

Lewes Planning Group

Masterplan Workshop - 22nd October 2025

Lewes Town Hall

**Report from workshop –
submission to South Downs National Park Authority**

31st October 2025

On 22nd October 2025 over 60 people representing all walks of life and interests in Lewes – including Councils, the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), neighbourhood representatives, traders and business, other service providers, and civic, community and other special interest groups – met in Lewes Town Hall to discuss the preparation of a ‘masterplan’ for Lewes.

The 60 people met because they wanted to ensure that the future development of several key sites within the town was progressed with some urgency and that it responded positively to the issues and challenges facing the town today. They agreed that a ‘business as usual’ approach, which has resulted in unacceptable delays, would only exacerbate these challenges.

It should be noted that the 60 people in the room were supported and enthused by 20 or so ‘other voices’ – a video presentation aired during the masterplan event comprising eloquent speakers from constituencies often excluded from traditional consultative exercises - young people, people struggling economically, black and minority ethnic people, older people, people with disabilities, families with young children, and so on.

The workshop was held on 22nd October because the SDNPA local planning authority had generously offered the people of the town the opportunity to provide a further response to the Regulation 18 draft Local Plan ahead of the drafting of the Regulation 19 draft Local Plan from November onwards.

Attendees expressed their appreciation of this offer and in return committed to work collaboratively and realistically with the National Park to develop a plan that delivers a much better town, a plan that meets both the needs of the local population and the strategic objectives of the National Park and other statutory bodies.

This note summarises the outcome of a combined 420 hours (and for many of the individuals involved a lifetime of lived experience) of concentrated discussion, analysis and creative solutions from the Lewes Masterplan Workshop.

We should not forget that town planning originated as a discipline and legislative framework in response to major public health concerns of the 19th-century and efforts

to address poor sanitary conditions in rapidly industrialising cities. Town planning has once more been given the opportunity to help address contemporary societal and global issues such as an ageing population, lack of secure and affordable housing, obesity and inactivity, climate change and the depletion of natural resources. These were all issues that informed the discussions during the day.

The workshop concluded that future development in the town should address specific housing needs and priorities, promote local employment opportunities, reduce car dependence, promote more active travel, build community cohesion, harvest natural resources whilst preserving scarce finite resources, and most particularly be developed in close co-operation with the existing residents and businesses of the town from all sectors of the community.

What follows is a number of suggested amplifications and changes to the policies contained in the Reg 18 draft Local Plan, and the LCWIP where appropriate, followed by specific proposals for the major and / or allocated sites in Lewes. The report concludes with some innovative proposals related to a potential delivery model aimed at getting appropriate development underway in Lewes in a timely fashion.

In the spirit of ongoing collaborative working, we would be very happy to work with the South Downs National Park Authority planning policy team and colleagues to determine how best these objectives might be met.

Policy

1. A Special Policy Area for Lewes

Lewes as a town is different from everywhere else within the South Downs National Park area. It is a historic town with a long industrial heritage. It has a distinct urban form. It is the largest town in the South Downs National Park Authority area and possibly any National Park. The policies that apply across the mainly rural national park are generally inappropriate for such a setting.

Lewes has a population of approximately 18,000 people. It sits on the River Ouse which forms one of the few north-south gaps in the South Downs. The surrounding Downs make Lewes a very compact town. As such it is a very walkable town with many neighbourhoods little more than a 15-30 minute walk from the town's centre. Conversely though this means that land is a precious and very valuable asset. Land in the centre of the town should be used for maximum benefit as the town cannot expand outwards.

Lewes is a vibrant place to live, with good strategic connections (by rail, road and, via Newhaven, to the continent) and close proximity to nature.

Lewes has a reputation as a prosperous town but its median household income of £32,000 per year is lower than the UK average of £37,400 per year (ONS 2024 figures). Property prices are high. The average house now costs 11.2 times the average household income, one of the highest differentials in the country. For a town that also comprises pockets of deprivation, with many families and individuals struggling to get by (with users of towns four food banks growing constantly), getting started on the property ladder (of any tenure) is becoming more and more difficult for more and more people – impossible for many. This situation cannot be ignored.

