellings	At least 3,000sq.m.
Battle	475-500 dwellings	At least 10,000sq.m.*
Rye	355-400 dwellings	At least 10,000-20,000sq.m.
Villages	1,670 dwellings	At least 10,000sq.m.
Total	At least 5,700 dwellings	At least 93,000 – 103,000sq.m.

(* includes sites on Marley Lane)

(NB The final figure is rounded to at least 100,000sq.m. in Policy OSS2.)

- 2.3 These figures provide a basis for identifying the quantum of land that is needed to realise the economic objectives of increased economic activity, reduced reliance on out-commuting and full employment of a growing workforce.
- 2.4 It can be seen that the floorspace requirements in the relevant Core Strategy policies² are expressed as minimum requirements. This is to avoid imposing any cap on provision that could work to inappropriately restrict the economic growth of the District.
- 2.5 Core Strategy policy EC2 provides the strategic approach to the supply of business land and premises, while policy EC3 provides the strategic policy relating to existing employment sites. These are both reproduced below.

² See the respective spatial strategies for Bexhill, Hastings Fringes, .Rye and Rye Harbour, Battle and the Rural Areas, at policies BX1-3, HF1, RY1, BT1, RA1-4

Policy EC2: Business Land and Premises

A suitably broad and readily available supply of business land and premises will be achieved by:

- (i) provision for some 100,000 sq m of employment floorspace over the Plan period, with the majority following on from construction of the Hastings Bexhill Link Road;**
- (ii) increasing the supply of high quality employment sites, including new major business sites at Bexhill;**
- (iii) securing a range of incubation space, small and medium sized sites and units across the District in line with the respective spatial strategies, and particularly in settlements with good strategic access, including through mixed use developments;**
- (iv) providing for business development in locations that make effective use of rail and water transport opportunities, notably at the Port of Rye;**
- (v) seeking town centre, or edge of centre, sites for offices, including as part of mixed-use developments.**

Policy EC3: Existing Employment Sites

Effective use of employment land and premises will be secured by undertaking a full review of existing and potential sites for employment use and allocating sites in the Development and Site Allocations Plan and/or Neighbourhood Plans. Until those plans are in place the following policy will apply:

- (i) land and premises currently (or last) in employment, including tourism, use will be retained in such use unless it is demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of its continued use for employment purposes or it would cause serious harm to local amenities;**
- (ii) permitting intensification, conversion, redevelopment and/or extension having regard to other policies of the Plan;**
- (iii) facilitating access/environmental improvements, where appropriate;**
- (iv) where continued employment use of a site/premises is demonstrated not to be viable, permit complementary enabling development as part of an overall scheme to make most effective use of the property for employment purposes; if a mixed use scheme is not viable, prioritise alternative community uses, affordable housing and then market housing, subject to local needs.**

2.6 In relation to policy EC2, it should be highlighted that the development of significant employment sites was awaiting the now constructed Bexhill Hastings Link Road ("Combe Valley Way").

- 2.7 Both policies highlight the role of mixed-use developments in securing new business development. In relation to existing business sites, it can be seen that the general approach is to retain business sites in employment use, subject to sites being reviewed as part of the preparation of the DaSA – which this report does - with the objective to secure ‘*effective use of employment land and premises*’, with mixed-use as an option to be considered.
- 2.8 Core Strategy Policy EC4 also has a bearing upon the identification and allocation of business sites in that it identifies potentials for business space other than on industrial estates, other business areas and freestanding sites. These are:

Policy EC4: Business Activities Elsewhere Within the District

Business activities will be promoted elsewhere within the district by the following:

- (i) continuing to give priority to the re-use and adaptation of suitable buildings in the countryside for employment, including for tourism purposes, in accordance with the Rural Areas policies;**
 - (ii) incorporate an appropriate level of business development within residential allocations and developments to contribute to the overall development strategy, where such accommodation is otherwise appropriate in the site circumstances;**
 - (iii) facilitating (where permission is required) business activities operating from residential properties wherever there is no adverse impact on local character and amenities, including by traffic generation.**
- 2.9 Of particular note is the priority given to the re-use and adaptation of suitable buildings in the countryside for employment purposes, which completion records show have been a significant source of supply in the past. Again, the need to give active consideration to incorporating employment space alongside housing is identified when assessing sites for development.
- 2.10 Also relevant to assessing site requirements is having regard to the suitability of supply for key sectors within the economy, as set out in Core Strategy policy EC5:

Policy EC5: Support for Key Sectors

Particular regard will be given to key sectors, notably “enviro-industries”, engineering, financial and business services and other growth and knowledge-based businesses, and those that are directly related to sensitive land management, as part of the consideration of sites for employment development and determination of planning applications for employment sites.

3. NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) sets out the role of employment land assessments. In relation to the provision of sites, paragraph 21 expects local planning authorities (LPAs) to set criteria or identify sites to match the strategy and meet the anticipated needs for local and inward investment. Paragraph 22 expects employment land allocations to be regularly reviewed. Paragraph 161 states that LPAs should assess the sufficiency and suitability of existing and future supply of sites to meet identified needs. Also, the review of economic development land should be undertaken at the same time as that for housing, in order that sites may be allocated for the use which is most appropriate (paragraph 161).
- 3.2 In terms of processes, paragraphs 179 and 180 encourage collaborative working on strategic priorities (which include policies to deliver jobs) across boundaries, having due regard to travel-to-work areas. This should complement engagement with county and neighbouring LPAs, as well as Local Enterprise Partnerships and the business community in gaining a clear understanding of business needs (paragraph 160).
- 3.3 It is noted that the process expectations have been met through the joint work with Hastings Borough Council, supported by East Sussex County Council, which assessed economic conditions and advised on the scale, distribution and nature of future employment land provision across the Hastings and Rother economic market area. This work is contained in the [Hastings and Rother Employment Strategy and Land Review](#) and the [2011 Update](#), which are both published online.
- 3.4 Of course, the outputs from these studies provided the basis for the employment land requirements which are established in parallel with housing requirements through the Core Strategy, while this report provides the necessary review of sites to be married with the housing allocations through the DaSA (and through neighbourhood plans).
- 3.5 The [National Planning Practice Guidance](#) (PPG) elaborates (at Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 3-010-20140306) on assessments, notably in relation to engaging with relevant interests, considering sites of 0.25ha (or 500m² of floor space) and above (subject to local discretion), issuing a call for sites, conducting surveys of potential sites, and assessing achievability (including viability) as well as suitability. It specifically expects a re-appraisal of the suitability of previously allocated land and its potential to designate it for different or a wider range of uses.

3.6 In terms of *outputs*, the PPG states³:

'The following set of standard outputs should be produced from the assessment to ensure consistency, accessibility and transparency:

- *a list of all sites or broad locations considered, cross-referenced to their locations on maps;*
- *an assessment of each site or broad location, in terms of its suitability for development, availability and achievability (including whether the site/broad location is viable) to determine whether a site is realistically expected to be developed and when;*
- *contain more detail for those sites which are considered to be realistic candidates for development, where others have been discounted for clearly evidenced and justified reasons;*
- *the potential type and quantity of development that could be delivered on each site/broad location, including a reasonable estimate of build out rates, setting out how any barriers to delivery could be overcome and when;*
- *an indicative trajectory of anticipated development and consideration of associated risks.*

3.7 As the NPPF remains in place and the PPG has not changed materially in the last 2 years, the Core Strategy's requirements, as set out in the previous section, are still regarded as consistent with the national policy framework.

3.8 While there has been recent downgrading of national economic growth forecasts, it should be appreciated that the Core Strategy's employment land provisions are primarily related to its housing growth targets, which are of course unchanged, and demographic forecasts, which are little changed.

³ PPG Paragraph: 028 Reference ID: 3-028-20140306

4. LOCAL ECONOMIC CONTEXT

- 4.1 The joint Employment Strategy and Land Review published in May 2008, together with the Review Update of August 2011, provide substantial background information on the local socio-economic context, relevant economic strategies and property market conditions, including business and other stakeholder views.
- 4.2 More recently, of particular note, 'Team East Sussex', the county sub-group of the 'South East Local Enterprise Partnership', has published its 'East Sussex Growth Strategy - *Doing Business Brilliantly* - 2014 – 2020 (December 2014). The Executive Summary states:

'If we are to close the productivity gap and accelerate economic growth, we need more high value businesses in East Sussex. This means enabling existing companies in the area to move up the value chain, supporting the creation of new business start-ups and attracting new high value firms to the county. We need to support investment in new types of business that are being formed to exploit demand for new products and services, and which are reaching new markets both in the UK and overseas through new digital technologies.

We have identified a number of sectors where there is a base of businesses and employment on which to build, and enhance prospects for growth. These sectors are: advanced manufacturing; business and professional services; environmental technologies ('Clean Tech'); health and social care and land-based industries. Regardless of the sector, we will create an environment for all East Sussex businesses to grow by providing access to good quality business premises, a skilled workforce and relevant business support.'

- 4.3 In terms of the spatial dimension, it states:

1.2 By capitalising on the county's strengths and unique characteristics, we will create a stronger, more diverse economy that will bring more jobs, particularly in higher value sectors. Our aim is to maximise the economic potential of every part of the county, recognising the different economic opportunities and challenges in our coastal communities and rural economy.

1.3 We have three growth corridors where there is the greatest capacity to unlock major new commercial and residential development. These are the A21/A259 Hastings-Bexhill corridor, the A22/A26/A27 Eastbourne-Polegate-Uckfield-Crowborough corridor and the Newhaven Clean Tech and Maritime Corridor. Significant investment in education, business support, transport, infrastructure and the public realm has already taken place in these corridors and this momentum needs to be sustained to unlock further growth.

- 1.4 In the largely rural area, which includes the South Downs National Park and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a different approach is needed; one which strengthens and diversifies the economy whilst protecting and enhancing the outstanding natural environment. Our aim is to create networked and vibrant market towns and villages ready for knowledge-based entrepreneurs and manufacturing and engineering businesses. Encouragement of emerging land-based industries, such as viticulture, quality food and agritech, are all needed to be taken advantage of, and the intensification, upgrading and new development of business premises is required to support manufacturing and office-based services.
- 4.4 In respect of smaller businesses, the Economic Strategy notes that there are a high proportion of varied SMEs spread across the County (Rother having 87.7%, compared to the national average of 82.9%) such as small-scale manufacturing, creative and knowledge-based businesses, often hidden from view. It states that:
- ‘Supporting the growth of this vibrant small business community and unlocking our entrepreneurial talent will be key to future growth.’
- 4.5 Of particular relevance to Rother District, it highlights that, following the recession, there has been significant growth nationally in the number of people becoming self-employed, through either choice or necessity and that, according to the 2011 Census, around 17% of people in employment are self-employed in Rother, compared to the national average of less than 11%.
- 4.6 The strategy itself has three themes, one being ‘business’. It highlights:

Enabling the delivery of a pipeline of business premises

- 4.41 In recent years, particularly since the recession, there is evidence that East Sussex has suffered from a shortage of quality business premises due to a lack of speculative development. Seachange Sussex, in partnership with the local authorities, has successfully delivered a number of schemes to address this market failure. Improving commercial property market conditions have meant that other development schemes across the county are emerging, some are being helped by funding to address any funding gaps and improve the viability of bringing sites forward. We need to maximise the opportunities of this pipeline and ensure that appropriate new business space continues to be developed to attract new firms and support the growth of existing businesses across the county. There is also a need to improve some of the older existing employment sites, in order to meet the needs of industries of the future.
- 4.7 The principal agency responsible for helping to match the market potential of the County with those of existing and inward investing companies is ‘Locate East Sussex’. It has provided the following overview of local commercial market conditions and prospects.

- 4.8 The following advice on the local commercial property market has been provided by Locate East Sussex:

Role of Locate East Sussex

Locate East Sussex provides services on behalf of the County to assist delivery of the vision of the East Sussex Economic Strategy (below), with particular regard to the push for county-wide business growth through an inward investment service.

“By 2021, East Sussex will have a stronger, more resilient, inclusive and balanced economy, built on an expanded private sector base in a county recognised for its distinctive character and excellent connectivity.”

We work closely with the business community and their representative bodies. Assistance is provided with commercial property searches and access to funding streams to unlock company growth and the creation of new jobs. Locate East Sussex also provides a liaison between businesses and the economic regeneration and planning teams of the District, Borough and County Councils.

Market perspective of the local economy

Of course, East Sussex as a whole benefits from reasonable proximity to London, but this is partly counter-balanced by relatively poor connectivity. The best linkage is along the M23/Brighton main line corridor, which includes Gatwick within it, and Brighton and Hove is itself buoyant. The stronger economy of this “Corridor” spills over into the western parts of the County, notably to Lewes and towards Uckfield.

The central and eastern parts of the County away from the coastal belt benefit from proximity to relatively prosperous Tunbridge Wells (which has a strong office market). This includes the northern and central parts of Rother District, while the eastern end of Rother is influenced to some extent by its links to Ashford.

Hastings in particular and Bexhill have, historically, been relatively weak economically, but there have been noticeable strides in Hastings with the development of the Innovation Centre, followed by the Creative Media Centre and the Priory Square redevelopment, now home to Saga, and regeneration of the Old Town, now with the Jerwood Gallery at its heart. Economic activity in Bexhill is also beginning to gather a new momentum, with the opening up of business sites off the new Link Road. The benefits of this new connection will be consolidated, in terms of both journey time benefits and additional land releases by a new link to the A21 in Hastings and the ‘North Bexhill Access Road’, extending from the Link Road to the A269 in Bexhill, both of which are currently under construction.

Market demand

We are presently seeing increasing numbers of enquiries for business space.

However, demand is to some extent limited by the existing stock; that is, a high proportion of the stock is ageing and best described as being of “serviceable” quality. This does mean that prevailing rentals are relatively affordable, which assists take-up, but also tends to limit scope for achieving the rentals needed to make new-build schemes commercially attractive. Hence, there has been relatively little new building in recent years.

This said, there is current private sector investment interest in addition to that which has recently gone through planning at Rye Harbour and Ivyhouse Lane, Hastings.

Most of the actual growth comes from indigenous business that require move-on space in order to meet their growth plans.

Occupier demand continues to be mainly for a range of medium quality workshop and manufacturing space mostly from local SMEs.

This local demand is reflected in the generally high occupancy of available space.

Demand is coming forward for better quality office stock, as most existing supply in both urban and rural areas is via conversions (larger residential or former agricultural), or now quite dated purpose built space, with more value in converting to residential. Park Holidays UK taking the first large office building at Bexhill is a prime illustration of this, but there is little available Grade A space to show potential occupiers.

New quality stock is required to help to meet this demand.

At the same time, it is vital that existing sites and allocations are retained so that a mix of both town and rural sites are available to help foster the diverse mix of start-ups and SMEs and to provide for inward investors relocating to the county. This seems particularly important to sustain economic activity across the Hastings/Rother economic area.

NB It is perhaps just worth noting that while, nationally, we are still at a relatively low level in the “economic cycle” and the overall rate of growth may be slow for some time, we would expect to see the local Councils planning for continued improvement, so East Sussex can achieve the stronger economy that is at the heart of the vision.

5. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Overview

- 5.1 This section explains the approach that is followed in assessing sites and areas to meet the business floorspace targets contained in the Local Plan Core Strategy. It focuses on the following sources of supply:
- existing business estates/areas
 - vacant and committed/allocated sites
 - further potential sites
- 5.2 Assessments have been carried out by Council officers from both planning and economic development perspectives.
- 5.3 Regard is paid to the market requirements across the employment travel to work area; hence, there has been engagement with Hastings Borough Council as part of the assessment process, particularly in relation to strategic sites and those on the fringes of the Borough. It also dovetails with the activities of the Local Enterprise Partnership and 'Team East Sussex', which has delegated authority for coordinating and setting economic development priorities in the County.
- 5.4 The methodology itself accords with the PPG. It has also taken on board guidance in the earlier, detailed 'Guidance Note on Employment Land Reviews', published by the then ODPM⁴, which referred to 'fitness for purpose' as a key test for determining whether existing employment land should be retained (and potentially extended) or released for other uses, as well as highlighting that meeting sustainable development criteria and market requirements, either now or over the plan period, are key factors for both existing employment areas and undeveloped sites.
- 5.5 The identification of potential employment sites stems from the outstanding Core Strategy business floorspace requirements in the first instance. The current position in relation to quantitative needs, taking account of completions and commitments, is addressed in Section 8. It goes on to consider distributional and qualitative reasons for additional provision where suitable opportunities arise.
- 5.6 It is noted that areas and sites in towns and parishes where neighbourhood plans are in progress (and are within the scope of those Plans) are considered in general terms, but are not the subject of DaSA policies or SA/SEA.

⁴ 'Employment Land Reviews Guidance Note'; ODPM December 2004

- 5.7 Initial consideration is given to whether previously allocated employment sites continue to represent sensible alternatives for business use to meet the identified requirements. (It is noted that the NPPF expects existing unimplemented business site allocations to be reviewed.) This applies to sites at Bexhill, the Hastings Fringes, Rye Harbour and Marley Lane. Hence, each of these are subject to individual assessment and SA/SEA.
- 5.8 The approach followed for identifying potential sites in each locality has regard to conclusions about outstanding need for business floorspace and the likely scope for contributions from existing estates/areas and existing commitments in each locality.
- 5.9 In respect of Bexhill, there are committed and previously allocated sites that will meet the basic quantitative requirement and no other potential sites are identified. An exception is that, given the possibility of an unmet need for a high quality office campus site, consideration is given to this use amongst other options for the vacant Northeye site as the only reasonable alternative for this.
- 5.10 In the Hastings Fringes, in addition to the review of the extant employment allocation at Burgess Road, a further extension of the Ivyhouse Lane Industrial Estate is now also considered a reasonable alternative (or further site) in the light of an allocation on adjacent land in Hastings Borough. There is one existing employment site on the Fringe, at Woodlands Way, that has been put forward for residential use; hence, both land use options are assessed.
- 5.11 Rye Harbour (Harbour Road) is the subject of an extant policy defining its extent and approach to development therein. It is the only established industrial area outside of Rye itself and, hence, the consideration of reasonable alternatives is seen in terms of whether the boundary and policy criteria are still appropriate.
- 5.12 Elsewhere, the existing allocation at Marley Lane is reviewed. Other existing allocations would have been reviewed, but all fall within Neighbourhood Areas. The option of business use has also been assessed either where a site well related to a town or village and with good access to a main road (but not utilising a purely residential street) has been put forward for consideration for housing or where an existing business use or similar sui generis use site has been put forward for development. These situations apply to several sites: at Beckley, Camber, Guestling Green, Hurst Green and Rye Harbour.

5.13 For all existing employment estates and areas and identified/potential sites, basic details are reviewed in terms of:

- Location
- Site size (ha.)
- Site extent/boundaries
- Current land use
- Surrounding land uses
- Physical characteristics

Existing Business Estates/Areas

5.14 A review of the profile of existing industrial/commercial estates and other larger areas in the District is the first stage in determining the requirements for further employment sites.

5.15 While national Planning Practice Guidance does not require existing employment areas to be embraced in the review (as opposed to existing allocations, unimplemented planning permissions, vacant and derelict land – all of which are considered in subsequent sections), it does recognise them as suitable locations which may contribute to meeting the business floorspace requirements.

5.16 In an area with high environmental constraints and a relatively weak commercial property market, it is considered vital for this Review to capitalise on any opportunities that existing industrial estates and other concentrations of business development may afford.

5.17 Also, Core Strategy policy EC3 looks to make most effective use of business land; hence, it follows that an assessment be made of the further development potential within these established areas, especially where such areas have brownfield opportunities and the infrastructure for intensification and growth.

5.18 To capture all sizeable business estates, a minimum area threshold of 2.0 hectares in the towns and 1.0 hectares in the rural areas is applied.

5.19 Information about estates has been gained through a combination of site visits and reviews of completions and commitments data. An 'Existing Business Areas Assessment' form is completed for each identified area. This is attached at Appendix 1.

- 5.20 An overview is provided about the nature of the area/estate in terms of:
- Location and relationship to settlement
 - The approximate number of plots and main occupiers
 - The general age and nature of the existing stock of accommodation
 - The existing main functions of the estate/area (see Categorisation below)
 - The broad extent to which units are occupied (See Occupation below)
 - Site context/constraints, including adjoining uses, relevant designations
 - The extent to which there is vacant plots or other unused land
 - Accessibility to service centres, main roads and public transport corridors
 - Intensification and expansion opportunities, for which floorspace potentials assume a site:floorspace ratio of 35% unless otherwise stated
- 5.21 Estates and areas were surveyed between late 2015 and mid-2016.

Occupation

- 5.22 The level of occupation is a key indicator of the “functionality” of accommodation. Under-occupation or the existence of a high proportion of units for let/sale can indicate low market interest and hence the potential for redevelopment or release for other uses.
- 5.23 For comparison purposes, levels of occupation of existing buildings are described as either:
- ‘Fully occupied’ (i.e. 100%),
 - ‘Virtually fully occupied’ (+90%),
 - ‘Substantially occupied’ (75-90%),
 - ‘Mostly occupied’ (50-75%),
 - ‘Significant vacancies’ (25-50%),
 - ‘Wholly or predominantly vacant’ (0-25%).

Categorisation

- 5.24 In order to better understand the nature of the existing stock and how it meets the needs of different types of businesses, the particular functions of employment areas and estates are categorised.
- 5.25 This not only helps gauge the nature of current demand, which informs the extent to which particular needs can be provided in a locality, but also may lead to the identification in gaps in certain types of supply and assist in ensuring that qualitative as well as quantitative needs are considered.

- 5.26 The categorisation of employment areas is essentially taken from a local market perspective; hence, while it is based on the general classification contained in earlier national guidance⁵, it also has regard to local circumstances.
- 5.27 The figure overleaf sets out the categorisation of industrial estates/business areas that has been applied.

⁵ 'Employment Land Reviews Guidance Note'; ODPM December 2004

Sector	Category
1	High Quality Office Sites
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear high quality identity, particularly suited for high quality offices as well as high tech and R&D uses (with high office content) • High profile environment and nodal location (in terms of access to main transport corridors and/or town centre) • Has or capable of having highest level/IT/cabling
2	High Quality Business Parks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern, high quality buildings in a well laid-out setting. Likely to accommodate (or attract) prestigious local businesses or larger in-moving businesses • Mix of office (B1a) and light industrial (B1b) uses • Prominent location • Good level of dedicated parking • Has or capable of having highest level IT/cabling
3	Higher Specification Office / Light Industrial Areas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More modern accommodation, in a range of sizes • Range of light manufacturing with some office elements • Better than average quality units and external space/parking • Good access to road network and public transport routes
4	General Purpose Industrial Areas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly light industrial (B1b) uses, but with some other uses, such as warehousing/trades • Mix of buildings age, standard and sizes, normally with mix of individual and sub-divided units • Overall reasonable (but variable) quality of area, building specification and external environment • Reasonable access and circulation space, particularly if more B8 uses Mostly dedicated parking spaces • Some scope for environmental/amenity improvements
5	Heavy Industrial Areas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High proportion of general industrial and sui generis uses, including processing industries and those related to bulk transport • Some large single occupiers • Non-prime or remote locations, including adjacent to ports • Poor environmental quality of area and locality
6	Lower Quality Industrial/Storage Areas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, older premises providing lower grade accommodation of variable sizes, including converted space for small units • Mixed uses with higher proportion of general industrial, including some non-conforming uses and external storage areas • More intensively developed, with some congested sites and/or highways

NB Given the nature of the area, the existing stock and market requirements, neither Science Parks nor Distribution Parks are listed in the above classification.

- 5.28 The information gained from each assessment provides the basis for drawing conclusions on whether existing employment areas/estates should be retained or not, as well as their potential for intensification of floorspace.
- 5.29 Land that is part of an existing plot or is inseparable from an adjacent developed plot is assessed in terms of its potential contribution to the intensification of the area/estate as a whole. Where there are freestanding plots that are vacant or unused, they are further considered as part of the assessment of '*Further potential sites*'. Similarly, land on the edge of an area/estate which is identified as potentially providing scope for its expansion is also carried forward into the consideration of '*Further potential sites*' in the following section.
- 5.30 In addition to the main survey of larger estates and areas, a survey of a sample of smaller business complexes/centres is also carried out to determine whether the findings are likely to be generally applicable. This was conducted at the same time, with a follow-up check on occupancy rates in Autumn 2016.

Committed/allocated and vacant sites

- 5.31 All sites that are either allocated for business use in the Rother District Local Plan 2006 but which had not progressed to the point of gaining planning permission at 1/4/15 are assessed, as are all sites that only have the benefit of outline planning permission - on the basis that there has not yet necessarily been detailed consideration to the implementation of proposals.
- 5.32 Consideration is also given to the continued suitability of vacant (or unoccupied) sites that were last used for business purposes. Vacant and unused land is identified both from the review of existing employment estates/areas and via direct approaches from landowners, developers and businesses, including through the "Call for sites" (see below).
- 5.33 While the PPG (see Section 4) suggests a threshold of 0.25 hectare for individual sites, given the rural nature and dispersed settlement pattern of the District and to be comprehensive as practicable, a minimum site size threshold of 0.1 hectare (which would equate to a potential of some 300sqm) is taken for employment sites and 0.2 hectare for mixed use sites. This is consistent with the 'SHLAA' threshold for housing sites.
- 5.34 The potential contribution of sites to meet accommodation needs, as well as reasons why business development has not yet come forward, are assessed in consultation with the Council's Economic Development Manager, drawing on information from owners/agents where available.

- 5.35 Of note, a perceived ‘hope value’ for housing is identified as key factor deterring business investment on a number of sites.
- 5.36 Where land is not being effectively used for employment purposes, particularly in relation to older accommodation, consideration is given to the potential for redevelopment within the Plan period. Where there is little prospect of reuse or redevelopment for business purposes within the foreseeable future or where there are greater needs for other land uses, consideration is given to alternative use, including mixed uses.

Call for sites

- 5.37 The original ‘call for sites’ process, although used primarily to inform the Strategic housing land Availability Assessment, also enabled the submission of sites for business or mixed-use purposes. However, as that yielded preferences for many housing site allocations (not surprisingly), it was considered appropriate to undertake a more focussed “call” for employment sites. This was highlighted on the Council’s website (see Appendix 2) and supplemented by awareness-raising emails, which were sent on 12th April 2015 inviting submissions over a 6-week period, with a follow-up email a week before the closing (sent on 22nd May 2015).
- 5.38 These were sent to:
- *Local commercial agents*
(Batchellor Monkhouse; Dyer & Hobbis; Phillips and Stubbs; Ross & Co; Stiles Harold Williams; Tingley Commercial; Vail Williams)
 - *Landowners agents and representative organisations*
(CLM; GMP Accountants; NFU; Federation of Small Businesses; Country Landowners Association; Rural Partners)
 - *Landowners*
(Rye Wharf, Plumpton College; Thorogood Enterprises; Woodland enterprise centre; Wheel Farm Business Park; Sea Change Sussex; Country Pine Warehouses; Welbeck Land)
 - *Chambers of Commerce*
(Battle, Eastbourne, Rye, Hastings)
 - *Public sector bodies*
(Locate East Sussex; Environment Agency; Hastings Borough Council; East Sussex County Council)

Further potential sites

- 5.39 The need for further business sites stems from the minimum quantitative floorspace requirements in the Core Strategy, taking account of completions, the likely floorspace growth from existing business areas, together with vacant sites, sites with planning permission and current allocations which are still found to be most appropriately developed for business development and with a realistic prospect of this.
- 5.40 The same site size thresholds are used as for vacant sites.
- 5.41 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that the factors to be considered to assess a site's suitability for development now or in the future should include:
- physical limitations or problems such as access, infrastructure, ground conditions, steep slopes, flood risk, hazardous risks, pollution or contamination;
 - potential impacts including the effect upon landscape, including significant natural features, nature and heritage conservation;
 - appropriateness and likely market attractiveness for the type of development proposed;
 - contribution to regeneration priority areas;
 - environmental and amenity impacts experienced by would-be occupiers and neighbouring areas.
- 5.42 The market potentials for individual sites is assessed using the same typologies as used for classifying existing business estates and areas (see above), not least in order to ensure that key sector requirements are duly considered in detailed site planning.
- 5.43 Regard is also paid to the contribution a site would make to the relevant spatial strategies of the Core Strategy. In relation to the Rural Areas, this includes regard to the villages/areas identified as having particular employment needs.

6. EXISTING BUSINESS ESTATES/AREAS

6.1 Individual Estate/Area assessments are set out in Appendix 3, while the Summary Table below presents an overview of the findings.

6.2 The main findings are:

- Some 21 areas/estates of at least 2 hectares in the towns or 1 hectare in the rural areas are identified in Rother District, covering a total of 122.9 hectares
- Their distribution, by area, is:
 - 13% Bexhill (16.4ha)
 - 8% Battle (including Marley Lane) (9.6ha)
 - 33% Rye (40.2ha)
 - 46% Rural Areas (56.7ha)
- Only 2 of the actual estates - Harbour Road, Rye and Beeching Road, Bexhill - would be viewed as substantial industrial areas, being 37.7ha, and 12.3ha respectively, although British Gypsum, Mountfield is also substantial, at 36.8ha
- The large areas of British Gypsum and Harbour Road, Rye substantially clearly boost the proportion of employment land in the Rural Areas and Rye respectively, but even without this influence, Bexhill has a relatively low coverage of medium/large industrial areas and estates
- There is a very high level of occupancy of units on existing business areas/estates, with 86% of areas/estates either fully or virtually fully occupied, and the balance is all substantially occupied.
- The categorisation of areas/estates, by area, shows:
 - 1% = 1 High Quality Office Sites (0.8ha)
 - 0% = 2 High Quality Business Parks (0ha)
 - 7% = 3 Higher Specification Light Industrial/Office Areas (8.3ha)
 - 37% = 4 General Purpose Industrial Areas (45ha)
 - 36% = 5 Heavy Industrial Areas (44.6ha)
 - 20% = 6 Lower Quality Industrial/Storage Areas (24.2ha)
- The first observation - which reinforces the East Sussex Economic Strategy - is that there is a severe lack of high quality office and business park sites capable of attracting inward investment of high-growth companies and/or headquarters.

- The overall impression is of supply heavily skewed towards the lower quality end of the range, although the high proportion of Category 5 space is largely accounted for by British Gypsum and Harbour Road, Rye, with their large aggregates and general industrial (Use Class B2) operations
- Harbour Road also has a large element of Category 6 space, this typology also boosted by the presence of several fencing/timber yards, accounting for 12% of the area of land in this category
- The recommendations in relation to the continuing value of the areas/estates are, in summary:
 - 12 areas/estates – Retain
 - 8 areas/estates – Retain and Intensify (see table below)
 - 3 areas/estates – Retain, Intensify and Expand or Consider Expansion

Industrial Estates Summary Table

Town/Parish	Estate name	Reference	Location	Area (ha)	Occupancy	Category	Recommendation
Ashburnham	Keeley's Timber Yard	ASIE1	Sawnden Farm, Ashburnham	1.1	Fully occupied (single occupier)	6	Retain
Battle	Beech Farm	BAIE5	Netherfield Hill, Battle	2.2	Virtually fully occupied	4	Retain
Battle	Beechdown Wood	BAIE3	A271, Battle	1.9	Fully occupied	1,6	Retain
Battle	Rutherfords Business Park	BAIE2	Marley, Lane, Battle	1.8	Substantially occupied	6	Retain, Intensify, Consider some extension
Battle	Station Approach	BAIE1	Station Approach, Battle	2.0	Fully occupied	1, 4, 6	Retain and Intensify
Bexhill	Beeching Road	BXIE2	Beeching Road, Bexhill	12.3	Substantially occupied	4	Retain and Intensify (through redevelopment in south-east)
Bexhill	Brett Drive	BXIE1	Brett Drive,	2.7	Virtually fully occupied	6	Retain
Bexhill	Elva Way	BXIE3	Elva Way, Sidley, Bexhill	1.4	Fully occupied	3	Retain and Intensify (subject to relocation of the Highways Depot)
Bodiam	Bodiam Business Park	BOIE1	Green Lane, Bodiam	3.0	Substantially occupied	3, 6	Retain
Brightling	Long Reach Farm	BLIE1	Brightling	1.0	Fully occupied	6	Retain
Ewhurst	Compass Park	EWIE1	B2244, north of Cripps Corner	4.4	Fully occupied	3	Retain and Intensify (via o/s planning permission)

Ewhurst	Quarry Farm Business Centre	BOIE2	Ockham, south of Bodiam	1.4	Virtually fully occupied	3	Retain
Hastings	Ivyhouse Lane	HFIE1	Ivyhouse Lane, The Ridge, Hastings	18.8	Substantially occupied	6	Expand
Mountfield	British Gypsum	MOIE1	Eatenden Lane, Mountfield	36.8	Fully occupied	5	Retain
Northiam	Coppards Lane	NOIE1	Coppards Lane, Northiam	3.5	Fully occupied	6	Retain
Rye	Harbour Road	RYIE1	Harbour Road, Rye Harbour	37.7	Virtually fully occupied	4,5,6	Retain and Intensify
Rye	Rock Channel	RYIE2	Rock Channel, A259, Rye	2.5	Fully occupied	6	Retain
Sedlescombe	Marley Lane Business Park	BAIE4	Marley Lane (north side), Sedlescombe	1.7	Virtually fully occupied	4	Retain and Intensify (via o/s planning permission)
Ticehurst	Gibbs Read Farm	TCIE1	Pashley Road, Ticehurst	1.0	Virtually fully occupied	4	Retain
Ticehurst	Tate Fencing	FLIE1	Yellowcoat Sawmill, Flimwell	1.7	Fully occupied	6	Retain
Westfield	Wheel Farm	WFIE1	Wheel Lane, Westfield	1.3	Fully occupied	4	Retain and Intensify (via o/s planning permission)
Whatlington	Vinehall Business Centre	WHIE1	Whatlington	1.2	Fully occupied	4	Retain (and consider expansion)

Areas with intensification potential

Estate name	Reference	Location	Intensification Area (m ²)
Rutherfords Business Park	BAIE2	Marley, Lane, Battle	500sqm
Station Approach	BAIE1	Station Approach, Battle	N/A - see below
Beeching Road	BXIE2	Beeching Road, Bexhill	N/A - see below
Elva Way	BXIE3	Elva Way, Sidley, Bexhill	400sqm
Compass Park	EWIE1	B2244, north of Cripps Corner	(1,390sqm via o/s permission)
Harbour Road	RYIE1	Harbour Road, Rye Harbour	600sqm (up to 12,700sqm but no landowner interest) in addition to land with pp – incl. 12,810sqm at The Saltings
Marley Lane Business Park	BAIE4	Marley Lane (north side), Sedlescombe	(2,400sqm via o/s permission)
Wheel Farm	WFIE1	Wheel Lane, Westfield	(550sqm via o/s permission)

- 6.3 As can be seen from the above summary table, several areas are found to have intensification potential. However, of the 8 areas/estates with intensification potential, 3 of these opportunities are already fully recognised through planning permissions, whilst Harbour Road, Rye also has a substantial area with either full or outline permission.
- 6.4 Beeching Road, Bexhill has potential for redevelopment in its south-eastern part, but this is also the area that is identified in the Core Strategy as being appropriate for retail development, (subject to further investigations) so any allowance for a net gain in business floorspace cannot be assumed; rather, a net loss of B-class space is more likely.
- 6.5 While Station Approach is fully utilised, the presence of less intensive, general manufacturing space and large areas of surface car parking suggests intensification potential, but without further detailed investigation of development viability and willingness to relocate, it is not possible to make an allowance with any confidence; it is a matter for the Battle Neighbourhood Plan to consider further.
- 6.6 Elva Way, Bexhill and Rutherfords, Battle offer realistic opportunities for intensification. The latter is also for the Battle Neighbourhood Plan to consider.

Areas with expansion potential

6.7 Three estates/areas are identified as having expansion potential, subject to further investigation:

- a) Rutherfords, Marley Lane
- b) Ivyhouse Lane Industrial Estate (situated on the edge of Hastings but which could expand into Rother)
- c) Vinehall Business Centre

Smaller Business Areas

6.8 While the survey of all the known larger industrial areas/estates provides an appropriate basis for assessing the nature, occupation and distribution of existing stock, it is known that there are many more small concentrations of business activity scattered across the District. Therefore, a sample survey of these has also been undertaken to supplement the above analysis.

6.9 The basis choosing areas for the sample survey is:

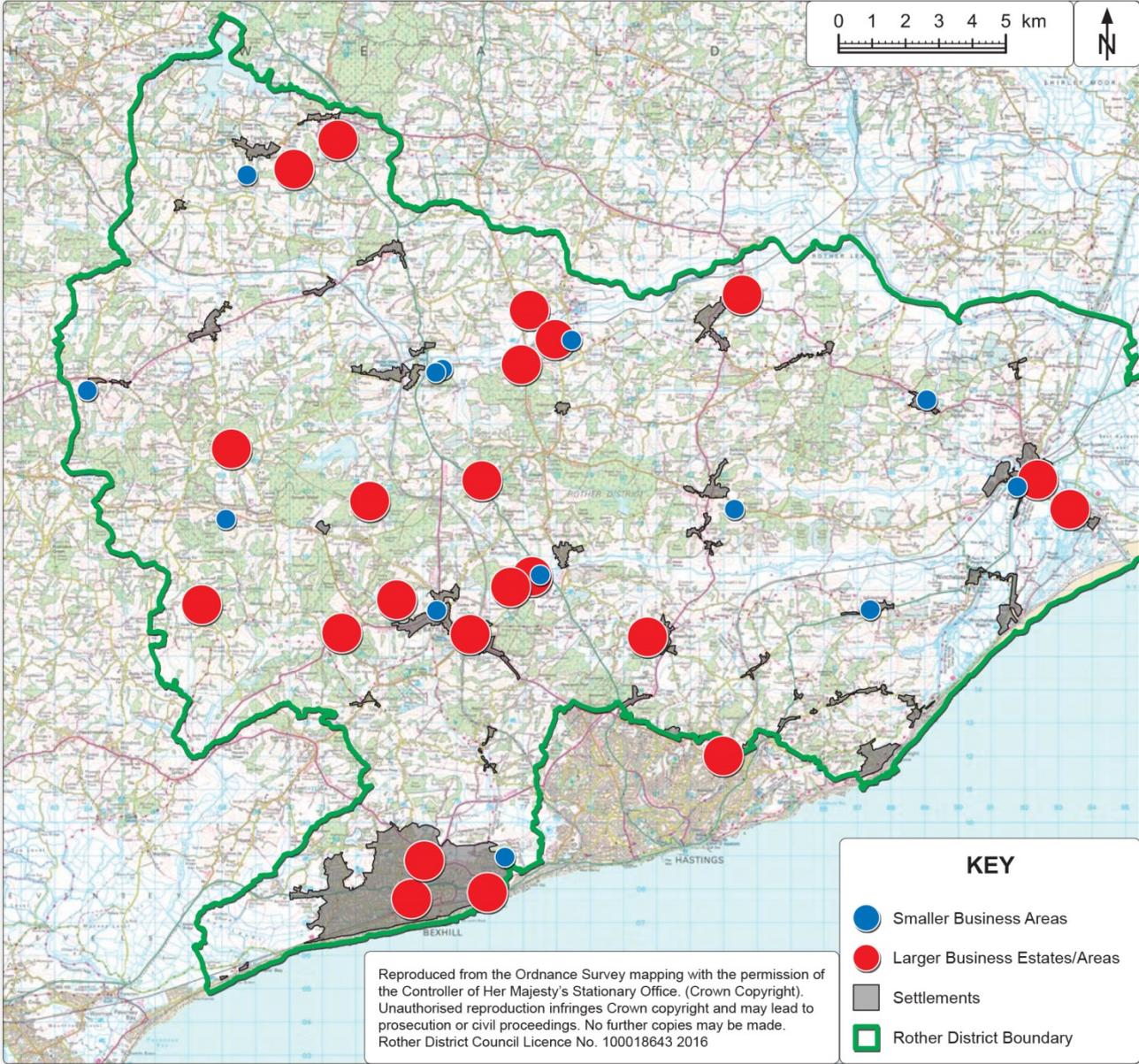
- A sample size of at least 10 areas
- Areas having a minimum of 3 businesses
- A good geographical spread, with at least one area in each of the towns and representation in the north-west, the east and the central rural areas

6.10 The areas reviewed are:

Name	Location	Approx. no. businesses	Level of Occupation	Category
Pebsham Business Centre	Bexhill	11	Fully occupied	4
Watch Oak Business Centre	Battle	8	Virtually fully occupied*	3
Marley Lane	Sedlescombe	3+	Fully occupied	6
Winchelsea Road	Rye	10	Fully occupied	6
Old Broad Oak Farm	Broad Oak	4	Fully occupied	4
Luck Farm	Burwash Common	4+	Fully occupied	4
Coldharbour Farm	Dallington	3	Fully occupied	6
Ockham Business Park	Ewhurst Green	4+	Fully occupied	4
Sherwood Industrial Park	Icklesham	4	Fully occupied	4
The Maltings	Peasmarsh	6	Fully occupied	4
Redlands Farm	Robertsbridge	5	Fully occupied	4
Russet Farm	Robertsbridge	8	Fully occupied	4
Parsonage Farm	Ticehurst	8	Fully occupied	3

* Vacant unit under offer

6.11 The map below showing the distribution of the smaller complexes alongside the larger areas, to show the oval spread across the rural parts of the District, as well as in the three towns.



6.12 The sample of the thirteen smaller business complexes across the District reinforces the findings of the main business areas/estates that there is a very high occupancy of existing business space, tantamount to full occupancy across all the towns and across the rural areas.

6.13 It also confirms the finding, albeit with the odd exception, that there is relatively little higher quality/specification space.

7. COMMITTED, ALLOCATED AND VACANT SITES

7.1 The April 2015 Employment Land Supply Monitoring report shows that identified sites in the District provide for some 94,567sqm of business floorspace. The breakdown of this is shown below. It can be seen that over a half of the total, amounting to 50,783sqm, had planning permission, of which 14% was under construction, with the balance allocated in the saved Rother District Local Plan 2006.

Business floorspace commitments as at 1st April 2015

Status		Net Floorspace (sq m)	Net Floorspace (sq m)
Planning permission	Under construction	7,304	50,783
	Full	6,027	
	Outline	37,452	
	Total		
Allocation (Local Plan 2006)			43,784
Total			94,567

7.2 The prospect of delivery of the larger sites which either have only outline planning permission or were previously allocated sites (but for which no planning permission has been gained) has been reviewed.

Sites with outline planning permission

Reference number	Location	Gross Floorspace (sq m)	Net Floorspace (sq m)	Likely implementation
RR/2012/1978/P	Land north of Barnhorn Road, Bexhill	3,500	3,500	Yes – servicing and marketing required as part of mixed use scheme
RR/2013/2166/P	Glovers Farm, Bexhill	11,742	11,742	Yes - Part of Bexhill Enterprise Park being brought forward by Sea Change Sussex
RR/2014/2733/P	Bexhill Innovation Centre, Bexhill	7,000	7,000	Yes - Part of Bexhill Enterprise Park being brought forward by Sea Change Sussex
RR/2013/1538/P	The Saltings, Icklesham	13440	12810	Yes – extension to Rastrums Wharf site; application for RM for Phase 1
RR/2013/2380/P	Culverwells, Salehurst	1,300	1,300	To be reviewed via Neighbourhood Plan
RR/2011/2636/P	Wheel Farm Business Park, Westfield	1,100	1,100	Yes – extension to existing estate

Sites allocated in the Rother District Local Plan, 2006

7.3 As can be seen from the table below, of the existing allocations in the Local Plan 2006 that had not gained planning permissions at the base date, the large majority is accounted for by the strategic sites to the north east of Bexhill, with other sites at Harbour Road, Rye and Marley Lane, Battle, together with a proposed extension of the Burgess Road industrial estate in the north of Hastings.

RDLP Policy	Location	Gross Floorspace (sq m)	Net Floorspace (sq m)
Policy BX2	East of Link Road, Bexhill	8,900	8,900
Policy BX3	West of Link Road, Bexhill	28,000	28,000
Policy RY7	Land east of Bournes, Harbour Road	1,184	1,184
Policy HF1	Land off Burgess Road, The Ridge	3,000	3,000
Policy EM4	Rutherfords Business Park, Marley Lane	2,700	2,700

East of Link Road, Bexhill

7.4 This site is the balance of land allocated for business development under RDLP policy BX2, being those areas to the south of The Mount, that has not received planning permission at the base date of April 2015. The total area, based on the areas shown in the North East Bexhill Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), adopted in June 2009, is some 8,900sqm.

7.5 More recently, in March 2016, this area has benefitted from an outline planning permission as part of a proposal for the majority of the BX2 allocation. That permission, (reference RR/2015/1760/P), includes up to 7,000sqm business floorspace (Use Class B1).

7.6 Hence, it is now appropriate to plan on the basis of 7,000sqm of business floorspace being provided on that site.

West of Link Road, Bexhill

7.7 This site is made up of three adjoining land parcels lying to the north of Sidley and to the west of the recently constructed link road between Bexhill and Hastings, now called Combe Valley Way. They are allocated in the Rother District Local Plan as part of policy BX3, reproduced below.

Policy BX3

Land north of Sidley, Bexhill, including Oaktree Farm and Preston Hall Farm, as shown on the Proposals Map, is allocated for major business development, together with housing and open space within a generous landscape setting.