The medieval core of the town was designed for movement by walking and horse. It is unsuited to modern motor vehicles. They impose an unnecessary burden on residents trying to go about their day to day business. The volume, noise and pollution creates public health and personal safety issues. A recent survey by Lewes Living Streets and Cycle Lewes revealed that approximately 50% of traffic on the High Street travels straight through the town without stopping. This through traffic should be removed and public alternatives to local traffic movements should be encouraged to enable residents to move about in other ways whilst reclaiming the streets for social interaction. Better active travel and public transport connections to and between the neighbourhoods of the town, outside the central core, are needed too.

There has been a significant loss of employment land over recent years and existing employment areas are under threat from alternative higher value uses. Businesses in the High Street, particularly the upper High Street are struggling as a result of high rents and rates (for those who are eligible to pay them), lengthy leasehold periods and the rise of online shopping. Independent shops that serve the independent minds of Lewes's residents are leaving and being replaced by a plethora of coffee shops and vape shops. There is a risk that Lewes will become a dormitory town serving only the needs of the better off London commuters.

To guard against these threats, and in recognition of Lewes's special characteristics within the National Park, Lewes requires a special policy area with a set of policies specifically developed to address these unique circumstances.

By adopting this approach, we can ensure that the type of development that comes forward in Lewes – particularly housing development - does not represent the 'business as usual' approach of the volume house builders and 'traditional' developers. Lewes needs development that addresses the specific needs of the town – development ...

- that comprises smaller, mixed-tenure housing that is genuinely affordable
- that is less car-dependent and prioritises investment (both on-site and in off-site infrastructure) in active travel and improved public transport
- that promotes local employment opportunities, and
- that looks to a local delivery vehicle to oversee the design and delivery of many of these developments.

We therefore propose that Lewes town centre, including all the strategic development sites (other than possibly Old Malling Farm), be made the subject of a Supplementary Planning Document, to be referenced in and developed alongside the new Reg 19 and final South Downs Local Plan. This approach is based on the approach being used for Haywards Heath in the Mid Sussex Local Plan.

This policy document would take the form of a Masterplan for Lewes, which would support the development and implementation of the South Downs Local Plan, the Lewes Neighbourhood Plan, the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

Policy SDXX – Supplementary Planning Document for Lewes - reference to the production of a Supplementary Planning Document for Lewes town centre and the strategic development sites which will comprise a Masterplan that addresses housing, employment, transport (including active travel) and infrastructure together with all of the other planning policy issues addressed in the rest of this paper

Policy SD3 – Major Development – reference to the specific requirements for major development within Lewes that is consistent with the SPD and all of the proposed policies listed below in this report

The Masterplan for Lewes would also support planned improvements in local public transport infrastructure and investment in the High Street and local employment sites (working hand in hand with the proposed Business Improvement District) and promoting the development of affordable housing schemes, not least on vacant public sector land such as land at North Street and Springman House.

The Lewes Planning Group is in the process of securing the services of a very experienced urban design and planning consultant to support us in our work, and we will continue to work collaboratively with all the residents of the town, the Town Council and all the relevant authorities, including the National Park

as we develop this Masterplan, which we will be putting forward for adoption by the National Park alongside the Local Plan.

2. Genuinely affordable and appropriate homes

A common theme throughout all of the discussions during the workshop was that the 'business as usual' volume / traditional housebuilders and / or market-led approach to housing, will not meet Lewes citizens' specific housing needs and priorities. By focusing on larger and more expensive homes, or housing types that appeal to external investors, this approach is distorting the demographics, and the social and economic trajectory, of the town to its detriment. Many of the other issues covered in this paper arise from inappropriate new housing provision.

Priority Needs:

- More social housing for residents in temporary housing accommodation and on the Housing Waiting List. The bill for 90+ households in temporary accommodation is a scandalous waste of public money on housing people in need mostly in very poor quality circumstances; wasting resources that are urgently needed for good quality permanent homes
- The town needs smaller properties to meet the affordability needs of younger people growing up in Lewes and wanting or needing to stay in the town for work or family reasons. Lewes is losing its ability to house young and growing families and so is starting to lose the social infrastructure that supports families – schools in particular
- The town also needs smaller properties to meet the affordability needs of older people and the downsizing aspirations of many older residents to rightsize or find more appropriately designed housing for mobility reasons and to combat loneliness and social isolation, to enable them to go on living independently for longer, and thus minimise the need for social care services.

Key Criteria for New Housing Delivery:

Affordability will be best met through a focus on socially rented properties (Council or Registered Providers) as well as Lewes Low-Cost Housing. The mixes of social housing should also reflect transfer requests and health requirements of existing social housing tenants to help optimise the number of households benefitting from each new home.

Good quality and responsibly managed private rented accommodation at a range of price points would be an important addition to the housing mix, to meet some of the priority needs as well as making more flexible use of the whole housing stock to enable people to live and work locally.

Most of the allocated sites in Lewes within the Local Plan will be delivered in phases. As proposed and permitted in the Neighbourhood Plan, good quality temporary housing and the meanwhile uses of existing buildings and open plots should be considered in the planning of these long term delivery programmes. We need to avoid large amounts of (mostly public) land continuing to stand idle while housing,

employment and cultural needs are not being met. Well-managed interim uses are an important vehicle for creating investor confidence and building delivery momentum, as well as meeting immediate needs. The reuse of currently empty buildings in the town centre would also meet this objective.

The current draft Local Plan allocates (when combined with unimplemented planning approvals and resolutions to permit) approximately 1,500 new homes in Lewes. This is almost 32% of the overall target for the whole National Park. Getting it right in Lewes is critical to the National Park achieving its overall target. But the right housing **target** is only part of the problem; effective and timely **delivery** is important to the National Park, to government, and, critically, to the people of the town. This paper addresses delivery too in the final section.

Lewes needs a housing policy that specifically supports housing at higher densities, with a mix of size, tenure and typology to meet local priority needs whilst also addressing sustainability issues (such as building materials and orientation in relation to solar capture, for instance).

Lewes Town Council's consultation representations focussed on the use of co-housing and co-living typologies in town centre locations as better and more affordable ways of meeting the specific needs of both young and older residents identified above, but which could also be part of the mix in multi-generational settings.

Lifetime Homes and accessibility and mobility challenges must be considered, especially when the hilly topography of the town will have an impact on mix and design.

These criteria should aim to ensure that new developments plan for community cohesion – no mono-culture / tenure estates, lots of open space and community facilities for social interaction - rather than mitigate against it.

Because land is in such short supply in Lewes, it is critical that land is not wasted providing space for cars that spend over 90% of the time not moving. The compactness and connections of Lewes means it is the perfect place for more low-car housing schemes (where only blue badge and car club vehicles are accommodated) with the additional value that is generated (from more land used for housing) used to pay for investment in improved active travel and public transport infrastructure (including possibly a shuttle bus service) to enable residents and visitors to get about. Consideration should also be given to the more imaginative use of existing car parks – with the potential for housing over for instance.

Adopting the planning concept of 15-minute neighbourhoods and walkable communities would contribute towards meeting this objective.

We therefore propose that in the context of the proposed Supplementary Planning Document as referred above that the following housing policies in the Reg 18 draft Local Plan should be changed with respect to Lewes:

Policy SD26 – Supply of Homes with a specific target for Lewes that reflects this paper

Policy SD27 – Mix of Homes with specific reference to a need for smaller homes that meet the needs referred above

Policy SDXX - Housing densities – a new policy that permits higher densities on the allocated sites in Lewes together with a mix of size, tenure and typology to meet local priority needs subject to addressing the other policy areas and meeting the overall objectives of the masterplan / SPD

Policy NEW1 – Accessible Homes with specific reference to a need for accessible homes that meet the needs referred above

Policy SD28 – Affordable Homes with specific reference to a need for genuinely affordable homes as described above and that meet the needs referred above

Policy SDXX – Interim uses – a new policy that supports interim uses (possibly housing and employment) on vacant sites, in empty properties, and as part of multi-phase projects.

3. The Lewes economy

The Lewes economy also operates in a very different way to anywhere else in the South Downs National Park. Lewes is the County town and a major tourist attraction. It has many significant employment assets – including Harvey’s Brewery (and a number of smaller breweries) and is a significant home to, presently, three tiers of local government. It has a proud history of both industrial manufacture and more recently arts and creative industries.