Proposals will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

- (i) a comprehensive scheme is put forward, embracing both residential and business elements, to be progressed in parallel and provide for job creation at the earliest opportunity;**
- (ii) some 26,000m² of business floorspace shall be provided. This will be mostly light manufacturing and offices, falling within Class B1 of the Use Classes Order; Class B2 (general industry) and Class B8 (storage) uses will only be allowed in visually contained locations away from housing;**
- (iii) at least 130 dwellings shall be developed, of which 40% shall be affordable, with no sub areas to be developed at less than 30 dwellings per hectare;**
- (iv) proposals for structural open spaces, landscape and woodland belts shall be developed and implemented as an integral part of proposals;**
- (v) the layout and design of the residential development shall accord with the principles laid out in Policy HG4 and incorporate open spaces and play areas in accordance with Policy CF4 in addition to the strategic “green” spaces and corridors and woodland areas shown;**
- (vi) there shall be no new dwellings in the vicinity of Preston Hall to the north of the allocated housing area;**
- (vii) vehicular access shall be from the Link Road via the Country Avenue local distributor road with a loop road to connect the employment areas to the local distributor road;**
- (viii) a local distributor road shall form the northern edge of built development and shall be laid out as a wide “country avenue”, contained to the north by a strong landscape tree belt; this shall incorporate a bus route and segregated cycleway/footway, which connect key destinations within the development and beyond, as indicated diagrammatically on the Proposals Map including the “Green Links” along Buckholt Lane and to Watermill Lane;**
- (ix) housing development will be accessed by an access road from the western end of northern avenue, with pedestrian/cycle access only to adjoining residential areas;**

- (x) development contributions are made towards off-site improvements to related community facilities, transport and other supporting infrastructure. Development proposals will be subject to a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan, but may relate to high frequency bus services/facilities to Bexhill town centre and north Hastings, pedestrian and cycle links to Sidley, Bexhill town centre and the Countryside Park. Contributions would also be required towards the Countryside Park, recreational provision; library improvements and secondary school provision.**

- 7.8 Of particular note, it can be seen that its development has had to await the construction of the Link Road and is also dependent upon the construction of a new local distributor road, referred to as a “Country Avenue”. Also, the policy requires business land to be developed alongside housing as part of a comprehensive scheme.
- 7.9 Planning permission for this further new road, now referred to as the North Bexhill Access Road, was granted in February 2016 (reference RR/2015/2260/P). It comprises a *‘roundabout junction with the A269 (Ninfield Road) and two direction 2.4km single carriageway road with shared footway/cycleway connecting to the newly constructed roundabout on the Bexhill Hastings Link Road and including stopping-up of Watermill Lane to South and provision of roundabout to provide access to Watermill Lane North, stopping-up of Buckholt Lane to South and provision of roundabout to provide access to allocated employment land and Buckholt Lane North, accesses to adjacent farm land and associated utility, landscape and drainage works.’*
- 7.10 The road is being promoted by the local regeneration company, Sea Change Sussex, and is expected to be built by late 2017/early 2018, subject to statutory procedures. Its primary purpose is to open up the land for this previously allocated business site to be built out and provide further employment opportunities for the town and surrounding area.
- 7.11 This road was seen in both the Local Plan 2006 and the 2009 North East Bexhill SPD as defining the northern extent of development. This is still regarded as appropriate and the capacity of the land, which was estimated to be some 28,000sqm in the North East Bexhill SPD will need to be reviewed to reflect the alignment and access provisions of the road.
- 7.12 Notwithstanding this, as a key strategic business site adjacent to the link road, with the necessary infrastructure in the process of being provided and now in the ownership of the regeneration company, there is every reason to continue to maintain its allocation.

Land east of Bournes, Harbour Road, Rye

- 7.13 'Land East of Bournes' relates to a site of approximately 1.3 hectares located on the south side of Harbour Road. Originally part of the ARC Spun Concrete site, the land has for some years been used for open storage, mainly of mobile homes, but a wide range of items, including lorry trailers, may be stored under the terms of the extant planning permissions RR/2003/1018/P and RR/2006/921/P. The site is generally flat and low-lying, with surface water currently draining, along with surface water from the field to the south and west, via a ditch running into the watercourse that borders the western side of the field. The latest permission, in April 2013, (RR/2013/93/P) allows for the parking of up to 7 lorries in addition to storage permitted under a previous permission. The site is currently being used, albeit not intensively, for this purpose.

Land off Burgess Road, The Ridge, Hastings

- 7.14 This Local Plan 2006 allocation (Policy HF1 reproduced below) relates to a small parcel of land on the edge of the existing large Ivyhouse Lane Industrial Estate, which is in Hastings Borough but adjacent to the district boundary.

Policy HF1

Land east of Burgess Road, Hastings, as defined on the Proposals Map, is allocated for employment purposes. Proposals will be permitted where:

- (i) access is provided off Burgess Road in the form of a loop to Haywood Way;**
 - (ii) some 3,000m² of business floorspace is provided;**
 - (iii) provision is made for the retention and future management of Ancient Woodland to the north of the site.**
- 7.15 The existing industrial estate presents a very "raw" edge on its eastern side and the adjoining, mostly rough scrub grass, land is traversed by tracks and holes made for trial motorcycles and bicycles. There are overhead transmission lines and three pylons rise from within this area.
- 7.16 Hastings Borough Council has confirmed the allocation of land immediately abutting this site, through its development Management Plan.
- 7.17 There is current landowner/developer interest in developing the site with small units.

- 7.18 In view of this context and the very limited ecological value of this fringe area, it is proposed that a limited expansion of the existing industrial development, by the inclusion of approximately 1.1 hectare of land abutting the Borough boundary, would enable improvements to the visual appearance of the area, including the management of enclosing woodland. Hence, while the land is situated in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, limited development provides the opportunity bring environmental as well as ecological, public access and amenity benefits.
- 7.19 The precise developable area requires input of a detailed tree study, but at this stage, some 3,000sqm of business floorspace is still regarded as appropriate, contingent on the benefits outlined above and with a large area of damaged woodland restored.

Rutherfords Business Park, Marley Lane, Battle

- 7.20 The allocated site is open, undeveloped land, amounting to some 0.75 hectares, to the north of the existing, well-established Rutherfords Business Park.
- 7.21 The relevant Local Plan 2006 policy, EM4, is reproduced below:

Policy EM4

Land at Rutherfords Business Park, Marley Lane including a northward extension as shown on the Proposals Map is allocated for business purposes. Development proposals, including the rationalisation and intensification of existing developments, should be visually contained from the wider Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty setting and, subject to a transport assessment, provide for an appropriate contribution to improvements to the junction of Marley Lane and the A21 and should demonstrate by means of a travel plan how additional traffic generation will be minimised.

- 7.22 The supporting text of the policy indicates an estimated capacity of some 2,700sqm of additional business accommodation.
- 7.23 The lower part of the field allocated for development is visually well contained, but much of the land on higher ground than the existing buildings is visible in some views from east Battle.
- 7.24 There has been no progress in progressing a purely business scheme in recent years. Also, given its greenfield status and relatively poor accessibility to Battle, its development may no longer be justified if better sites are identified through the current Neighbourhood Plan process being undertaken by Battle Town Council.

Vacant sites

- 7.25 Vacant business sites that are capable of reuse, conversion or redevelopment may provide for new business activity and jobs without taking up further land⁶. Conversely, if they are unlikely to meet the accommodation needs of a business, they should be considered for an alternative, potentially mixed use. Known vacant sites are considered below.

Former Scats Mill, Northbridge Street, Robertsbridge

- 7.26 This is a substantially derelict site of a former Mill, with most buildings having been demolished several years ago, leaving only the impressive ‘Hodson’s Mill’, a small Listed barn and outbuildings.
- 7.27 The site has been unused for many years and previous efforts have been made to redevelop it residentially. These were successfully resisted, as the site was seen as a significant business site in the north of the District, close to the A21, as well as to the main London railway.
- 7.28 The Core Strategy, in Chapter 12, identifies Robertsbridge as one of the villages where further business space would be appropriate.
- 7.29 This site has again been put forward for a residential-led scheme.
- 7.30 An assessment of the ongoing need for its retention for business use should be undertaken by the Salehurst and Robertsbridge Parish Council as part of the preparation of its Neighbourhood Plan. That assessment should consider the potential for a mixed-use scheme in the first instance and also take account of the potential non-implementation of the longstanding allocation at land r/r Culverwells, off High Street, Robertsbridge.

Former Manroy factory, Hobbs Lane, Four Oaks

- 7.31 This former armaments factory has been vacated for a number of years and despite marketing it has failed to find another occupier. Following a site visit and building inspection, it is clear that the disposition of the building does not lend itself to ready reuse and it is in poor repair. Furthermore, there is a risk of potential contamination of the site from the previous use.

⁶ For the purposes of assessing progress towards business floorspace targets, the demolition of any building last in B Class use would be counted as a net loss irrespective of whether it was occupied at the base date of 1st April 2013, as the figures relate to stock. If there were no buildings on a site at the base date, then its reuse for non-business purposes would not appear in the statistics.

7.32 For these reasons, it is considered very unlikely to make a meaningful contribution to meeting business needs over the plan period. Also, having regard to the location and limited size of the site, and the existence of business units opposite which are more suited to a range of needs and currently available, a mixed use is not seen as appropriate.

8. BUSINESS LAND SUPPLY FROM EXISTING SITES

A. Quantitative assessment

8.1 The table below shows the already known sources of supply for business development, taking account of their prospects of coming forward. The 'intensification allowance' gives likely minima, where appropriate, in view of the uncertainties about the availability and achievability of further floorspace.

Business floorspace potential from identified sites and areas/estates

	Completions 2011-2015 (sqm)	Commencements (sqm)	Full permissions (sqm)	Outline permissions (sqm)	Intensification allowance (sqm)	Total likely floorspace from existing sites
Bexhill	120	2,907	2,769	22,242	400	25,738
Hastings Fringes	0	0	0	0	0	0
Battle	170	988	4,637	0	500	6,295
Rye	16	0	2,168	12,810	600+	15,594
Rural	3,284	3,409	3,757	1,100-2,400*	0	11,550+
Total	3,590	7,304	13331	36,151-37,452	1,500	61,117+

* Range allows for non-delivery of 1,300sqm at Culverwells, Robertsbridge

Business floorspace targets, identified supply and minimum quantitative requirements

	Core Strategy Target (sqm)	Total likely floorspace from existing sites	Additional capacity from sites approved since April 2015	Minimum requirement from new sites
Bexhill	At least 60,000	25,738	7,000	27,262
Hastings Fringes	At least 3,000	0	0	3,000
Battle	At least 10,000	6,295	0	3,705
Rye	At least 10,000-20,000	15,594	0	0 – 4,406
Rural	At least 10,000	13,490+	-665	0
Total	At least 100,000	61,117+	6335	33,967 – 38,373 (32,548)

B. Qualitative assessment

- 8.2 While the above figures show that the currently identified quantum of industrial, office and storage space across the District appears capable of meeting a high proportion of the overall need, this does not take account of either the range of provision that is appropriate or the availability of different types of space in different localities.
- 8.3 A need to re-balance the range of available stock has been identified in economic strategies, while the relatively high proportion of older stock has also been identified as an issue warranting consideration in the earlier Employment Land Review.
- 8.4 Scrutiny of the types of business space currently available clearly shows not only an absence of high quality business parks, but also a relatively low level of high quality, modern light industrial and office space.

C. Overview

Bexhill

- 8.5 The recently approved schemes for business space off the recently built Mount View Street to the east of the link road (Combe Valley Way) will make a significant contribution to address the lack of high quality space in a strategic location. In fact, the first office building has now been built.
- 8.6 Given its successful early phase and having regard to the 15-year time horizon of the plan, it would be appropriate to supplement, and complement this, with further high-quality business space, capable of accommodating major users. Bexhill would be the most appropriate base for a Category 1 office complex, possibly a campus-type development, if there was a sufficient market.
- 8.7 In addition, given the concentration of traditional, general purpose accommodation on both Beeching Road and Brett Drive, and noting the success of the much more recent Elva Way development, there is also a potential for further smaller unit light industrial and office accommodation in Bexhill.
- 8.8 In conclusion, the qualitative analysis suggests a little higher level of provision than the minimum target in order to provide both a more diverse range of sites and opportunities for smaller unit general purpose space. An office campus would most likely be for a single occupier inward investment and hence be regarded as a "one-off".

Hastings Fringes

- 8.9 Given that North East Bexhill and the Queensway sites in Hastings will offer higher-quality space, the likely unmet demand is most likely to be for more small to medium-sized general purpose units, mainly for light industry (Use Class B1).
- 8.10 Other than the Queensway sites, the only identified opportunities in Hastings for new industrial development are at the Ivyhouse lane Industrial Estate; hence, the capacity for expansion of that estate into Rother should be seen as an opportunity to dovetail with the provisions in Hastings to provide valuable additional space to serve the town and its environs. The general absence of residential amenity concerns also allows the potential for land here to be marketed for a variety of purposes, thereby reducing development risks and increasing the likely rate of take-up.
- 8.11 The size of the Hastings market and limited supply of new general purpose industrial space in the town means that there may well be more capacity than 3,000sqm. The actual capacity for further business space in Rother is likely to be more constrained by environmental designations than market demand.

Battle

- 8.12 Battle also has a relatively small economic base, with more industrial concerns based at Station Road and along Marley lane towards the A21, where storage uses, taking advantage of the access to the trunk road, are more prevalent. There are smaller, office-based uses in and around the town centre, but there is no clear hub – which one might expect close to the station.
- 8.13 Therefore, in the interests of sustainability and realising the potential of Battle for offices and a greater light manufacturing presence, it would be appropriate to examine closer the opportunities for intensification at Station Road. This may require consideration of mixed-use schemes.
- 8.14 There is an unimplemented planning permission at Marley Lane (in addition to the consent for a highways depot- see next section) which is a significant development opportunity.
- 8.15 Having regard to qualitative and sustainability factors, achieving the floorspace target through developments along Marley Lane should not detract from making more effective use of Station Road for more intensive business developments, as it would clearly complement that provision and provide a stronger commercial hub in the town itself.

Rye

- 8.16 Rye is well served by Harbour Road for a wide range of uses. It has further potential for growth, as shown by the substantial land and floorspace covered by outstanding planning permissions.
- 8.17 If the developments with outstanding planning permissions are brought forward, the Core Strategy target would readily be met but, as with Battle, it should not undermine seeking complementary business, especially office, provision in the town itself.

Rural Areas

- 8.18 The rural areas have seen most floorspace growth in recent years, in terms of completions, commencements and permissions. This shows their importance in providing accommodation, both to meet the needs of larger space users with relatively low specification requirements and as viable alternatives, not least as urban land values are squeezing space in towns and villages.
- 8.19 At the same time, there is a steady stream of mostly smaller sites being lost to business use as a consequence of new permitted development rights, although this can also result in substantial net losses, as seen as Bodiam Business Park, with 1,800sqm of offices being converted to residential.
- 8.20 It is clear that the combination of the opportunities that the Rural Areas provide for businesses to locate and flourish – as evidenced by the very high occupation rates across all sizes of areas/estates and across the rural parts of the District – and the financial pressures that tend to undermine new schemes coming forward - make it appropriate to continue to retain existing sites and premises in the rural areas (as well as in the towns) and be supportive of business floorspace even when the floorspace target is reached.
- 8.21 Consideration should be given to the intensification and expansion opportunities of existing sites. Vinehall Business Centre is identified as being worthy of further consideration. This may be done under the scope of Core Strategy policy EC3 (or any replacement).
- 8.22 The potential for mixed-use sites should also be actively considered. Reference may usefully be made to Figure 10 in Chapter 12 of the Core Strategy, especially where suitable sites are being considered for development in the local service centres and service villages, as these offer greatest access to related facilities, including Post Offices, as well as being accessible to a local population.

9. POTENTIAL EMPLOYMENT SITES

- 9.1 Potential employment site allocations (which would not normally be necessary for sites already in employment (B Class) use or with planning permission at April 2016) are reviewed below, by location. This includes consideration of existing estates/areas considered to have expansion potential.
- 9.2 The need for further employment sites and floorspace needs to take account of any losses to the existing stock. It is shown in chapter 6 that there is, overall, a very high occupancy of existing business space and that this occurs across all the towns and across the rural areas.
- 9.3 It follows that to both maintain and where possible consolidate the existing accommodation base, as well as to manage the need to develop new greenfield sites, there should continue to be a clear presumption not only to retain but also to make most effective use of existing employment sites to support business growth.

Bexhill

- 9.4 As discussed in the previous section, there is still a need to identify at least some 27,000sqm of business floorspace at Bexhill, with a principal focus on high-quality light manufacturing and office space, with a likely need for additional sites for small, workshop units and the possibility of a more targeted office development.
- 9.5 While there will still be some circumstances where, for viability or locational reasons, it would be clearly inappropriate to retain a site for business purposes, the following proposals for potential sites assumes that such situations are relatively rare and that that the recommended allocations represent net additions to the current stock.

Land north of Sidley', west of Combe Valley Way

- 9.6 The 2006 Local Plan (policy BX3) allocation for 'land north of Sidley', to the west of Combe Valley Way, offers an excellent opportunity to provide such space to serve not only the town but the wider Bexhill/Hastings economic area. Also, as discussed in section 8, it is still expected to come forward. Access to the combined area is provided for as part of the approved North Bexhill Access Road, which will form the northern boundary of the allocation.

- 9.7 Hence, this should continue to be identified as a key site for offices, light industrial and, subject to individual details, storage, uses. The capacity of the site as identified in the North East Bexhill SPD, of some 28,000sqm, may need to be refined in the light of the current access details, but the guiding principles remain the same.

Land at Elva Way

- 9.8 Elva Way is an existing employment site, but has been identified as having intensification potential. The opportunity to build on the success of the recent scheme at Elva Way to meet the need for modern but smaller and lower-spec offices and workshop space should be pursued. Such an intensification of the southern section of Elva Way is provided for under Core Strategy policy EC3 (as recommended to be updated). However, subject to confirmation of the relocation of the existing Highways Depot, it may duly be considered as a specific allocation for office and light industrial (B1) uses.

Beeching Road Industrial Estate

- 9.9 Recognising the high likelihood of a retail use allocation in the south-eastern area of the Estate, consideration should be given to the potential to create more intensive B1, especially office, space, as part of any retail-led allocation.

Northeye

- 9.10 The former Northeye site should be considered as a potential site for a “campus” type development for a high tech and R&D uses, with a high office content, based on the current lack of category 1 - - High Quality Office Sites.

Land at Barnhorn Green

- 9.11 While this site already has planning permission for business floorspace as part of a mixed-use scheme (and is treated as a commitment), it may come under pressure for residential use in the future. This should be resisted as it represents the key opportunity to provide good quality business space to the west of the town. Hence, it should continue to be safeguarded for business purposes in line with the permission, (subject to the future use of Northeye).

Other sites

- 9.12 The above sites will readily provide the quantum and improved quality range of business accommodation to meet the needs of the town and wider area. Even so, any residential-led development allocations in central location should still look at the potential for a mixed use business element.

Hastings Fringes

Land off Burgess Road, Ivyhouse Lane Industrial Estate

- 9.13 The Core Strategy target remains outstanding, but as noted in section 7, the 2006 Local Plan allocation (policy HF1) is still expected to progress, in conjunction with adjoining land in Hastings, and provide that amount of business floorspace. Hence, the allocation should be carried forward, subject to updating regard impact on tree cover, in line with the assessment at paragraphs 7.14 - 7.19 above.

Land north of Ivyhouse Lane Industrial Estate

- 9.14 Hastings Borough Council has identified land to the north of the Estate for an extension (in Policy HOV11 of its Development Management Plan, September 2015). The policy states that account should be taken of the wider area in Rother District when considering development proposals for the site. The supporting text also refers to joint work between the respective councils on urban fringe management which is likely to inform development requirements. The allocated land in Hastings has a frontage to Ivyhouse Lane and a new access is proposed at the southern end of the site just beyond the existing Estate. An alternative access directly off Burgess Road is also mooted.
- 9.15 A Landscape Assessment carried out for the two Councils advises that industrial development may extend into Rother to the east of the southern portion of the Hastings site with little adverse impact on the wider valley. Development should be subject not only to mitigation measures to ensure satisfactory ecological, landscape, traffic and amenity impacts, but should also support the longer-term management of adjacent undeveloped valley to ensure its conservation to meet AONB objectives and local amenity needs.
- 9.16 Subject to these measures, a limited extension to the east of the allocated area in Hastings appears logical, creating a more viable development area without adversely impacting on the wider valley, complementing the allocation of the above site off Burgess Road.

Land at Breadsell Lane

- 9.17 An area just within the District on the south side of Battle Road, Hastings has also been assessed as a potential business allocation. However, it is found to make a very significant contribution to the 'Strategic Gap' between Hastings and Battle, as well as being rural in character notwithstanding its proximity to Hastings. It is also noted that adjacent land in Hastings is not allocated for development. Hence, it is not recommended for allocation.

Other sites

- 9.18 An existing employment site at Woodland Way has been put forward for residential redevelopment. It is currently underused and it is understood that the principal occupier is set to move to other premises locally. Also, it is now served from a now otherwise residential road. On balance, notwithstanding its proximity to The Ridge, given its ageing nature and limited value to the local economy at present, and given the additional land identified above off Ivyhouse Lane nearby, it is recommended that this may a site which could be released for housing, subject to further investigation of viability factors.

Battle (including Marley Lane)

- 9.19 As section 7 identifies, existing sites are expected to accommodate some 6,300sqm of additional floorspace towards the 10,000sqm target. This is made up primarily of outstanding planning permissions along Marley Lane, as well as scope for intensification of the Rutherfords Business Park, also on Marley Lane.

Rutherfords Business Park

- 9.20 Section 7 reviewed the 2006 Local Plan allocation (policy EM4) for the expansion of Rutherfords Business Park, which had an identified capacity of some 2,700sqm. This would virtually meet the outstanding quantitative requirement for the Battle (including Marley Lane) sub-area.
- 9.21 However, question-marks remain about both the sustainability of further greenfield development in this location and the likelihood of the allocation coming forward, given that it has not resulted in any development or even a planning permission in the intervening 10 years.
- 9.22 The Battle Neighbourhood Plan will need to consider the most appropriate approach to the future of this site, alongside its consideration of the Station Approach Business Area – see below.

Station Approach Business Area

- 9.23 The Industrial Estate assessment in Appendix C identifies a number of low-key uses as well as large areas of surface car parking that may offer potential for intensification, adding that without further detailed investigation of development viability and willingness to relocate, it is not possible to make an allowance with any confidence.

- 9.24 In view of its proximity to both the London-Hastings main line railway station and to the town centre, Station Approach is clearly a logical area in which to focus business growth. Furthermore, the types of space that are not very well catered for already in the locality – category 1, 2 and 3 space for higher quality offices and light manufacturing – would be attracted to this this highly accessible location.
- 9.25 Further, more detailed assessment of the opportunities and deliverability of the identified potential for intensification, within a comprehensive plan for the upgrading of the Station Approach Area, is called for. The Battle Neighbourhood Plan provides an appropriate and timely vehicle for determining potential here.

Felon's Field, Marley Lane

- 9.26 Planning permission was granted in 2014 for a highways depot on “Felon Field” on the south side of Marley Lane, adjoining the highways depot site at the junction with the A21. However, it is not being pursued. In view of this, further consideration has been given to the merits of reallocating the site.
- 9.27 It was allocated in the 2006 Local Plan under policy EM5, reproduced below. The estimated capacity at that time was 1,900sqm of industrial or warehousing floorspace:

Policy EM5

Land west of D.B. Earthmoving, Marley Lane, as defined on the Proposals Map, is allocated for industrial/storage purposes. Development proposals should:

- (a) provide for the retention and strengthening of boundary tree belts, new woodland planting to the south and west and its subsequent management;**
- (b) be subject to an ecological survey;**
- (c) ensure that it does not prejudice ground water;**
- (d) not encroach into the area at risk of flooding and should employ measures to minimise the risk of increased flooding due to surface water run-off; and**
- (e) be accompanied by travel plan to show how the traffic to be generated is to be minimised and by a transport assessment that would, amongst other things identify whether improvements are in consequence required to the junction of Marley Lane for which an appropriate contribution will be required from the development.**

- 9.28 Any development would inevitably need to respect the number of constraints impinging on the site. Not only is it within the High Weald AONB, but is fringed by Semi-Natural Ancient Woodland and tree belts on the site are subject to a Tree Preservation Order. The southern part of the site is within Flood Zone 3, while the discharge of water via soakaways would not be permitted as the site lies within a ground water protection zone. Ecology work in connection with a recent planning application (RR/2014/473/C) identified dormice on site, and a mitigation strategy.
- 9.29 Whilst the site is poorly sited in terms of public transport and is not accessible by walking, this site still represents a very rare opportunity for uses that would benefit from good access to the adjacent A21.
- 9.30 Therefore, subject to strict controls to ensure that the environmental constraints, including its habitat value, are fully and sensitively addressed, it is still considered to be an acceptable site especially for distribution-oriented uses.

Rye and Harbour Road

- 9.31 The business floorspace requirement for the Rye area is set as a range in the Core Strategy, of at least 10,000-20,000sqm. This reflects both its local role and its strategic role, notably in relation to its port activities.
- 9.32 As highlighted in the previous section, there are significant outstanding planning permissions at Harbour Road Industrial Estate which would, if implemented, exceed the minimum floorspace target. In fact, it would give a shortfall against the upper end of the range of only some 4,000sqm.
- 9.33 Allowance has already been made for a fairly modest amount of additional floorspace through intensification within the Estate, but the review also identifies potential further opportunities should existing land that is used, or is proposed to be used, as open storage is alternatively built upon. Indeed, if only a couple of these were taken up, the upper target would be met.
- 9.34 Of course, while the Estate performs a number of functions, as identified on the Assessment Form, it is not ideally suited for all needs. In particular, it could not be regarded as a high quality location for office development.
- 9.35 Furthermore, offices are normally more appropriately situated in more accessible locations, ideally close to town centres and transport hubs.

- 9.36 The most appropriate approach to not only meeting the floorspace targets, but also to delivering a good balance of types of business sites and premises is to:
- a) ensure that effective use is made of land at Harbour Road through an appropriate enabling policy for intensification (but, critically, without expanding on to or otherwise adversely impacting upon the surrounding nature conservation designations)
 - b) promoting higher density office-led schemes in more central locations, including as part of mixed-use developments, possibly in association with the redevelopment of existing commercial sites and/or relocation of businesses less suitably sited in central areas.
- 9.37 It will be for the Rye Neighbourhood Plan to further investigate the most appropriate framework for bringing forward suitable policies and proposals for how further business space should best be accommodated in the town itself.

Rural Areas

- 9.38 As the tables in the previous sections show, the rural areas have shown by far the most business development in recent years; they also account for the greatest amount of floorspace with full planning permission (including commencements). Together, these approximate to the minimum total floorspace target for the Rural Areas.
- 9.39 The level of development activity itself points to the role that rural areas are playing in meeting the accommodation requirements of businesses and, hence, to the economic growth of the District. It would not be consistent with the strategic objectives set out in the Core Strategy to frustrate this.
- 9.40 Looking at records of completions in the Rural Areas since 2011, it is evident that a high proportion of the total floorspace completions are for storage (B8) or low intensity uses, such as timber processing. These are also low in terms of job creation. Hence, it may well be that the typical job densities used to calculate floorspace requirements may well be too high. In this context, resulting in too low a floorspace target.
- 9.41 Other evidence supports the need to continue to retain the sites and premises that already exist and to allow for further floorspace.
- a) The level of occupation of industrial areas and estates in rural areas is very high, as is that of the smaller business areas surveyed. This is true across the District.

- b) There is increasing pressure on existing space from the changes in permitted development rights resulting in the conversion of offices to residential use, with currently approved schemes involving the loss of over 3,000sqm, and more continuing to come forward
 - c) The economics of new, freestanding business development is not commercially attractive, especially when compared to residential development
 - d) There is a view among some commercial developers that a clear policy statement of retaining business sites would lower residential “hope value” and encourage new commercial space for which a demand exists
- 9.42 The fragmented nature of the rural commercial market makes it difficult to accurately identify exactly where new floorspace is going to come forward without a detailed knowledge of individual sites, with sites either in farm complexes or in secluded locations, or as extensions to existing sites.
- 9.43 Of the areas reviewed, while they are universally wholly or substantially occupied, there is little scope for sustainable expansion, with the likely exception of Vinehall Business Centre (see below).
- 9.44 Some, limited possibilities for intensification and expansion have been identified, but it remains uncertain to what extent this will come forward.
- 9.45 In these circumstances, it is considered that the most appropriate policy approach within the Rural Areas is to:
- continue to resist the loss of existing business sites and floorspace to other uses (which is seen to be justified in the towns as well as the rural areas) unless there is very clear evidence that it is not needed⁷
 - enable further floorspace to come forward at existing areas and sites in suitable locations and subject to strict environmental criteria
 - promote mixed-use business and residential developments on suitable sites in and around settlements
 - take a supportive approach to working at or from home, including in relation to ancillary buildings within residential curtilages, subject to amenity and environmental criteria

⁷ See Vacant Sites section in Chapter 7

Vinehall Business Centre

- 9.46 This is a well-established business centre with over 40 businesses, adjacent to the A21 at the junction with the B2089 (Rye) road. Both roads have bus services. Although well away from settlements, its location offers market potential, while the immediate confines of the area are quite contained by boundary planting in an otherwise open AONB countryside.
- 9.47 The potential for limited northern/eastern expansion may be considered in line with the criteria of Core Strategy policy EC3 (or any amendment to it). Key issues will be impact on the character of the area and managing travel demand, having regard to demand and opportunities elsewhere.

Other sites

- 9.48 Of the villages being considered as part of the DaSA, Catsfield, Hurst Green, Peasmarsch, Northiam and Westfield are 'Local Service Villages', while it does not identify a particular employment need for Catsfield. . (Both the 'Rural Service Centres' of Robertsbridge and Ticehurst are being planned for via neighbourhood plans.)
- 9.49 There is considered unlikely to be realistic opportunities for mixed-use developments in these villages, based on the sites identified through the earlier Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process, having regard to their relationship to existing housing and road access.
- 9.50 However, there may be suitable sites for mixed use developments in or adjoining villages covered by neighbourhood plans which should also be considered.

10. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 In summary, it is recommended that:

District-wide

- i. Continue to resist, in principle, the loss of existing business sites and floorspace to other uses, unless there is clear evidence of a lack of realistic need or viability

Bexhill

- i. Land north of Sidley, to the west of Combe Valley Way, should continue to be allocated as a key business site for offices, light industrial and, subject to individual details, storage, uses
- ii. The southern section of Elva Way should be allocated for office and light industrial (B1) uses, to meet the needs of smaller businesses for lower-spec offices and workshop space
- iii. The former Northeye site should be considered as a potential site for a “campus” type development for a high tech and R&D uses with a high office content
- iv. The existing Brett Drive and Pebsham business areas should be retained and the approved site to the north of Barnhorn Road brought forward
- v. The Beeching Road Industrial Estate be clearly safeguarded over and above any necessary retail use allocation that may be made

Hastings Fringes

- i. Land at Burgess Road should continue to be allocated for industrial and warehousing purposes, in conjunction with the adjoining allocation in Hastings Borough
- ii. Land adjoining the north of the Ivyhouse lane Estate be allocated as an extension to the Estate, in conjunction with the adjoining allocation in Hastings Borough

Battle (including Marley Lane)

- i. Land at Felon Field, Marley Lane be re-allocated for warehousing (B8) and industrial uses, subject to strict environmental safeguards
- ii. Battle Town Council be recommended to review the business development potential of both Station Approach and Rutherfords Business Park through its Neighbourhood Plan

Rye and Harbour Road

- i. Carry forward the existing enabling policy, suitably updated to reflect current environmental and other imperatives, for further intensification of industrial, storage and port-related uses at Harbour Road.
- ii. Rye Town Council be recommended to further investigate the most appropriate framework for bringing forward suitable policies and proposals for how further business space should best be accommodated in the area, with specific reference to higher density office-led schemes in more central locations, possibly as part of mixed-use developments, possibly in association with the redevelopment of existing commercial sites and/or relocation of businesses less suitably sited in central areas.

Rural Areas

- i. Enable further floorspace in suitable rural locations through a criteria-based policy
- ii. Promote mixed-use business and residential developments on suitable sites in and around settlements as part of the Local Plan and recommend that Neighbourhood Planning bodies also consider this, based on an assessment of the needs of their own areas and businesses
- iii. Support home-based working

Appendix 1: Existing Business Areas Assessment Form

(Name of Estate) Employment Area/Estate – Assessment Form

Ref. No.:

Name:

Location:

Parish:

Area (ha.):

Approx. no. of businesses:

Main Occupiers:

Occupancy level of units:

Extent of unused land/vacant plots:

General age, nature of stock:

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6):

Site context/constraints:

Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle):

Intensification opportunities:

Expansion opportunities:

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release)

Notes:

1. A plan of the estate and at least one photograph accompanies each assessment – see Appendix 3
2. Initial sieving also proposed assessment against broadband speeds, but advice from ESCC indicated that fibre coverage is either available or planned everywhere, either by BT's own commercial deployment or by the e-Sussex project, so this was excluded.

Appendix 2: Call for Sites - Website extract and site identification form

Employment Sites Review

Introduction

The Council is currently preparing a background evidence study on the suitability of existing and allocated employment sites, as well as of further potential sites, for identification/allocation in the forthcoming Development and Site Allocations Plan.

The need to identify further suitable sites to support jobs and business growth is in line with the adopted Core Strategy.

As part of this work, the Council issued a renewed call for sites for seven weeks up to 29 May 2015, specifically focusing on business and employment uses (B-use classes).

It covered the potential for expanding existing sites, as well as completely new sites, and the need to review the potential of undeveloped business sites, including those already allocated for business use.

National policy context

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) sets out the role of employment land assessments. It expects LPAs to set criteria or identify sites to match the strategy and meet the anticipate needs for local and inward investment (paragraph 21). Paragraph 22 expects employment land allocations to be regularly reviewed. Paragraph 161 states that LPAs should assess the sufficiency and suitability of existing and future supply of sites to meet identified needs.

In terms of processes, paragraphs 179 and 180 encourage collaborative working on strategic priorities (which include policies to deliver jobs) across boundaries, having due regard to travel-to-work areas. This should complement engagement with county and neighbouring LPAs, as well as Local Enterprise Partnerships and the business community in gaining a clear understanding of business needs (paragraph 160).

Also, the review of economic development land should be undertaken at the same time as that for housing, in order that sites may be allocated for the use which is most appropriate (paragraph 161).

The [National Planning Practice Guidance](#) (PPG) elaborates on *assessments*, notably in relation to:

- also engaging with those with land interests; land promoters; local property agents and business representative organisation
- a process that should enable identification of sites and locations suitable for the required development in the Local Plan
- considering all sites and broad locations capable of delivering economic development on sites of 0.25ha (or 500m² of floor space) and above, subject to local discretion
- constraints must be set out clearly, including where they severely restrict development
- coverage should embrace existing economic development allocations, planning permissions that are unimplemented or under construction, applications that have been refused or withdrawn, surplus/likely to become surplus public sector land, vacant and derelict land and buildings, additional opportunities in both urban and in rural locations
- issue a call for sites

- assess potential sites against national policies and designations
- to conduct site surveys of potential sites, recording location, site size, boundaries, land use and character of site and surrounding area, physical and environmental constraints (e.g. access, contamination, steep slopes, flooding, natural features of significance, location of infrastructure/utilities), any development activity; an initial assessment of whether the site is suitable for a particular type of use or as part of a mixed-use development
- the use of floor space densities for certain industries can provide a useful guide to capacity
- assessing achievability (including viability) and suitability can usefully be carried out in parallel with estimating the development potential
- assessing the suitability of sites or broad locations for development should be guided by (a) the development plan, emerging plan policy and national policy and (b) market and industry requirements in that functional economic market area
- a re-appraisal of the suitability of previously allocated land and the potential to designate allocated land for different or a wider range of uses should be informed by a range of factors including the suitability of the land for different uses and by market signals, which will be useful in identifying the most appropriate use
- the factors to be considered to assess a site's suitability for development now or in the future should include:
 - physical limitations or problems such as access, infrastructure, ground conditions, flood risk, hazardous risks, pollution or contamination;
 - potential impacts including the effect upon landscapes including landscape features, nature and heritage conservation;
 - appropriateness and likely market attractiveness for the type of development proposed;
 - contribution to regeneration priority areas;
 - environmental/amenity impacts experienced by would be occupiers and neighbouring areas.

In terms of *outputs*, the PPG states:

The following set of standard outputs should be produced from the assessment to ensure consistency, accessibility and transparency:

- *a list of all sites or broad locations considered, cross-referenced to their locations on maps;*
- *an assessment of each site or broad location, in terms of its suitability for development, availability and achievability including whether the site/broad location is viable) to determine whether a site is realistically expected to be developed and when;*
- *contain more detail for those sites which are considered to be realistic candidates for development, where others have been discounted for clearly evidenced and justified reasons;*
- *the potential type and quantity of development that could be delivered on each site/broad location, including a reasonable estimate of build out rates, setting out how any barriers to delivery could be overcome and when;*
- *an indicative trajectory of anticipated development and consideration of associated risks.'*

Local Policy context and evidence base

[Local Plan Core Strategy](#) policy EC2 provides for some 100,000 m² of business floorspace across the district over the plan period. It elaborates upon the nature and distribution of this provision, complementing policy OSS1 and the spatial distribution set out in Figure 8.

The floorspace requirements in Figure 8 of the Core Strategy are expressed as minimum requirements. They represent what is regarded as the realistic potential to realise the economic objectives of increased economic activity, reduced reliance on out commuting and securing full employment. However, they also allow a greater floorspace growth if the market can support this.

Given the very recent adoption of the Core Strategy, following independent examination, these targets are regarded as up-to-date and provide the quantitative basis for business employment floorspace provision in the DaSA.

The joint Employment Strategy and Land Review published in May 2008, together with the Review Update of August 2011, provide substantial background information on the local socio-economic context, relevant economic strategies and property market conditions, including business and other stakeholder views.

Hence, the focus of this further study is the more in-depth assessment of the various sources of supply of business , namely:

- existing sites
- committed sites
- further potential sites

The scope of the brief in relation to investigation of such sites is set out below.

Previous examination of sites

The profile of existing industrial and employment areas in Rother is set out at Appendix 3b of the ESLR. Information is collated on the basic circumstances of the site as well as condition accessibility and market segmentation. Some 16 employments are identified and analysed. In addition, a further 30 smaller concentrations of business activity across rural areas of Rother are identified. However, no assessment is undertaken of those.

Appendix 5b of the 2008 ESLR reviews existing allocations and sites with planning permission, including their land use/sectoral potential, market attractiveness, sustainability, and strategic planning value.

Next Steps

The 'call for sites' has now closed. However a site may be submitted for consideration at any time by completion of a sites form, obtainable below in 'Related Documents'. There will be a specific opportunity to put a site forward as part of the consultation process.

The Council is currently preparing the 'Employment Sites Review' document.

The main tasks required are:

i. Update the baseline information to 1 April 2014

This should enable information to be presented on

- estimated stock of industrial, office(B1) and warehousing (B8) floorspace
- annual floorspace gains and losses 2006-2011 and since 2011
- floorspace gains/losses by use class 2006-2011 and since 2011
- the distribution of completions (i.e. specified town or 'rural area')
- the amount of floorspace with planning permission at 1/4/14
- the amount of land, and potential floorspace, on sites allocated for business purposes without planning permission
- the outstanding requirement for business floorspace growth

ii. Assessment of potential within existing sites

The prospect of net changes (gains and losses) to floorspace within established business areas should be assessed both by site survey (see 'Survey Information' below) and by review of completions and commitments data for the existing sites. This can draw largely on the work done as part of ESRL referred to above.

iii. Assessment of potential from existing vacant sites

Established but vacant sites of over 0.25ha (or other agreed threshold) should be identified, and their potential for continued business use assessed, having regard to period of vacancy and other marketing intelligence, as well as site circumstances (see 'Survey Information' below)

iv. Assessment of potential of sites with planning permission

Sites with permission at 1 April 2014 for at least 500sqm (or other agree threshold) identified from stage (i) should be assessed in terms of the prospect of them coming forward. This should be done firstly by seeking advice from the owners/agents on intentions and, if in doubt, also by obtaining independent commercial advice on market potential.

v. Assessment of allocated sites

Sites of at least 0.25ha (or other agree threshold) allocated for business use in the Local Plan 2006, but without permission at 1/4/14, identified from stage (i), should be assessed in terms of the prospect of them coming forward. This should be done firstly by seeking advice from the owners/agents on intentions and, if in doubt, also by obtaining independent commercial advice on market potential.

vi. Assessment of the need for further sites

This stage will draw together the quantitative identification of outstanding floorspace requirements from stage (i), the likely floorspace growth from existing sites, vacant sites, sites with planning permission and current allocations (stages ii-v) with a qualitative assessment of any imbalance in the range of existing and already committed supply and market demands and opportunities. This will rely on information obtained as part of the respective supply reviews on the one hand and market intelligence (from combination regeneration partners, commercial agents and economic strategies) on the other.

vii. Draft Report

It is expected that this will be built up as work progresses. The report should provide a clear framework for the identification of further sites, in terms of scale, unit sizes, range of uses and distribution by policy area.

Related Documents

-  [Employment Sites Identification Form PDF Version \[172kb\]Opens new window](#)
-  [Employment Sites Identification Form Word Version \[233kb\]Opens new window](#)

Appendix 3 – Business Estate/Area Assessments

- Ashburnham - Keeley's Timber Yard, Sawnden Farm, Red Barn
- Battle - Beech Farm
- Battle - Beechdown Wood – Former Sawmill Area
- Battle - Rutherfords Business Park
- Battle - Station Approach Industrial Estate
- Bexhill - Beeching Road Industrial Estate
- Bexhill - Brett Drive Industrial Estate
- Bexhill - Elva Business Centre and Sidley Goods Yard
- Bodiam - Bodiam Business Park
- Brightling - Longreach Farm
- Ewhurst - Compass Park Estate
- Ewhurst - Quarry Farm Business Centre
- Hastings Fringes - Ivyhouse Lane Industrial Estate
- Mountfield - British Gypsum
- Northiam - Coppards Lane Industrial Estate
- Rye - Harbour Road Industrial Estate
- Rye - Rock Channel (East)
- Sedlescombe - Marley Lane Business Park
- Ticehurst - Gibbs Read Farm Business Units
- Ticehurst - Tate Fencing
- Westfield - Wheel Farm Business Park
- Whatlington - Vinehall Business Centre

Keeley's Timber Yard, Sawnden Farm, Red Barn, Ashburnham

Ref. No.: ASIE1

Location: Sawnden Farm, Red Barn, Ashburnham

Parish: Ashburnham

Area (ha.): 1.1ha

Approx. no. of businesses: One

Main Occupiers: W Keeley & Sons

Occupancy level of units: Fully occupied

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: Land on site is generally in use, either for vehicle movement or open storage of timber, albeit at a low density and low intensity.

General age, nature of stock: Average condition, fit for purpose, concrete and timber storage sheds and workshops,

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): Rural business (General saw-mill/woodyard including storage of timber, saw milling, fencing materials, morticing and, planning). As such, Category 6.

Site context/constraints: Site surrounded by AONB countryside (south slopes of High Weald landscape character area). Two ponds on site (BAP priority habitat) which are important to protect from development. Ancient Woodland to west. Some surface water flooding issues.

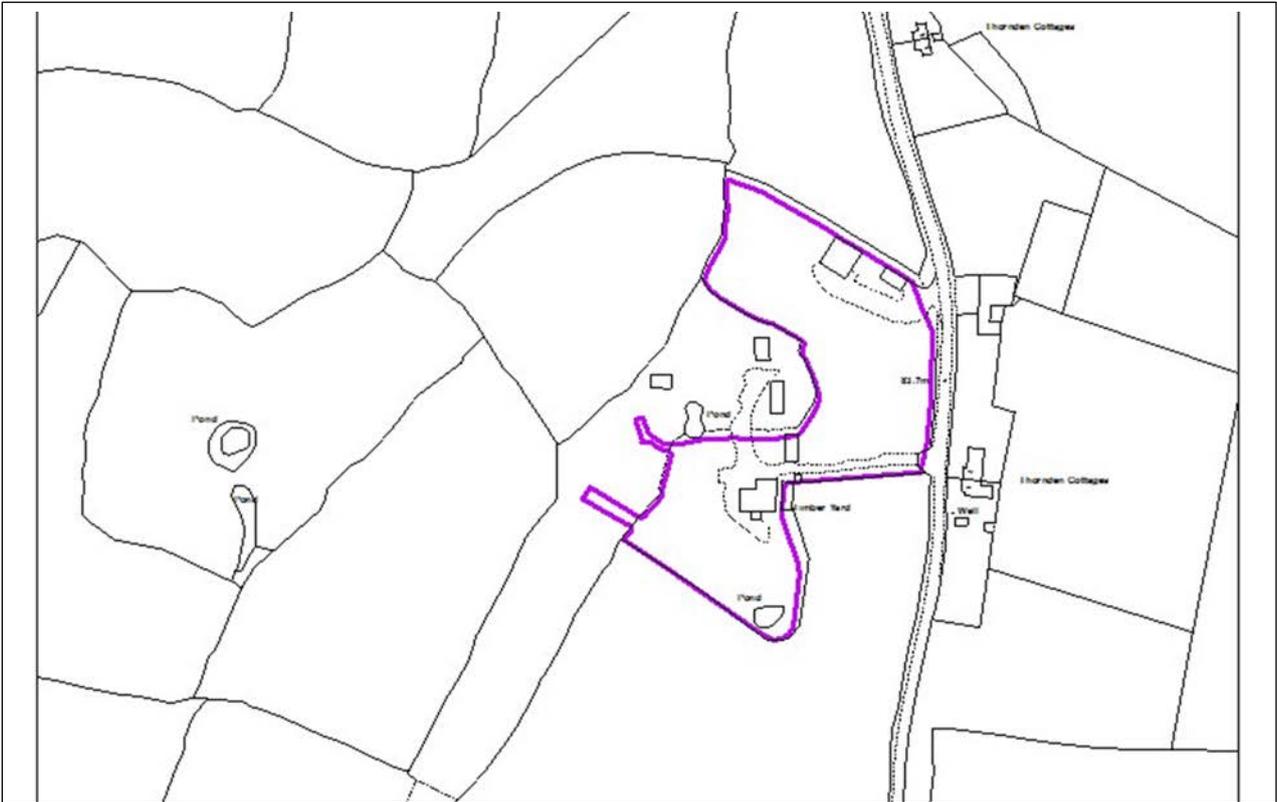
Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): Inaccessible to all but private vehicle.

Intensification opportunities: Possibly on site, mindful of environmental constraints.

Expansion opportunities: Very limited opportunities - limited to needs of current single user. Note application (RR/2015/1719/P) for 84sqm of office space to serve existing facility.

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):

RETAIN



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Beech Farm, Battle

Ref. No.: BAIE5

Location: off Netherfield Hill, Battle

Parish: Battle

Area (ha.): 2.2ha

Approx. no. of businesses: Approximately 12

Main Occupiers: Paul Sedgewick (Stained glass maker and designer), Granary Field Sports Country Store, The Granary (Sandwich Delivery), Plumbwell Heating, AIM Archery, Dale Racing, Socks-U-Wear, Romani Pole, local car valeters.

Occupancy level of units: Substantially occupied.

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: None.

General age, nature of stock: Generally older stock with mix of timber, stone and brick construction. Mix of one and two storeys. Mix of former farm buildings and stables, with some purpose built industrial units added.