But there has been a significant loss of employment land over recent years and existing employment areas are under threat from alternative higher value uses. Businesses in the High Street, particularly the upper High Street are struggling as a result of high rents and rates (for those that are eligible to pay them), lengthy leasehold periods and the rise of online shopping. Independent shops that serve the independent minds of Lewes’s residents are leaving and being replaced by a plethora of coffee shops and vape shops. There is a risk that Lewes will become a dormitory town serving only the needs of the better off London commuters.

Lewes needs strengthened planning policies to improve the protection of retail and industrial uses. The High Street and Brooks Road area in particular need greater protection from conversion to residential uses. Consideration should also be given to establishing a Business Improvement District to leverage the skills and resources of all businesses together with public bodies to identify and provide interventions that will support the High Street in particular as well as other employment and / or visitor locations. This is something the revitalised Chamber of Commerce, and others, are considering.

The Masterplan workshop was unanimous in its support for long-term high-quality jobs suited to the needs of local people – young people in particular. To ensure the right ‘match’, research should be undertaken to identify likely future employment trends with skills training provided to equip young people (and older workers transitioning from declining industries) with what they need to make the most of these opportunities.

Another linked theme was the issue of access to employment. There needs to be good quality, affordable and timely public transport links from neighbourhoods and surrounding villages to employment locations – the High Street, industrial areas and other locations – to ensure these opportunities can be taken up without reliance on a car that would then spend the whole day taking up valuable space at the expense of visitors to the town.

A critical barrier to employment is the lack of good quality, affordable and well-located childcare. Sites need to be identified for this, in the town centre, within schools, and / or other major employment locations.

There was a recognition at the workshop – including from High Street traders – that low traffic areas can be good for business, as long as they are accessible to people with disabilities, and allow for buses, deliveries, pick-up and drop-off. Low traffic areas (like The Precinct and Cliffe High Street in Lewes) generate increased footfall and linger time (with pedestrians spending more money than car drivers – see Living Streets report). This approach will take traffic off the roads, resulting in reduced congestion and air pollution, leading to a more pleasant environment enabling people to spend more time in the town – spending more money whilst also improving their social interaction benefiting their health and well-being.

To facilitate the transition to a low car environment, the major site developments should contribute financially towards the cost of installing new, improved and / or enlarged car parks (possibly with multiple tiers) at the edge of town linked by 'park and stride' and / or a shuttle bus service into the centre. Final mile deliveries – utilising cargo bikes, for instance - will contribute towards this transition to a cleaner and more attractive Lewes.

Lewes has a thriving visitor economy. It could be even more successful if it were supported by a hotel and visitor economy strategy. One of the biggest visitor attractions of all is, of course, Bonfire. Yet this only occurs on 1 day of the year. Consideration should be given to the creation of a permanent Bonfire exhibition or museum so this unique and spectacular event can be experienced across the whole of the year.

In addition, the meeting agreed that the town needs a "Town Square" which can host markets (like the existing monthly Farmers Market that struggles in the space it has), other outdoor events and festivals, as well as being able to provide for larger indoor events such as large-scale concerts and theatre.

Bull House records the presence of Thomas Paine in the town. There could, perhaps should, be a museum dedicated to the work of Gideon Mantell, the obstetrician, geologist and palaeontologist who began the scientific study of dinosaurs in the 19th century, and was born in Lewes. Another facility could be a Lewes Textiles and Design Museum - to be complemented by the protection of one of the oldest shops in the country (the former Hugh Rae shop in the upper High Street) representing 800 years of clothing production on one site.

There are a number of sites where employment use is supported by planning policy and / or has been approved (including the North Street Quarter) but they have not come forward. These are 'stalled sites'. Consideration should be made of the use of CPO powers (which a Mayoral Development Corporation would have – see delivery section at the end of this report) to intervene and help to bring sites and development proposals forward, particularly those in public ownership.

Equally, whilst stalled sites are waiting to proceed, interim uses should be considered (and permitted, even encouraged, in policy terms) to help to generate economic activity and longer-term developer interest.