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): 4 – General Purpose Industrial Areas

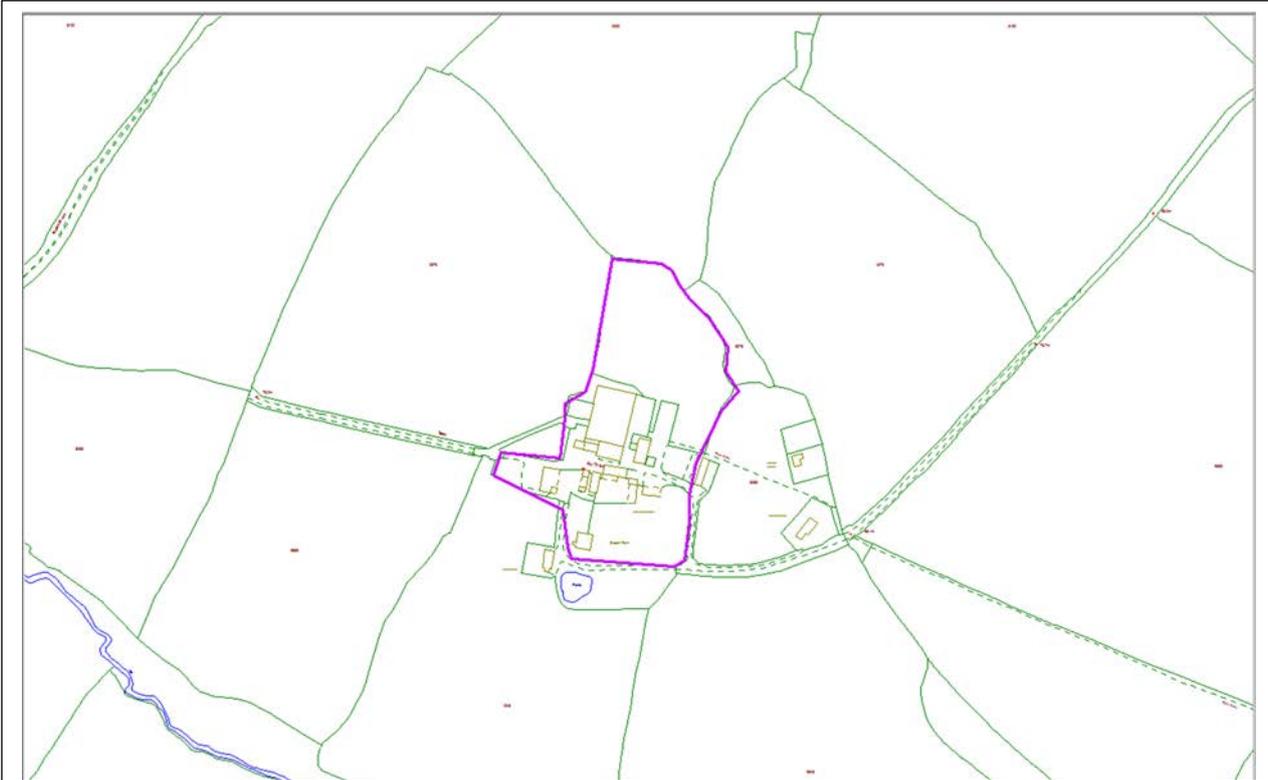
Site context/constraints: Farm diversification within exposed AONB countryside. Within groundwater source protection zone.

Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): Remote and inaccessible. Can be reached by private vehicle only down long 1km+ track before connecting to highway network.

Intensification opportunities: None

Expansion opportunities: None

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):
RETAIN.



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Beechdown Wood – Former Sawmill Area, Battle

Ref. No.: BAIE3

Location: A271, Battle

Parish: Battle

Area (ha.): 1.86

Approx. no. of businesses: Two

Main Occupiers: Solar UK (R&D and Solar Panel Production Facility – B1 use) and Littlewood (fencing and barriers)

Occupancy level of units: Fully occupied, albeit the Solar UK unit is still under construction.

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: None

General age, nature of stock: Older fencing yard and one new, high spec building

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): 1 – High Quality Office Site (0.48ha). West Side is 6 – Lower Quality Industrial/Storage (1.38ha).

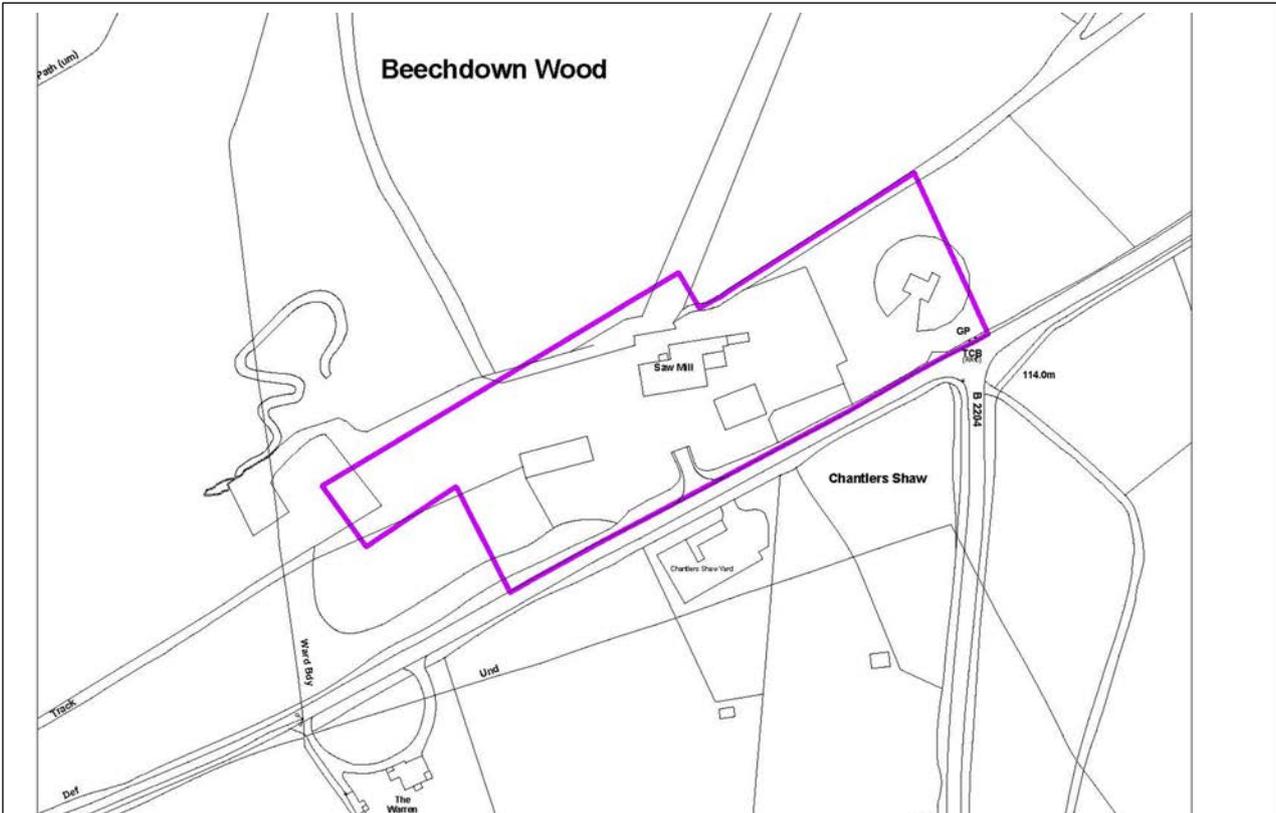
Site context/constraints: Rural character AONB, hemmed in by ancient woodland on all sides (also partially ghyll woodland – key component of HW AONB character).

Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle):

Intensification opportunities: None

Expansion opportunities: None

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):
RETAIN



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Rutherfords Business Park, Battle

Ref. No.: BAIE2

Location: Marley Lane, Battle

Parish: Battle

Area (ha.): 1.75ha

Approx. no. of businesses: Approx. seven, although occupancy not particularly clear.

Main Occupiers: The Jamieson Consultancy (strategic marketing company B1), Senlac Stone Ltd, Rutherford (the Pool People), Upfield Engineering Ltd, Cascade Clamps UK Ltd.

Occupancy level of units and Extent of unused land/vacant plots: Mostly occupied, although may be higher, as ad-hoc layout and some buildings may be ancillary storage.

General age, nature of stock: Mixed stock but generally poorer quality and in need of refurbishment. Exclusively single storey. Mostly brick or block construction, although some wooden shed areas. Surfacing is poor.

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): 4- General Purpose Industrial Area.

Site context/constraints: Access on bend, identified by signboard, but estate mostly screened for public view. AONB countryside location. Trees/woodland on most sides.

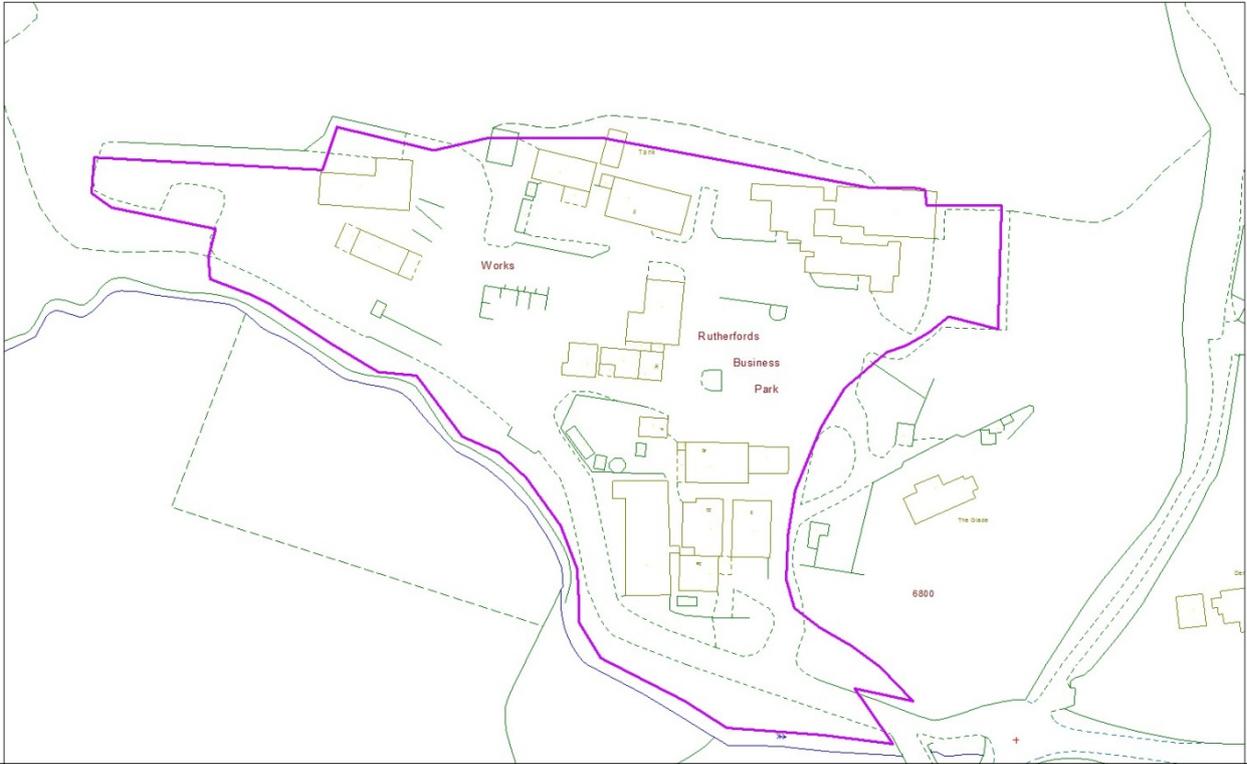
Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): On C94 road, with direct access. On bus route which operates less than 5 days a week. A21 is relatively short distance to east.

Intensification opportunities: Possibly limited opportunities alongside redevelopment/refurbishment or rationalisation of layout and parking areas for c500sqm.

Expansion opportunities: Field to north is an unimplemented Local Plan 2006 allocation, so may be considered in tandem with the existing site if redevelopment likely, although not a very sustainable site and greenfield extension would need strong justification.

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):

RETAIN AND INTENSIFY AND POSSIBLY EXPAND (DEPENDING ON OPPORTUNITIES ELSEWHERE IN MORE SUSTAINABLE LOCATIONS).



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Station Approach Industrial Estate, Battle

Ref. No.: BAIE1.

Location: Station Approach, Battle.

Parish: Battle

Area (ha.): 2.0ha

Approx. no. of businesses: 10

Main Occupiers: Battle Health Centre, health centre (with residential apartments), Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Alzheimers Society, Senlac Storage, Battle Mower Centre, Auctioneers, Howard Bros Joinery, Foster Motors, Senlac Parking.

Occupancy level of units: Fully occupied

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: None vacant, but large areas to both north-west and far-east for parking, including commuter parking.

General age, nature of stock: A mix of ages and types, including some modern and high quality buildings. Most of stock comprises a mix of brick, block and corrugated iron construction – mainly two or three storey or high single storey warehouses.

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): Overall category 4 (general purpose industrial areas, 0.9ha) with some 1 (High quality office sites, 0.3ha), and 6 (Lower quality industrial/storage areas, 0.8ha).

Site context/constraints: Urban site. Residential is to the north and west, where dwellings are close to boundaries. Levels are uneven to the north-west. Lower southern parts have a surface water flooding risk and SFRA reported sewerage flooding incidents. Vehicle access along Station Approach is narrow, exacerbated by layout of on street parking spaces. Battle station is a listed building and the Old Granary is also probably worthy of retention.

Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): Very accessible employment estate, situated adjacent Battle train station, two bus stops and a large car park. Pedestrian access to north (Marley Lane) and to south (Battle Hill and Lower Lake). Scope for provision of cycle lanes.

Intensification opportunities: Scope for redevelopment for uses that would benefit from highly accessible location. Potential to rationalise parking provision. A comprehensive scheme may facilitate higher building form adjacent the railway line to the east, where land is low-lying and neighbour issues are less of an issue. Improved access on to Marley Lane to the north-east would be worth investigating to increase accessibility further, although need to consider proximity to level crossing and impact on traffic flows.

Expansion opportunities: Very limited opportunities as site is wholly within the urban area.

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):
RETAIN AND INTENSIFY.



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Beeching Road Industrial Estate, Bexhill

Ref. No.: BXIE2

Location: Beeching Road, Bexhill

Ward: The estate straddles Kewhurst/Collington/Central wards

Area (ha.): 12.3ha

Approx. no. of businesses: 50+ businesses located within the estate

Main Occupiers: The estate comprises of a variety of uses including trade counters (Parker Building Supplies, Jewsons, Screwfix, Brewers), light industrial, general industrial and storage uses (car showrooms, garage motor repairs, bus depot), along with some sui-generis uses, notably the emergency services (Fire, Ambulance and Police), vets, scout hut and some low key storage.

Occupancy level of units: The estate is substantially occupied (16 units vacant). The vacant units vary in size, but are mostly concentrated in 2 areas within the estate (central eastern side of Beeching Road – formerly occupied by RHM Frozen Foods, and central western side of Beeching Road).

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: No unused or vacant plots (as opposed to units), although public car park is little used.

General age, nature of stock: The majority of the stock along Beeching Road was constructed between the 1960s-1980s, in a mix of styles. The condition of these buildings is quite variable but a number of buildings are in need of modernisation, particularly in terms of general appearance and the eaves height. There has been some recent investment into a small number of buildings on the estate to modernise and improve the appearance of the units. Gorringes (which has a frontage on Terminus Road) is listed (Grade II – Former Bexhill West Station).

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): The estate primarily consists of Category 4 (General Purpose Industrial Areas) with some areas that are Category 6 (Lower Quality Industrial/Storage Areas)

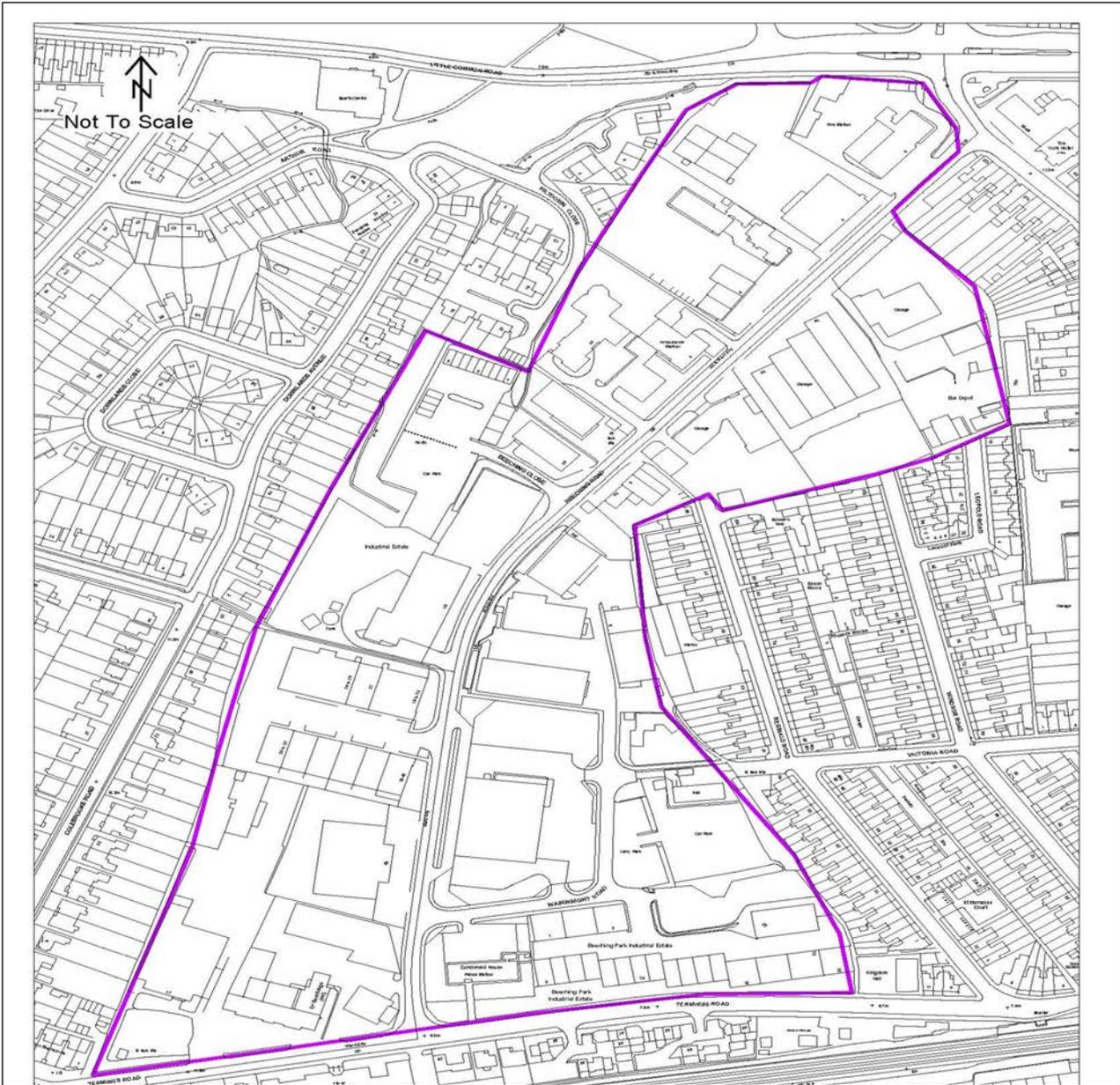
Site context/constraints: The estate is located to the north-west of Bexhill Town Centre and it is surrounded by residential properties to the east and west, with residential and some further low key employment uses (car wash & car sales) to the south, on the other side of Terminus Road. To the north-east is a parade of retail/restaurants uses (along London Road) with mainly residential on the upper floors. To the north-west is King Offa Way and the Bexhill entrance to the Link Road. There is a culvert which runs roughly from the centre of the site running south-east. A small part of the central-western part of the estate is located within Flood Zone 3 and the central and south-eastern part of the site being located within Flood Zone 2/3.

Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): Central location, close to Bexhill Town Centre (approx. 120m from the edge of the Bexhill Town Centre Shopping Area boundary) and the A259. Beeching Road is in walking distance from both Collington and Bexhill Train Stations.

Intensification opportunities: There is a clear area for redevelopment, centred around the existing public car park and vacant building/underused plots in the centre of the Beeching Road Estate.

Expansion opportunities: None identified. The site is surrounded on all sides by development so opportunities are unlikely.

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):
RETAIN AND INTENSIFY (through redevelopment in the south-east)



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Brett Drive Industrial Estate, Bexhill

Ref. No.: BXIE1

Location: Brett Drive, Bexhill, off De La Warr Road (A259)

Ward: Sackville

Area (ha.): 2.71ha

Approx. no. of businesses: 16 businesses located within the estate

Main Occupiers: Mix of B1, B2 & B8 including Brett Concrete, AAH Pharmaceuticals (pharmaceutical distribution), H20 Linen Services, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, 1066 Gymnastics

Occupancy level of units: Virtually fully occupied – only 1 unit vacant (around 125sq.m)

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: 1 vacant plot - part of existing block of smaller units on the estate. 1 underused plot (unit 5 – south-eastern part of the estate)

General age, nature of stock: Approx. 30-40 years old, mix of industrial and warehousing buildings, Construction - some brick built, some metal sheeting, varying sizes, B2 units generally closest to the railway and/or adjacent retail park

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): Predominantly category 6 – Mix of light manufacturing, general industry and storage uses

Site context/constraints: Urban site accessed off the main A259 route into Bexhill from Hastings. The site is surrounded on 4 sides (residential to the west, A259 to the north, Ravenside Retail and Leisure Park to the east, railway line to the south). On-street parking along Brett Drive is at capacity, whilst customer parking around the units appears to be adequate. Previously there have been issues with contamination at unit 5, however, this has been cleared. The estate is immediately adjacent to Ravenside Retail & Leisure Park (Wickes, Tesco, M&S etc) On-street parking issues along the access road indicate that the estate is functioning at capacity, although customer parking around individual units appears proportionate and spaces available for use during the site visit.

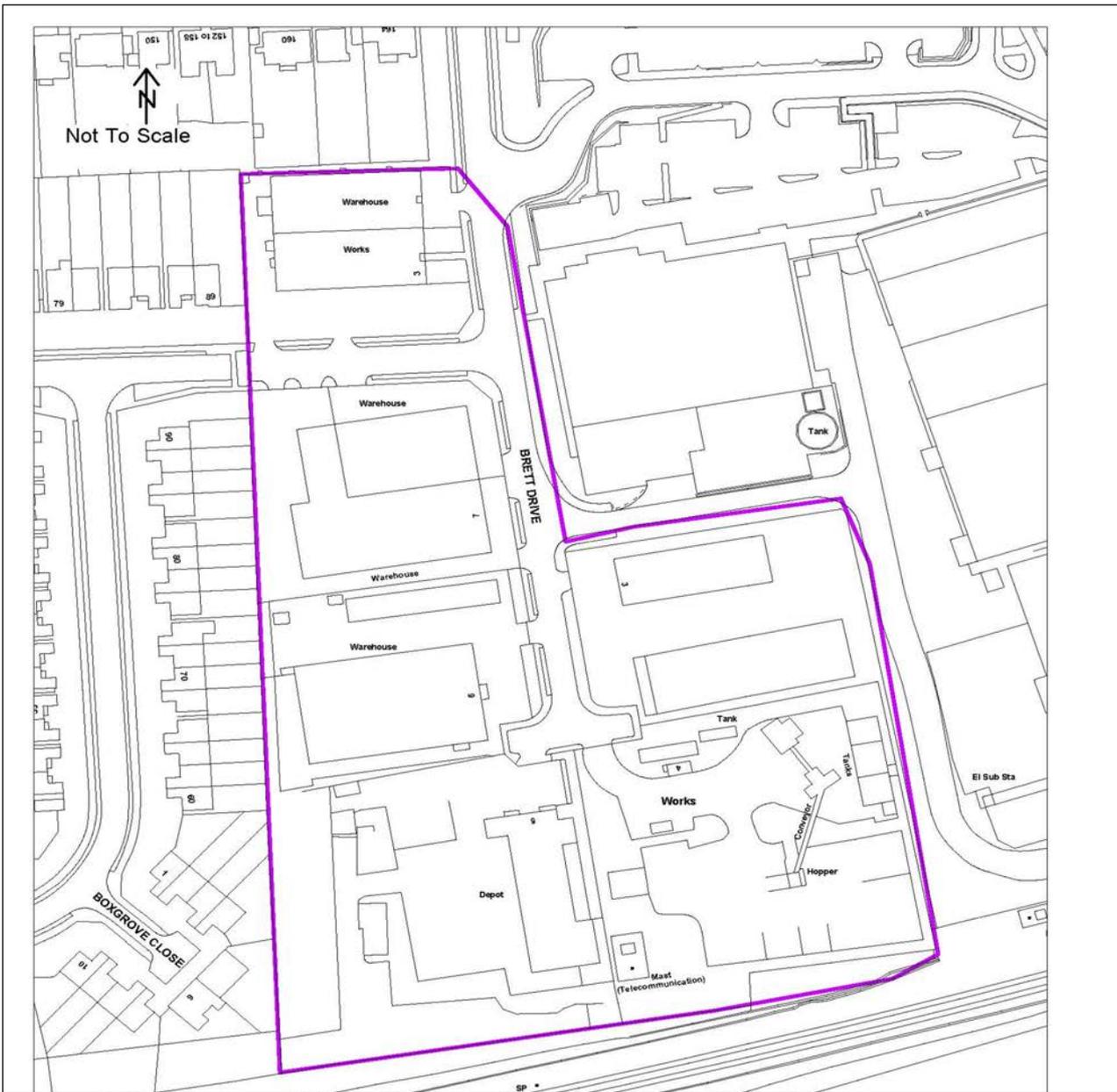
Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): Primary access from A259 (De La Warr Road) with a secondary access through Ravenside Retail and Leisure Park onto Brett Drive. The Bexhill Hastings Link Road once completed should reduce the traffic queueing currently experienced on the A259. Railway line abuts the south of the site but there is no access to the line. Bus stops on A259 with pedestrian paths to wider estate from the main road and via pedestrian link from College Road. The National Cycle Network (NCN- South Coast cycle route - Route 2) is 650m from Brett Drive joining Bexhill and Hastings Town Centres.

Intensification opportunities: Scope for possible intensification of area around Unit 5, as the unit is small compared to the overall size of the plot. Any further development would need to be mindful of this relationship with neighbouring residential uses in Boxgrove Close in terms of height, scale, bulk and use (only likely to be suitable for B1). While there could be intensification of buildings, up to c1,000sqm (at 35% site coverage on remaining unoccupied area), the plot is occupied by a building contractor, so benefits from the open area for parking and storage.

Expansion opportunities: None, the estate is surrounded on all 4 sides by existing development and there are no obvious areas for any expansion.

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):

RETAIN (note very limited intensification potential of one plot, but unlikely need by occupier)



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Elva Business Centre and Sidley Goods Yard, Bexhill

Ref. No.: BXIE3

Location: Elva Way, Sidley, Bexhill

Ward: Sidley

Area (ha.): 1.4ha

Approx. no. of businesses: 31 occupiers

Main Occupiers: East Sussex County Council – ESCC (highways depot), Terinea Ltd (IT support services), Timber Frame IT (Timber frame self-build), Burts Butchers

Occupancy level of units: Fully occupied

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: No vacant plots on the main estate area but the south-eastern area (occupied by ESCC) is currently used as the main highway depot for the Bexhill area, and occupies a large plot relative to the buildings on the site.

General age, nature of stock: The majority of the site is a modern development (completed in 2010) of 2,260 square metres in 3 blocks of light industrial and office business space. The central and western blocks are permitted for B1 use with the eastern block (Napier House) being permitted for B1a/B1b use. Elva Business Centre consists of a number of small serviced units for small/start-up businesses, ranging between 22 and 200 sqm. The development includes Photovoltaic roof panels, Ground Source Heat Pumps and a Road Energy system which heats and cools the buildings.

The highways depot (sui-generis) to the south of the site consists of 3 buildings with flat roofs (2 single storey & one 2-storey) and a garage block on a large plot. The buildings are of portacabin-type construction and of poor quality. There is a road construction material storage area to the rear of the site. The depot is separated from the wider Business Centre by a tall perimeter fence.

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): The majority of the site comprises of:

- Category 3: Higher Specification Light Industrial/Office Areas (northern/eastern part of the site).
- Category 6: Lower Quality Industrial/Storage Areas (southern part of the site – highways depot)

Site context/constraints: The site is surrounded on all 4 sides by built development (Bexhill-Hastings Link Road (BHLR) to the east, with residential development beyond; there is further residential development to the south and west. The BHLR has opened up the frontage (eastern part) of the site making the estate more prominent, and highlighting the relative 'scruffiness' of the depot site. There is allocated parking for each of the industrial units, although there is some overspill around the Napier House unit resulting in some on-street parking.

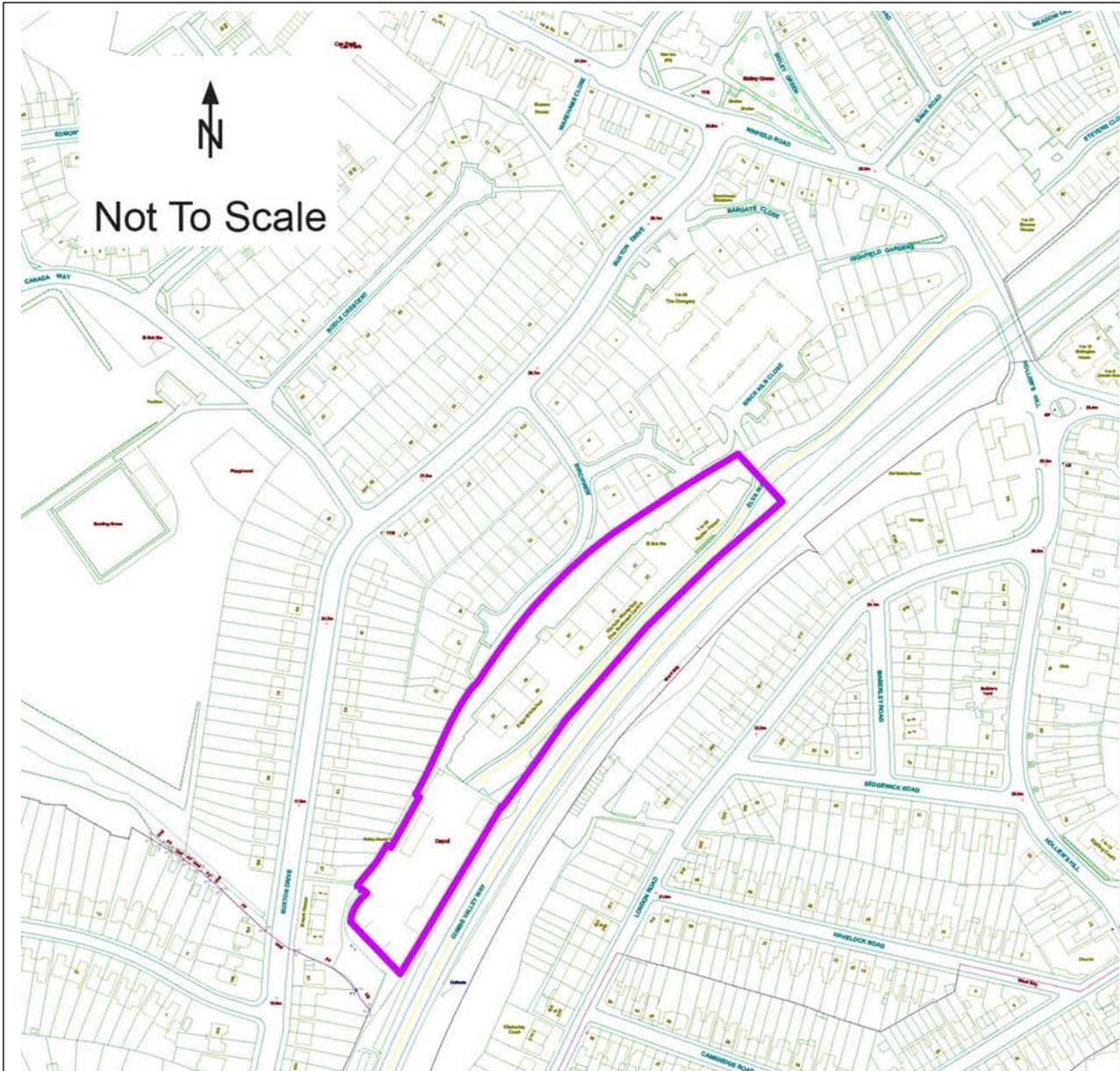
Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): Highway access from Sidley High Street. Bus stops are also located in Sidley High Street with pedestrian paths to wider estate from the main road. There is cycle storage adjacent to Napier House.

Intensification opportunities: The ESCC highway depot land is underused for the size of the plot; if the existing use should relocate (although still occupied, it is currently identified by ESCC as 'surplus'), the land would provide a logical extension to the successful modern B1 development, potentially for a further 400 sqm. net additional floorspace.

Expansion opportunities: None, the site is surrounded on all 4 sides by existing development and there are no obvious areas for expansion.

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):

RETAIN AND INTENSIFY (subject to relocation of the Highways Depot)



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Bodiam Business Park, Bodiam

Ref. No.: BOIE1

Location: Green Lane, Bodiam

Parish: Bodiam

Area (ha.): 3.0ha

Approx. no. of businesses: 14.

Main Occupiers: Westridge (Construction Company) – occupying at least half the site. Other occupiers include: Mervyn J Stone, Quality Cleaning Services, LL Pools, Claque Theatre, Budd Mosaics, Mark Maynard Ltd, The Bookcase Co, MTF Enterprises, USL Ltd, Aquarius Trading, Nick Atkins and MA Godwin, MSC Managed Services Centre, Midicy Oast, DAT Group.

Occupancy level of units: Substantially occupied. Recent proposal for offices to be converted to housing.

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: Only one unit appeared vacant

General age, nature of stock: Very mixed. Western frontage of site comprises high quality, high spec office accommodation (two blocks) in a treed landscaped setting with an attractive pond on-site. Middle block older, poorer quality 2 storey brick built. Corrugated iron shed and open storage at rear

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): Mix of 3 – Higher Specification Office/Light Industrial (western frontage, 1.1ha) and 6 – Lower Quality Industrial/Storage Areas (rear eastern sections, 2.2ha).

Site context/constraints: Countryside location, exposed in wider AONB to south and south-west. Sections of the site (largely landscaped areas or open storage areas) are within areas at risk of surface water flooding.

Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): Access to highway network (B2244) via 300m access road. No bus service available

Intensification opportunities: None, given location and setting of the site, together with flood risk.

Expansion opportunities: None, as above.

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):

RETAIN



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Longreach Farm, Brightling

Ref. No.: BLIE1

Location: Longreach Farm, Brightling

Parish: Brightling

Area (ha.): 1ha

Approx. no. of businesses: One.

Main Occupiers: Wrenns Feeds

Occupancy level of units/ Extent of unused land/vacant plots: Fully occupied, albeit ad-hoc layout.

General age, nature of stock: Predominantly former farm sheds. Long Reach Farm House is Grade 2 listed - Early C19.

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): 6 – Lower Quality Industrial / Storage Areas

Site context/constraints: Highly exposed with very far reaching views across the AONB landscape.

Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): 250m from public highway (Brightling Village) from where a bus route operates 5-6 days a week. Accessed down steep track. Pedestrian access awkward. No train stations in vicinity.

Intensification opportunities: None

Expansion opportunities: None

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):

RETAIN



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Compass Park Estate, Ewhurst

Ref. No: EWIE1

Location: Located between Hawkhurst and Cripps Corner via Junction Road (B2244).

Parish: Ewhurst Parish

Area (ha.): 4.38ha

Approx. no. of businesses: 3 businesses from have relocated into the new premises.

Main Occupiers: [GreenBlue Urban](#), [Kinley Systems](#) and [Bell Chem Products Ltd](#)

Occupancy level of units: High

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: Recently redeveloped site which comprises of four modern units for B1 (a), B2 and B8 uses set within landscape grounds and accompanying Gospel Hall. As of the May 2015 only Unit 1 (combined Units 1 and 2) and Unit 4 had been built.

General age, nature of stock: Recently constructed although only 2 units have been completed and infrastructure and building work is ongoing on the remaining units including a gospel hall.

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): High Specification Light Industrial/Office Areas.

Site context/constraints: Compass Park is sited off western side of Junction Road (B2244). It was formerly occupied by Compass Agricultural Products and Pet Foods.. The site is within the countryside and forms part of the designated High Weald AONB. The south part of the site falls within an area of Ancient Woodland. A public right of way bisects the site. A new access road has been constructed and serviced plots have been laid out in accordance with RR/2009/1463/P and RR/2010/2168/P. A further application (RR/2013/343/P) was submitted in 2013 for a revised scheme and replaces two buildings previously approved (plot 1 and plot 2) with a combined plot 1 which is currently occupied by Kinsley Products. Unit 2 (**1461sq. m**) is completed and is occupied by GreenBlue Urban. Unit 3 (**700sq. m**) and Unit five (**690sq. m**) have yet to be built as well as the Gospel Hall.

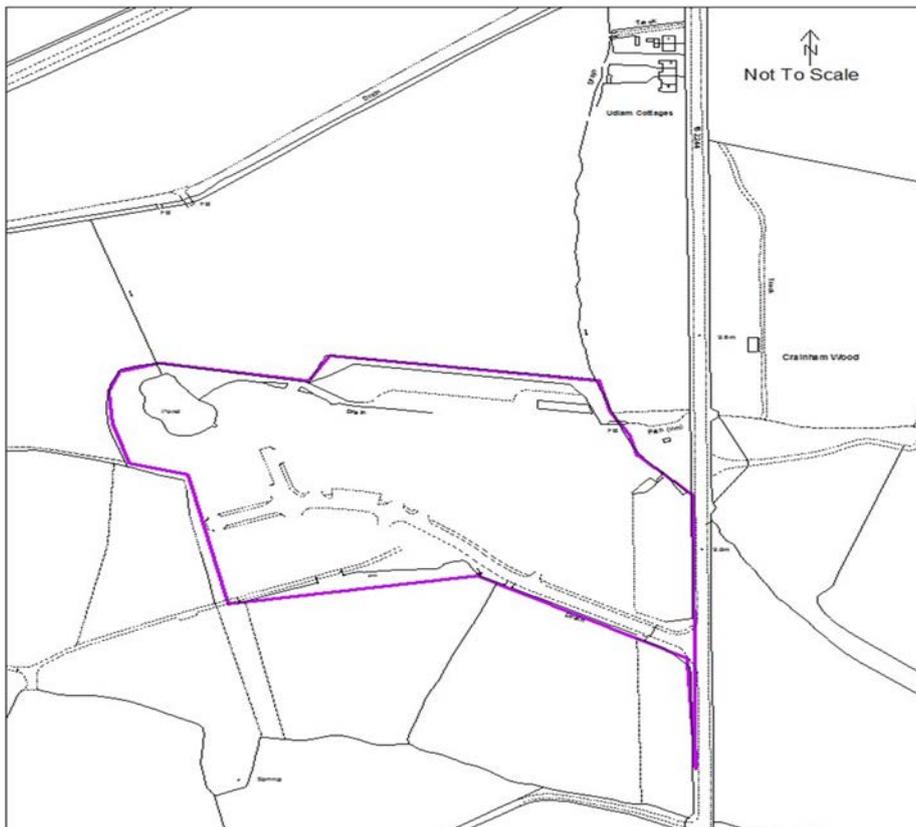
Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): Located off Junction Road between Cripps Corner and Hawkhurst. Travel will be primarily via private car given its rural location and relative isolation from main transport corridors and main settlements. The closest village is Cripps Corner to the south (0.36 miles) which is limited in the services it can provide. The larger village of Staplecross is located 1.3 miles to the north east of Compass Park by road. Stagecoach operates a service (349) between Hawkhurst and Hastings which travels along the B2244 (at intervals every two hours). There is no pedestrian footpath along B2244 which further exacerbates its relative rural location.

Broadband Speeds / Accessibility: Fibre coverage but unlikely to be superfast. ADSL

Intensification opportunities: None.

Expansion opportunities: None over existing commitments. It would involve encroachment into the landscape/amenity area of the park close to the entrance of the site and next to the gospel hall and increase the overall footprint in the AONB.

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release): There is no scope to increase further employment provision at Compass Park either through intensification or expansion. Given its relative rural isolation further development here would increase car usage to this site and have negative impact on the AONB.



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Quarry Farm Business Centre, Ewhurst

Ref. No.: BOIE2

Location: Bodiam Road, Ewhurst Green (Near Ockham, between Bodiam and Ewhurst Green)

Parish: Ewhurst

Area (ha.): 1.4ha

Approx. no. of businesses: 16-18

Main Occupiers: Sparkles Domestic Cleaners, R Brownstone (Specialists in Reconstituted Stone), ASE Corporate Eyecare Ltd – eyecareplans.co.uk, Aaron Chemicals, Chaffer Antiques, Floor Restore, Wealden Advertiser, Hi-Vac Devices, Barry O Dwyer (Personalised Product Services), Horti Gifts, Promo Seeds, K Jones Electrical, Legend Photography Studio, Your Office Ltd.

Occupancy level of units: Virtually fully occupied. Site Manager reports having to turn away interest.

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: Limited – see intensification opportunities.

General age, nature of stock: Generally higher quality, higher spec purpose built timber premises. Mix of single storey and and larger warehouse-style units.

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): 4 – General Purpose Industrial Area, but of a generally good standard.

Site context/constraints: Countryside. Exposed in the AONB landscape of the Lower Rother Valley. Visible from Bodiam Castle situated on the other side of the Rother Valley.

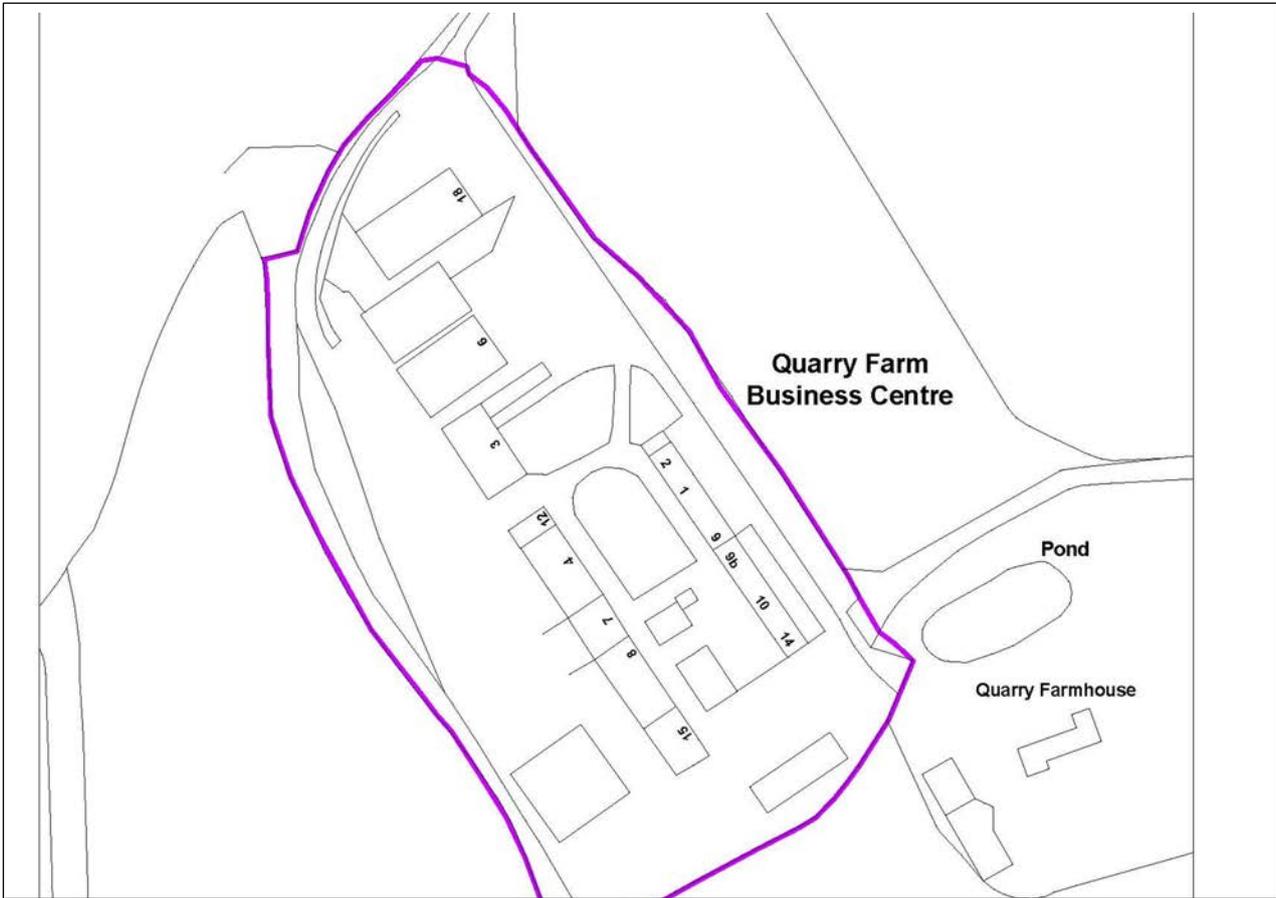
Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): Accessed via a 450m access road connecting to the C19, which is served by bus operating 5-6 days a week.

Intensification opportunities: Potentially within the framework of existing buildings, given the constraints of this rural AONB setting. The southern sections of the site are more informal storage and a couple of low key buildings that could be refurbished.

Expansion opportunities: Limited given the sensitive location. An agricultural shed off-site to the north (but on the access road) has potential scope for incorporation as an associated business use (est 150sq.m). However, other locations are likely to be more sustainable options.

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):

RETAIN (WITH VERY LIMITED SCOPE FOR INTENSIFICATION, ESSENTIALLY UTILISING EXISTING BUILDINGS)



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Ivyhouse Lane Industrial Estate, Hastings Fringes

Ref. No.: HFIE1

Location: Ivyhouse Lane, off The Ridge, Hastings

Parish: Hastings, but abuts Guestling Parish

Area (ha.): 18.8ha (NB The current Estate is entirely in Hastings, but adjacent to District boundary)

Approx. no. of businesses: 75+ businesses located within the estate.

Main Occupiers: The estate contains a wider range of businesses including B1, B2, B8 and sui-generis uses. Occupiers include Grays International (Sports equipment manufacturer), AF Blakemore and Son/Spar (Grocery distribution), Kurt J Lesker Vacuum Sciences, Harwood Drywall Ltd, Ivar UK Ltd (Plumbing supplies), Sussex Coast College Automotive Training Centre.

Occupancy level of units: Substantially occupied (12 units were vacant at the time of the survey)

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: None identified in Rother area

General age, nature of stock: Ivyhouse Lane provides 37,500sq.m of business floorspace on the northern edge of Hastings. Most units are around 30/40 years old and “Many of the units are run-down and in need of maintenance” (HRELR, 2008). Post-2000, there has been significant additional B1/B8 floorspace (over 6,500sq.m.) constructed on the eastern part of the estate. The Estate includes a mix of light industrial units for medium/large uses (>1,000 sq.m), some good quality B2/B8 industrial/warehouse premises for smaller uses (<1,000sq.m) and some poorer quality general industrial/general warehousing/retail warehousing/trade counters. Although the estate comprises of a mix of units sizes, there are no units under 50sq.m. The largest units on the estate are largely concentrated off Ivyhouse Lane/Brook Way, with a number of units exceeding 2,000sq.m.