In this context there is a growing need for low-cost, business start-up space, with shared facilities providing young people in particular with the opportunity to start out in the world of work, ideally associated with low-cost housing. The box-park model is a good starting point for this thinking. This idea was the basis for the Phoenix estate at North Street up until 2016.

We therefore propose that in the context of the proposed Supplementary Planning Document as referred above that the following employment policies in the Reg 18 draft Local Plan should be changed with respect to Lewes:

Policy SD34 – Sustaining the Local Economy with a greater emphasis on the Lewes town economy (as opposed to rural economy) that reflects this paper

Policy SD35 – Employment Land with specific reference to a need to protect and encourage employment land in Lewes as referred above

Policy SD36 - Town and Village Centres – a policy that combines protection of the retail core in Lewes (protecting it from conversion to residential) with support for the establishment of a Business Improvement District subject to approval by trader representatives in order to meet the objectives referred above

Policy SD37 – Development in Town and Village Centres - a policy that combines protection of the retail core in Lewes (protecting it from conversion to residential) with support for the establishment of a Business Improvement District subject to approval by trader representatives in order to meet the objectives referred above.

Policy SDXX – Museums - reference to support for museum use in Lewes Town Centre

Policy SDXX – Hotel and Tourism Strategy - reference to support for the development of a hotel and tourism strategy for Lewes

Policy SD23 – Sustainable Tourism – specific reference to the tourism characteristics and potential of Lewes town and support for associated sustainable infrastructure.

4. Access, movement and travel

Traffic dominates the streets of Lewes that were originally designed for pedestrians to the detriment of the economic health of the town and the public and personal health of the residents. A survey undertaken by Cycle Lewes and Lewes Living Streets in 2021 demonstrated that approximately 50% of the vehicles passing along

the High Street do not stop in the town – these vehicles are through-traffic that add nothing to the town except congestion and pollution.

Measures should be put in place to discourage or prevent through traffic – measures that only permit buses, blue badge vehicles, business access (ideally using cargo bikes for ‘last-mile’ delivery) and cycles / cargo bikes along the upper High Street and School Hill (with Market Street pedestrianised). If this intervention were complemented by more edge-of-town car parking (at Southerham Quarry, the Racecourse, County Hall perhaps) and / or double-decking of existing edge of town car parks (the Phoenix car park for instance) together with park and ride / stride, shuttle bus service and / or improved cycle links, the in-town environment would be transformed enabling a rapid transition to increased use of active travel and public transport as has happened in many other towns and cities in England and beyond.

The Lewes Planning Group has developed the Lewes Movement Strategy (with assistance from specialist consultants, PJA) that proposes a series of highway and access modifications – including a re-modelled entry to the town from the east over the Phoenix Bridge, and a low-car approach to School Hill and the upper High Street, amongst other measures. The Lewes Planning Group are in discussion with the Highway Authority about these proposals with a view to us working together to model the impact of this in order that the benefits in the centre of town are not outweighed by disbenefits elsewhere. The Lewes Movement Strategy should be incorporated in the Supplementary Planning Document for the Special Policy Area for Lewes.

Measures should also be put in place to discourage the growth of new vehicular traffic. This could and should be achieved through the promotion of low-car housing schemes and complementary investment in new public transport and active travel infrastructure within the rest of the town.

When additional edge of town car parking is provided, the small ‘pocket’ car parks in town (and which contribute to significant additional miles travelled as visitors search for a space) can be removed and these spaces turned into open space or other useful and usable community facilities.

Bus services and facilities need to be improved. Either the bus station should be re-opened, or a comprehensive bus interchange should be created outside Waitrose on a re-modelled Eastgate Street (with 2-way working and a probable pedestrian crossing – the details of this are included in the emerging Lewes Movement Strategy). Buses are presently required to make unnecessary journeys around the gyratory which adds cost, time and pollution that could all be avoided.

The temporary provision at the bottom of School Hill should be removed as it does not provide the interchange facilities that residents have been asking for and which are necessary to support the modal shift aspirations of the Highway Authority’s Local Transport Plan 4.

Evening services to and between Lewes neighbourhoods and outlying villages need to be provided and maintained (possibly paid for through development levies in the short-term until usage levels begin to generate sustainable revenues).

Attention needs to be paid to securing the integration of bus services and times with the train service and times. This could best be secured by a more effective interchange at Lewes Railway Station and / or a shuttle service between the bus interchange at Eastgate Street.

The roads in Lewes are too narrow to accommodate cars and higher priority road users (walkers, wheelers and cyclists). If through traffic and some local traffic is removed or discouraged as a result of the interventions referred to above, then there would be room for wider pavements, dropped kerbs and continuous pavements at side roads, making Lewes a wheelie-friendly town. Equally, if on-street parking were removed as newer edge-of-town provision was provided it would enable two-way cycling on Lansdown Road, Friars Walk and Prince Edward's Road, for instance, avoiding the need to struggle up Station Road, resulting in greater uptake in alternatives to cars contributing to improved preventative health outcomes.

Lewes lacks a coherent cycling and walking network. It needs the completion of the NCN90 through Lewes which could follow the High Street if the above measures were installed and a safe and legible route through to the A27 to the east created, using perhaps a new route created through the East Sussex College site (see site allocations below).

The River Ouse is another major asset within Lewes that is not exploited to its full potential. With the exception of the Railway Lands, and the Tesco corridor to the north, there are few places where it is possible to access the river or travel along the edge of it. The river could become a green corridor through the heart of the town and a walking, wheeling and cycle route to the north and south, on both sides of the river, possibly as part of the Avenue Verte – with gates removed on existing river routes to make it easier to cycle / wheel. It will be necessary to consider safety issues after dark.

The river could also provide one edge to a new town square as referred in the economy section above.

There is a need for improved walking, wheeling and cycling routes within the town and between the surrounding neighbourhoods. Priority areas for improvement are the Cabbage Walk route, the Piggy Steps in Offham Road, as well as the need for zebra crossings on desire lines to parks and schools. School streets in particular will be prioritised.

The Nevill community has already developed a set of proposed interventions to address pedestrian safety alongside and when crossing Nevill Road (including the extension of the 20mph zone here and along Offham Road). These should be progressed and similar interventions should be developed and implemented along Malling Road, Brighton Road and similar locations.

There is a need for increased investment in cycling infrastructure, such a safe and secure covered cycle parking (including on-street cycle hangars), improved signage and wayfinding, and facilities to support the growth of e-bikes for both personal and commercial use.

We therefore propose that in the context of the proposed Supplementary Planning Document as referred above that the following transport, active travel and public transport policies in the Reg 18 draft Local Plan should be changed with respect to Lewes:

Policy SDXX – Low-car housing – new policy that reinforces a commitment to promote low-car housing and investment in active travel and public transport infrastructure to support a move away from a car dominated environment in the historic market town of Lewes

Policy SDXX – Lewes Movement Strategy – new policy that references the Lewes Movement Strategy and its status within the Supplementary Planning Document with respect to highway (re)design, active travel and public transport improvements, parking policy and associated public realm improvements

Policy SD20 – Walking, Cycling and Equestrian Routes – to promote the walking, wheeling and cycling objectives referred above (including modal shift, infrastructure, footways, etc) including within the towns as well as to outlying settlements. A specific commitment to safeguard the route of the Lewes to Uckfield greenway and the proposed re-aligned Avenue Verte that passes through Lewes on its way to Newhaven

Policy SD19 – Transport and Accessibility - to promote the walking, wheeling and cycling objectives referred above (including a new and comprehensive bus interchange, modal shift, school streets, infrastructure, footways, etc) including within the towns as well as to outlying settlements

Policy SD21 – Public Realm, Highway Design and Public Art – specific reference to the promotion of low-car development and the prioritisation of active travel and public transport in relation to new development

Policy SD22 – Parking Provision – specific reference to the promotion of edge of town car park provision in Lewes with in-town parking discouraged (both on street and in small car parks) for all except blue badges, deliveries, pick-up and drop-off and freed up spaces converted to open space, community facilities and broader community benefit.

5. Land use, infrastructure, and climate

In and around Lewes there is a diminishing supply of quarried and locally manufactured building materials and the fresh water supply is over-harvested.

Development should therefore prioritise retrofit over demolition in order to re-use buildings and so to trap embedded carbon. Planners and developers should consider the issue of carbon sequestration and forestry for construction.