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): The estate is, overall, category 6, albeit with some areas of category 4 and the newer areas (east) of the estate category 3.

Site context/constraints: The Estate is surrounded by ‘The Ridge’ to the South, residential properties to the east, along with a caravan park and residential to west, with the cemetery beyond. There is open countryside to the north, with woodland beyond (to the north-east), which falls within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Internal roads are narrow and congested and there is significant use of on-street parking, particularly on Burgess Road, leaving room for only single-lane traffic.

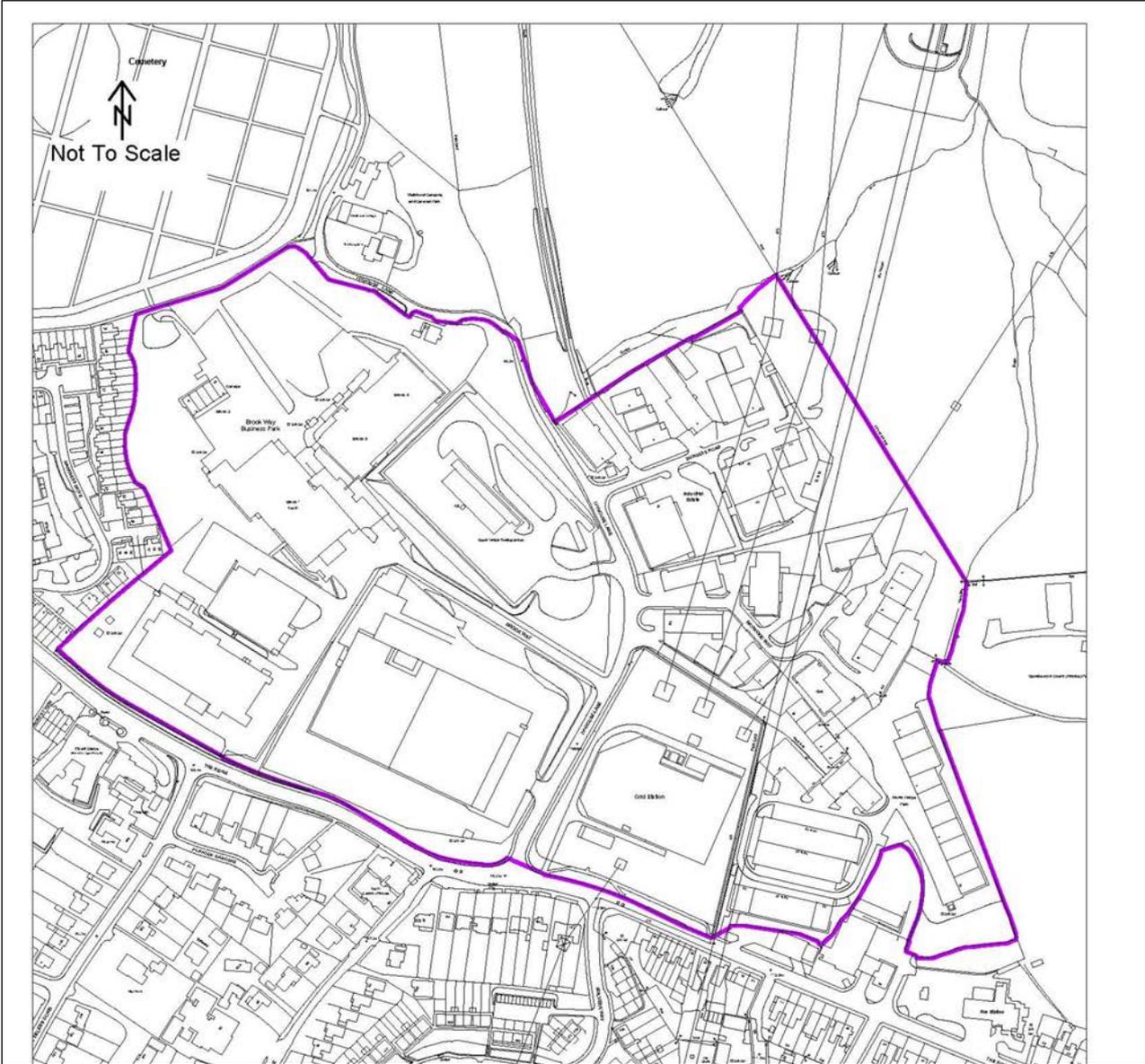
Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): The Estate is accessed from ‘The Ridge’ which is benefits from being a main bus route. Ore Train Station is 1.2 miles away.

Intensification opportunities: Industrial Estate is located within Hastings, but none identified.

Expansion opportunities: The Hastings Development Management Plan allocates two sites for expansion of the Estate in Hastings – a large, undeveloped parcel to the north-west of the Estate, on Ivyhouse Lane, for some 7,000sqm of B1 space, and a further allocation at the end Burgess Road for circa 1,400sqm of B1 floorspace. In the Rother Local Plan (2006), some 3,000sqm of business floorspace is allocated at land east of Burgess Road, abutting the Hastings Burgess Road allocation. This is worth reconsidering for reallocation, subject to further examination of environmental factors and viability, as is land to the north abutting existing Hastings allocation off Ivyhouse Lane. Areas for expansion should be considered through the site assessment process.

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):

RETAIN AND EXPAND (adjacent to the Hastings employment allocations, to the north off Ivyhouse Lane and east of Burgess Road)



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British Gypsum, Mountfield

Ref. No.: MOIE1

Location: Eatenden Lane, Mountfield.

Parish: Mountfield

Area (ha.): 36.8ha

Approx. no. of businesses: One

Main Occupiers: British Gypsum, a subsidiary of BPB plc (British Plaster Board).

Occupancy level of units: Fully occupied

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: Huge sprawling site, with about 30 hectare currently in operational use, albeit at a relatively low density/level of intensification. British Gypsum comprises vast tracts of land, including vacant greenfield and ancient woodlands

General age, nature of stock: Access limited. Difficult to fully determine.

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): 5

Site context/constraints: AONB countryside (Brede Valley landscape character area). Surrounded on most sides by ancient woodland. Intermittent areas of surface water flooding risk. Not surprisingly it is an ESCC safeguarded minerals site.

Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): Limited to private vehicle. Bus service operates on A2100, but at least 1km from site entrance to west. RAILWAY?

Intensification opportunities: Significant open areas, but seemingly operational land for existing operator of mine and associated facilities.

Expansion opportunities: Relatively remote site in High Weald setting, aside from discrete operation, albeit with good strategic road access, so unlikely to anticipate expansion for wider business purposes.

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):

RETAIN



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Coppards Lane Industrial Estate, Northiam

Ref. No: NOIE1

Location: North eastern end of Northiam village via Coppards Lane.

Parish: Northiam

Area (ha.): 3.46 ha

Approx. no. of businesses: 7

Main Occupiers: Jewsons Building Merchants, ahs ltd, GWF construction, Pump House Garage, C Measor Caravans, Land Rover Repairs and Sprusa UK Ltd.

Occupancy level of units: Fully occupied (There is no obvious vacancy within the estate)

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: None, the estate is full.

General age, nature of stock: The age of the stock varies but generally the premises are older (20-30 years old) of varying size. Much of the available space is given over to storage of machinery relating to transport or materials relating to the building trade (i.e. timber yards and associated materials).

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): Lower Quality Industrial/Storage (Category 6)

Site context/constraints: The estate sits within AONB and located to the north east fringe of Northiam Village on the Sussex/Kent border. The estate is bounded by mature woodland and the landfall gently slopes from north to south. Coppards Lane abuts the northern edge of the estate leading into Whitebread Lane, which forms the eastern boundary. Ancient woodland on the south eastern perimeter of the estate. Residential properties to west and north-east.

There is a communications mast located on the western boundary of the estate. A storage tank is also sited on the western boundary of the estate. Contents unknown. A sewerage treatment plant is located adjacent to the south eastern perimeter of the estate although not part of the estate itself. Pockets of minor surface water flooding within the estate but further surface flooding can be found along Whitebread Lane. A couple of ponds can be found around the south western corner of the estate.

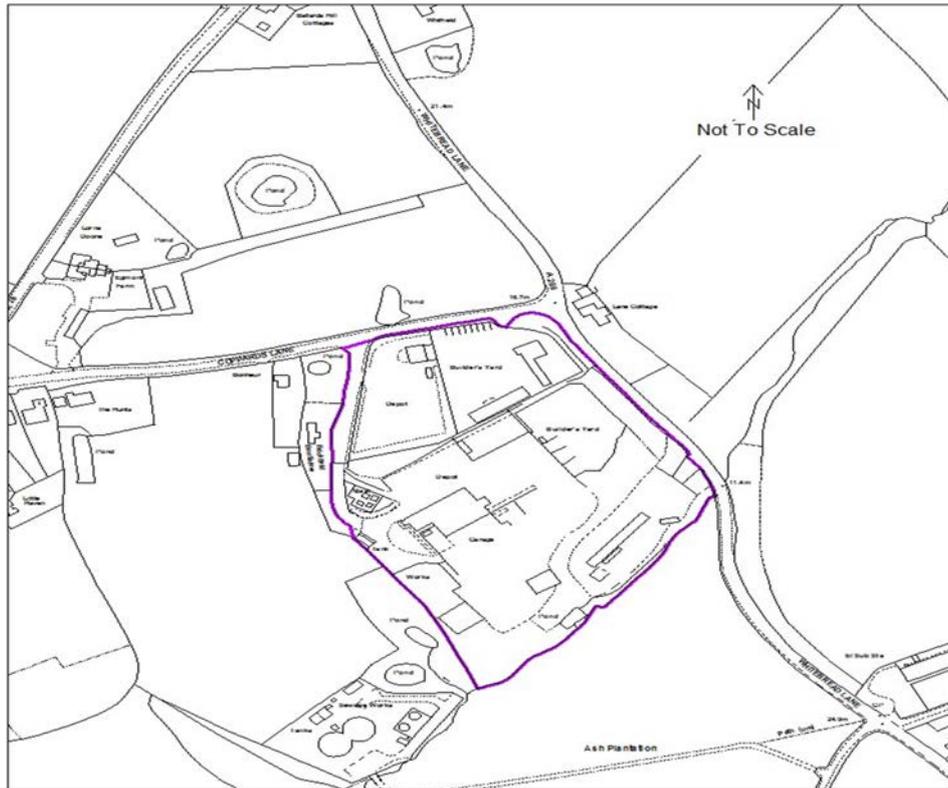
Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): Coppards Lane estate can be accessed from Station Road (A28) and is within reasonable walking distance from urban edge of the village but is sited approximately 1500 metres from the centre of the village and its main services. Station Road is relatively flat and is accessible for pedestrian and cyclists. There is no pedestrian footpath along Coppards Lane.

Intensification opportunities: None. There is no available plot to develop further.

Expansion opportunities: None. The estate is fairly well contained within the existing landscape and is bounded by existing tree belts, residential dwellings and the existing road network.

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):

RETAIN



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Harbour Road Industrial Estate, Rye

Ref. No: RYIE1

Location: South east of Rye off the A259 (Winchelsea Road)

Parish: Icklesham Parish

Area (ha.): 37.7ha (NB: includes land west of Rastrums which was not formerly in the 2006 RDLP policy area but gained permission (The Saltings RR/2013/1538/P) for 13,440 sqm of B1(c), B2 and B8 uses.

Approx. no. of businesses: Approximately over 130 businesses operate from Harbour Road Industrial Estate as a whole.

Main Occupiers: Rastrums, Tradebe, Rye Oil, Chase Protective Coatings, JRM Racing, RYCON, Long Rake Spar and Bournes Removal. There are also many small businesses which operate out of the smaller unit complexes, including Atlas Rye and Weslake Industrial Parks.

Occupancy level of units: Virtually fully occupied. The large majority of units are occupied. Both Rye Industrial Park and Altas Industrial Park have reported full occupancy.

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: There is one longstanding vacant plot - the former ARC site to the east of RYCON (3.57 ha), while the site east of Bournes Removals (1.28 ha) is an almost derelict state, although used for some parking. There are also significant parts of both Churchfield Industrial Estate site in the south-east and the adjoining Weslake Industrial Park in the west that are unused.

General age, nature of stock: The age of stock on the estate varies significantly ranging from lower grade accommodation of variable size to the recent development of light industrial uses for storage and distribution. Overall the estate primarily has B1/B2 and B8 uses.

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): The estate fulfils several distinct functions, each of which is significant:

- Category 4 (General Purpose Industrial Areas, 24.4ha) – Rastrums Ltd/ Rye Industrial Estate/Atlas Industrial Estate
- Category 5 (Heavy Industrial Areas, 7.8ha) – Tradebe (solvent recovery service) Rye Oil, Chase Protective Coatings Ltd
- Category 6 (Industrial storage areas, 5.5ha) – Rye Industrial Park/Atlas Industrial Park/Churchfields Industrial Estate

Site context/constraints: Harbour Road Estate is bounded by the River Rother to the north, with Rye Harbour village to the east, with the Church of the Holy Spirit (Grade II listed) and School House (Grade II listed) being close by. Rye Harbour Holiday Park and Rye Harbour Nature Reserve are also located nearby. The open countryside to the south has several overlapping international nature conservation designations, with the Dungeness to Pett SPA and the Ramsar sites generally abutting the southern edge and a SAC extending up to the southern, central part of the estate. These also carry SSSI status.

The generally open land to the west forms a defined Strategic Gap between Harbour Road Industrial Estate and Rye and contributes to the setting of the Citadel. The estate also falls within Flood Zone 3. There is known to be some ground contamination and, although its extent and pathways are not certain, may impact on development and the sensitive ecological areas, given the high water table in the area.

Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): The estate can only be accessed from the A259 via Harbour Road. There have been calls to upgrade this junction to better accommodate HGV traffic. Turning HGVs cross lanes restricting traffic flow. The whole of the estate is served by a pedestrian footpath/cycleway on one side of the Harbour Road; however this is incomplete on the approach to the junction with A259, where pedestrians have to share road space with vehicle traffic. There is an hourly bus service between Rye and Rye Harbour.

Intensification opportunities: The potential sites for further development are:

A: Weslake Industrial Estate: The eastern half of the site, totalling some 1.08ha lies unused and overgrown. Subject to satisfactorily addressing any ecological, contamination and access issues, and provision of a landscape buffer will be required on the Harbour Road frontage, there is scope to expand into this area with the development of additional B1 Class units, with potential capacity up to 3,500sqm.

B: Land East of Bournes: This site amounts to some 0.93ha, with a large hardstanding. It is readily accessed off the same access as adjacent formerly Churchfield Industrial Estate. There is capacity for it to be used far more effectively. It is understood that contamination is not likely to be an issue, but should still be investigated. A landscape buffer will be required on the Harbour Road frontage. It has a potential capacity for some 3,200sqm floorspace.

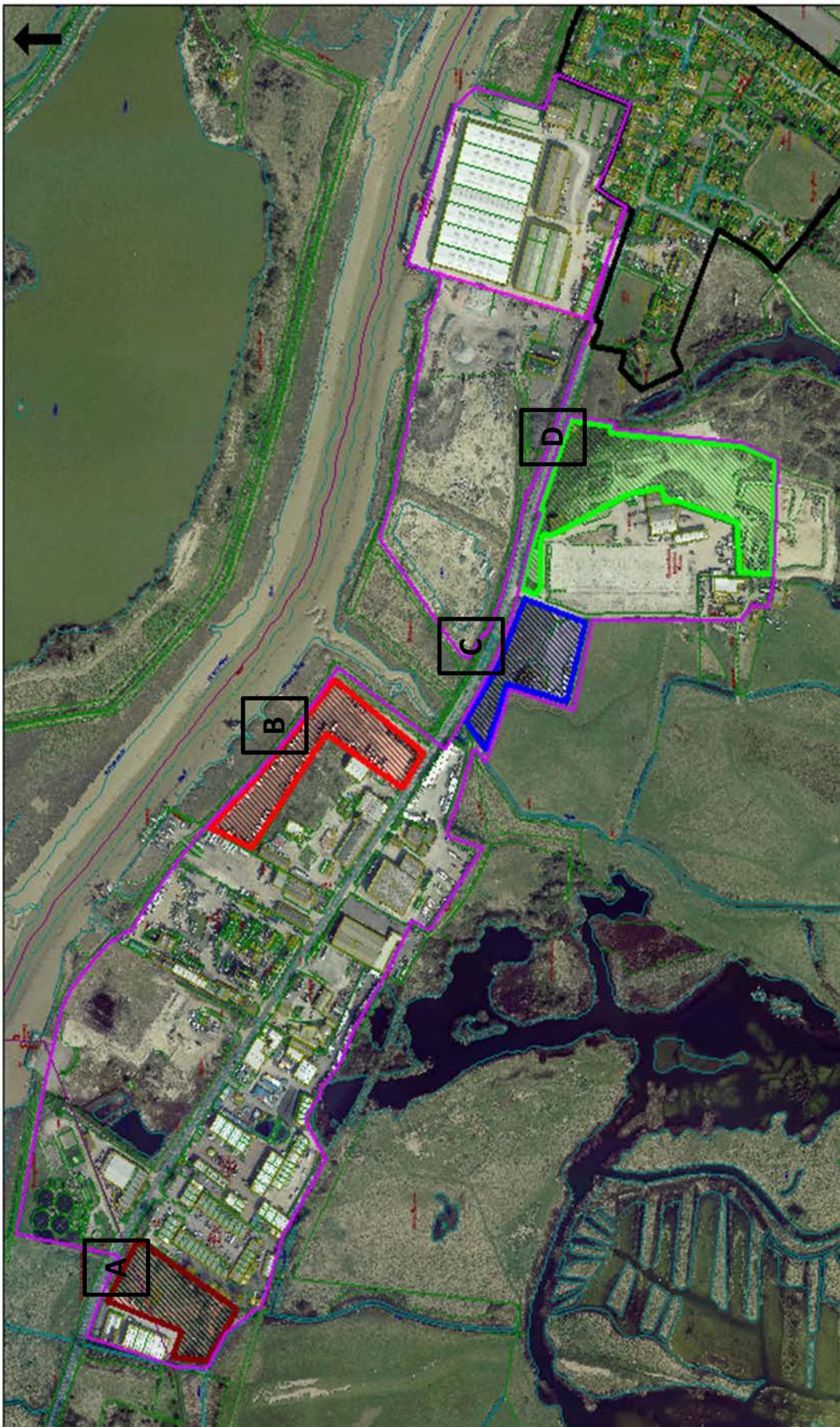
C. Land known as Churchfield Industrial Estate: Long Rake Spar gained planning permission for the use of part of a long-term vacant site for the storage and distribution of aggregates to the building market in 2015 (RR/2015/1798/P refers). There is scope on the land within the previously defined Harbour Road Policy Area for further expansion. This should be attentive to the wider environmental constraints and minimise impact on the SSSI and international designations. Full consultation with Natural England will be expected and any mitigation required should be applied in full.

The use and layout of any further development/use here must also respect the setting of the nearby Listed church and school cottages –likely to include a landscape buffer on the Harbour Road frontage and on the eastern boundary to minimise visual intrusion. The capacity of the vacant land will depend upon proposed use, but could provide up to 6,000sqm of buildings if fully built out.

Expansion opportunities: The above development opportunities, all within the existing RDLP employment area, will consolidate the estate as the principal business area in the eastern half of the district, but there are no further opportunities for outward expansion, given the very tight and substantial environmental and physical constraints.

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):

RETAIN AND INTENSIFY (but not expand outwards).



Scale: 1:5500
TQ9319

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Photo 1: Rye Harbour Road looking northwards (Rye Oil)



Photo 2: Entrance to Rastrums, Rye

Rock Channel (east), Rye

Ref. No.: RYIE2

Location: Rye

Parish: Rye Civil Parish

Area (ha.): 2.5 ha

Approx. no. of businesses: Approx. 13 businesses

Main Occupiers: Market Fisheries, Moon Marine, R&E Engineering, Hollands of Rye, Alsford Timber Yard, W S Wright Ltd, Unimead Ltd, Rock Channel Marine Ltd, Sandrock Marine Ltd, La Maison, Car Craft, Leapin Frog

Occupancy level of units: Fully occupied

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: No vacant plots available

General age, nature of stock: The age of the stock is generally older with significant proportion of local businesses connected to riverside activities such as boating, marine engineering, sea food processing.

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): 6 - Lower Quality Industrial/Storage Area

Site context/constraints: Located next to the River Brede this area has historically been linked to riverside activities for a significant part of the town's history. Over the years, this had led to a number of extensions, sub-division, and niche areas developing. The area's topography is flat but also falls under flood zone 3. There are adjacent residential dwellings.

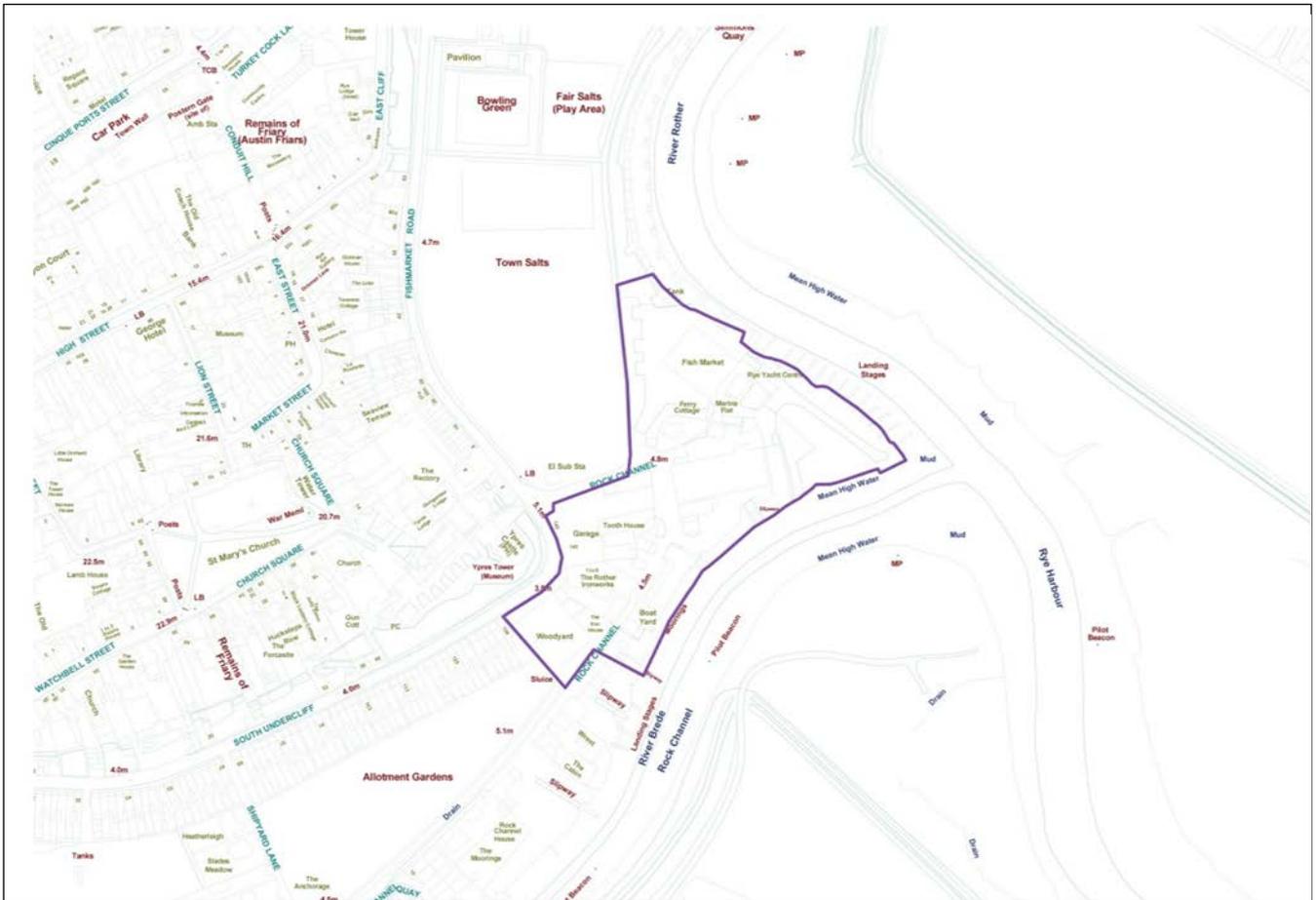
Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): Transport links are good, with the estate located adjacent to the A27 and close to the town centre, although there is a degree of severance from the town centre.

Intensification opportunities: None. Although the Draft Rock Channel SPD allowed for redevelopment, the area has consolidated since then.

Expansion opportunities: The area is bounded to the south and east by the River Rother and River Brede respectively, to the north lies A27 and the Town Salts area further restricting expansion possibilities. To the west further growth is restricted by Rye allotments and housing.

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):

RETAIN



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Marley Lane Business Park, Sedlescombe

Ref. No.: BAIE4

Location: Marley Lane, Battle

Parish: Sedlescombe

Area (ha.): 1.7ha (including landscaping, access and undeveloped area with permission).

Approx. no. of businesses: Three (occupying four out of five units)

Main Occupiers: CKL in 2 units (Historic car repairs), PSL Paneltech Systems Ltd, Kingswell Coachworks (car specialised body and paintwork)

Occupancy level of units: Virtually fully occupied.

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: Land available for expansion on east side, where outstanding planning permission for 2,400sqm (RR/2009/1151/P).

General age, nature of stock: Good condition industrial/storage units. Woodcote building occupied by CKL has an ancillary office. Buildings are large single storey of brick construction with white cladding. Ample parking on site.

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): 4 - General Purpose Industrial Area. (Note application RR/2014/798/P for Change of use from B1 (business)/B8 (storage and distribution) uses to B2 (general industrial) use across the whole site was Approved Conditionally.)

Site context/constraints: High Weald AONB countryside location. Ancient woodland encircles site, TPOs at southern, western and eastern boundaries. Groundwater Source Protection Zone. Two telecommunications masts on northern edge of site within landscaped area.

Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): On C94 road, with direct access. On bus route which operates less than 5 days a week. No bus stop apparent in the vicinity.

Intensification opportunities: Yes, but only on field to the east which already has permission, although unimplemented.

Expansion opportunities: No

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):
RETAIN AND INTENSIFY



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Gibbs Read Farm Business Units, Ticehurst

Ref. No.: TCIE1

Location: Pashley Road, Ticehurst

Parish: Ticehurst

Area (ha.): 1ha

Approx. no. of businesses: 18 units containing approximately 15 businesses.

Main Occupiers: A&C Blasting Services - Specialist Blast Cleaners, Capital Garden Products - Design and manufacture of fibreglass planters, Gould Surveyors, World Wide Subscription Service Ltd, David Driver, Lokring Piping Solutions Ltd, Genus RBS, ABS, Gibbs Reed Garage & MOT Centre.

Occupancy level of units: Virtually fully occupied

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: None. Site is fairly densely developed.

General age, nature of stock: Farm conversion featuring a mix of sizes, mix of heights (mostly single storey, with some double) and mix of construction (brick, timber, stone and breeze block). Generally older stock.

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): 4 – General purpose industrial areas.

Site context/constraints: Rural character and fairly exposed AONB countryside in the Upper Rother Valley. Separated from highway by hedgerow. Adjacent Gibbs Reed Farmhouse is Grade 2 listed. Ancient woodland abuts western site boundary.

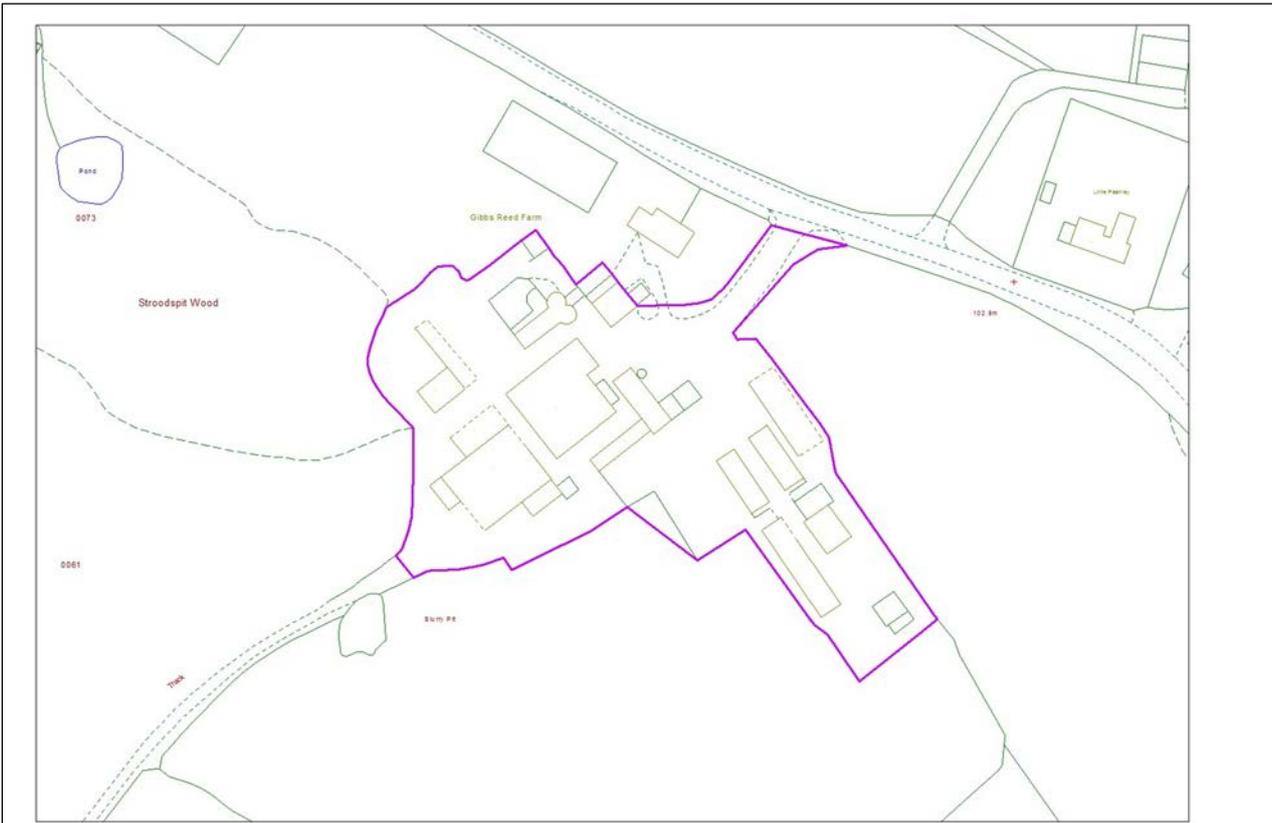
Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): Direct access to B2089, but no adjacent bus service. 1km from Ticehurst (a Rural Service Centre) but no connecting footway so pedestrian access is limited.

Intensification opportunities: None

Expansion opportunities: Not on southerly aspects. Considered potential to NE side between existing estate and highway, where land is relatively contained, but this is not a very sustainable location, given the car-dependency of the site and would intrude into the rural character of the surrounding, typical landscape of the AONB.

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):

RETAIN



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Tate Fencing, Ticehurst

Ref. No.: FLIE1

Location: A21, Flimwell

Parish: Ticehurst

Area (ha.): 1.4ha

Approx. no. of businesses: One

Main Occupiers: Tate Fencing

Occupancy level of units: Fully occupied

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: None

General age, nature of stock: Reasonably modern stock, large wooden storage sheds combined with showrooms.

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): 6 – Lower Quality Industrial/Storage Area

Site context/constraints: AONB countryside that is completely surrounded on all sites by Ancient Woodland and TPO; Covered by BAP habitat designation: Wet Woodland and Ghyll Woodland. Quite exposed in the AONB landscape on the south-facing slopes of the Upper Rother Valley.

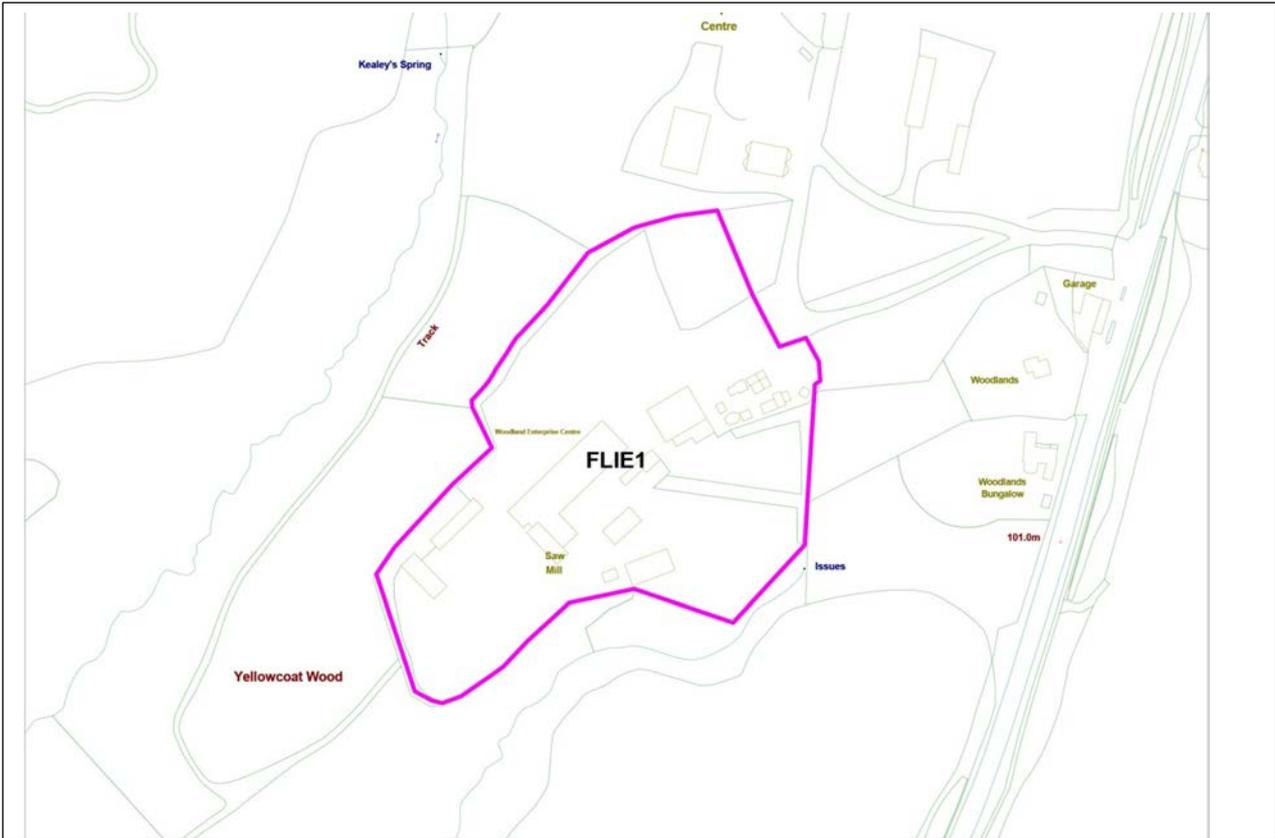
Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle):

Intensification opportunities: None

Expansion opportunities: None

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):

RETAIN



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Wheel Farm Business Park, Westfield

Ref. No.: WFIE1

Location: Wheel Lane, Westfield

Parish: Westfield

Area (ha.): Existing estate – 1.82ha

Approx. no. of businesses: 10 businesses

Main Occupiers: A mix of B uses, primarily B1/B8, occupiers include Max Appliances (domestic waste disposal units), Vantage Racing Ltd, Woodbase Joiners, Retrotec (historic aircraft restoration), Barleywood (woodturners), Bespoke Building and Renovations, Gilbertson Antiques, Ironworks UK, Frazer Haywood (joinery), E.S. NHS Integrated Health Team.

Occupancy level of units: Fully occupied.

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: An extension of the area in line with a 2006 Local Plan allocation has planning permission (RR/2015/703/P - granted in 2015) for 1,100sq.m of B1 floorspace, but construction of one of the units has not yet commenced.

General age, nature of stock: The estate consists of five former agricultural buildings – mainly single-storey (converted in 1986), with a further 3 modern, purpose-built commercial units (built in 2002). The former agricultural buildings are generally in good condition, although some of the corrugated iron roofs have been replaced in favour of tiles. Some of these units benefit from the addition of solar panels on the roof. The newer units are notably more modern in design and are brick built, with slate roofs and glazed eaves on the frontage. The entire estate consists of approximately 4,600sq.m of business floorspace.

Existing main function(s): (e.g. Categories 1-6): Category 4 (General Purpose Industrial Areas)

Site context/constraints: Wheel Farm Business Park is an established employment area on a low-lying, level site west of the village, with open countryside beyond. There is a Public Right of Way along the eastern boundary of site, linking Wheel Farm to New Cut. The access from Wheel Lane is shared with the access gate for the adjacent fields to the west. There are some residential properties in New Cut on higher ground to the north-east which overlook the site, but are separated from the site by an area of Ancient Woodland. Wheel Cottage is adjacent to the south-eastern part of the site. There is a pond to the north of the Business Park adjacent to the Ancient Woodland. There is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) to the south-east, which is separated by a small stream which runs the length of the Business Park. The site is located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). There is a large amount of formal parking within the estate.

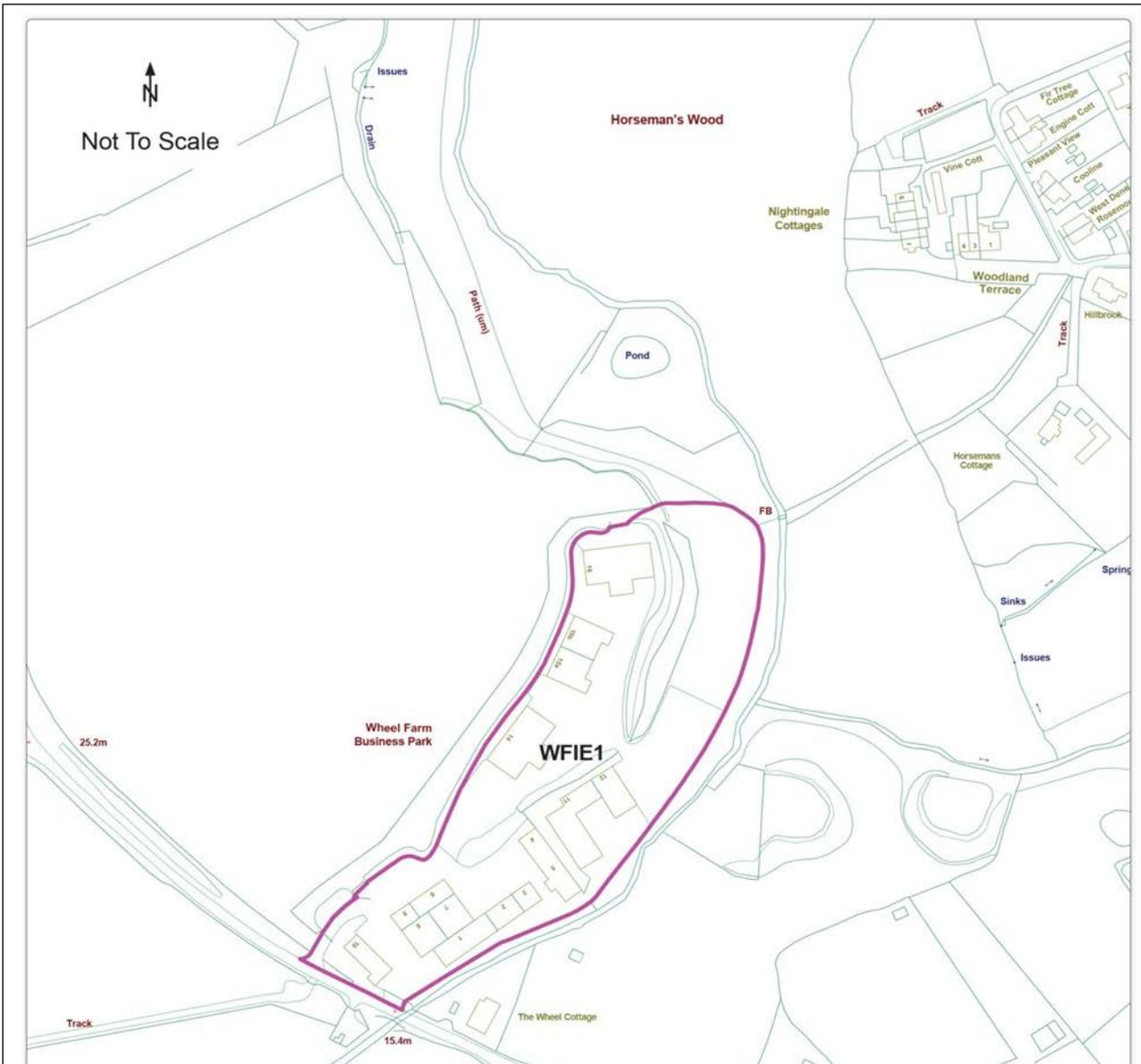
Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): The site is accessed from Wheel Lane approximately 600m from the centre of Westfield village. Westfield benefits from a regular bus service which stops in the centre of the village, but there are no footpaths along Wheel Lane to the Business Park.

Intensification opportunities: None identified over and above the unimplemented permission for some 550sqm B1 floorspace. The units appear to be in good condition.

Expansion opportunities: None

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):

RETAIN AND INTENSIFY (limited to the existing permission)



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Vinehall Business Centre, Whatlington

Ref. No.: WHIE1

Location: Vinehall Road, Whatlington

Parish: Whatlington

Area (ha.): 1.2ha (based on permission RR/89/0723/P)

Approx. no. of businesses: There are forty two units, although less businesses.

Main Occupiers: Mick's Auto Repair Shop, Hurst Green Treen, Just Add Popcorn, Trinity Electrical Contractors, The Roman Group, Orchard Produce, Matt LX, The Spice Co., Risks Ltd, Archies Toybox, Vinehall Studios, Feedback Data, Bows Hire, The Granary, Spoonangel Arts & Crafts, Si-Lite Ltd.

Occupancy level of units: Appears mostly occupied, although not always clear.

Extent of unused land/vacant plots: Very limited. Land to the north-west corner is under-occupied, but topography is a constraint.

General age, nature of stock: Established in 1991 via a change of use application, it contains range of offices, workshops and storage units in former agricultural buildings. Units are mostly reasonably high quality, although one or two in the centre are in need of renovation. Units are predominantly single storey brick built, although there are larger units of timber and breeze block construction. Well landscaped and surfaced in an attractive setting.

Existing main function(s) (e.g. Categories 1-6): 4 – General Purpose Industrial Area.

Site context/constraints: AONB countryside, exposed to long views across the Rother Valley to the north. Topography is such that the land drops away off-site to the north down a lightly treed and shrubbed valley towards Barne's Wood. However, immediate area is more contained.

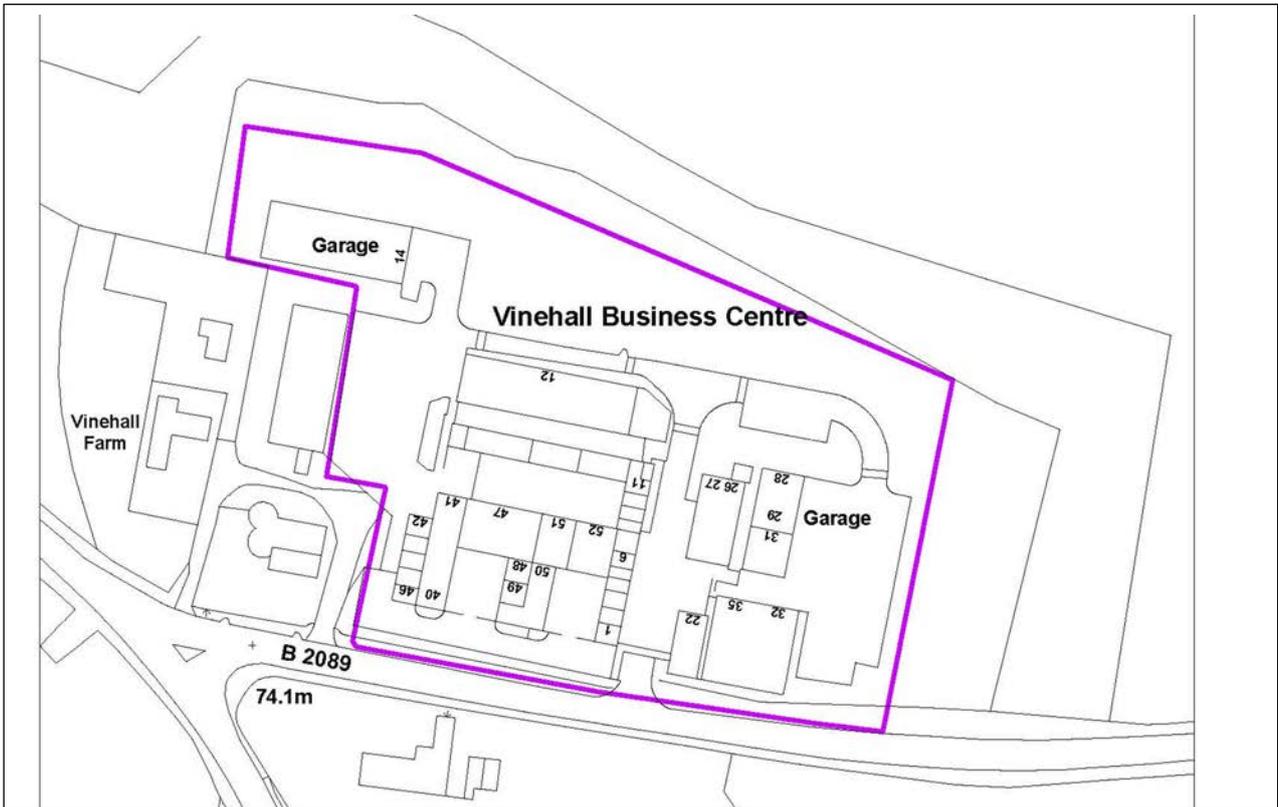
Accessibility (Transport – Road, Rail, Bus, Pedestrian, Cycle): Situated 3 miles of south Robertsbridge on the junction of the A21 and the B2089 (Rye) road. Both roads have bus services.

Intensification opportunities: Very limited. NW corner is vacant but topography is a constraint.

Expansion opportunities: Limited. Some land off-site immediately adjacent to the east may have potential (estimated 700sq.m) should a need for expansion arise, but this is not a particularly sustainable location for development.

Recommendation: (Retain/Intensify/Expand/Part Release/Release):

RETAIN. (Possible limited northern/eastern expansion, although may depend on opportunities elsewhere in more sustainable locations)



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