New housing should be carbon negative with intelligent solar design and a means of storing surplus renewable energy should be identified.

Development in Lewes should prioritise higher density housing as referred in the Housing policy section above, arranged within '15-minute planned neighbourhoods' alongside green corridors which also act as walking, wheeling and cycle routes, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, mobility hubs, etc.

To support development we need improved and appropriate sewerage provision.

Planning and development proposals should protect employment spaces and ensure the efficient use of limited sites.

Development should stimulate new supplies of locally sourced (harvested, quarried/manufactured) building materials by promoting the establishment of a long-term local forestry industry, the local area can increase rates of carbon sequestration as well as make beneficial gains in biodiversity.

We therefore propose that in the context of the proposed Supplementary Planning Document as referred above that the following land use, infrastructure and climate policies in the Reg 18 draft Local Plan should be changed with respect to Lewes:

Policy SD5 – Design – specific reference to the design requirements for Lewes as listed in section 5

Policy SD12 – Historic Environment - specific reference to the special requirements for Lewes as a historic town centre

Policy SD13 – Listed Buildings - specific reference to the listed building requirements for Lewes as a historic town centre

Policy SD12 – Conservation Areas - specific reference to the conservation area requirements for Lewes as a historic town centre

Policy SD48 – Climate Change and Sustainable Use of Resources - specific reference to the climate change and sustainability requirements for Lewes as listed in section 5

Policy SD51 – Renewable Energy - specific reference to the sustainable energy requirements for Lewes as listed in section 5

Policy SD17 – Protection of the Water Environment - specific reference to the water environment requirements for Lewes as listed in section 5

Policy SD49 – Flood Risk Management - specific reference to the flood risk management requirements for Lewes as listed in section 5 and elsewhere in this document

Policy SD50 – Sustainable Drainage Systems - specific reference to the sustainable drainage systems requirements for Lewes as listed in section 5 and elsewhere in this document

Policy SD54 – Pollution and Air Quality - specific reference to the pollution and air quality requirements for Lewes as listed throughout this document

6. Sport, culture, arts, leisure, well-being and recreation

Lewes has a large number of cultural “crown jewels” some of which are of national (international?) repute - Depot, Dripping Pan and Pells Pool – not to mention Bonfire and the Battle of Lewes. There is Artwave, Charleston and the Lewes Art Galleries Network too. There is Lewes Castle, Anne of Cleves House, Tom Paine, the Priory Remains and Virginia Woolf.

In addition to the Dripping Pan, there are a number of other sporting assets. Lewes would benefit from a masterplan for the Lewes sports corridor – from the River Ouse to the Athletics Club, Lewes FC, and the South Downs Sports Club to the Stanley Turner Sports Ground.

There was particular plea to not develop on the College car park as it is used to service major athletic events – in the longer term possibly more sustainable access routes should be provided.

What is missing from the town, however, is a major music and cultural event space (indoor and outdoor) – which could possibly be at North Street in the interim at least. This should be underpinned by a cultural strategy.

Workshop attendees were very clear that provision for youth, health and well-being for all should be integrated throughout all development.

This could be achieved in part through green corridors doubling up as walking, wheeling and cycle routes alongside blue corridors providing improved access to the river and nature-friendly infrastructure – for example, tour boats, dragon boats, etc.

Concern was expressed about the loss and / or poor management of open / green spaces which would be overcome if they were placed into community ownership and management.

Day nurseries need to be provided to support cultural events and workers. The All Saints Centre and Churches provide possible venues.

Big public notice boards would help people know what is going on.

The Charleston museum at Southover House could be enhanced to provide a more inclusive facility – see the community engagement section below.

We therefore propose that in the context of the proposed Supplementary Planning Document as referred above that the following sport, culture, arts, leisure, well-being and recreation policies in the Reg 18 draft Local Plan should be changed with respect to Lewes:

Policy SD46: Open Space, Sport and Recreation - specific reference to the open space, sport and recreation requirements for Lewes as listed throughout this document including the need to produce a specific masterplan for the sports corridor

Policy SD47: Local Green Spaces - specific reference to the pollution and air quality requirements for Lewes as listed throughout this document

7. Community engagement

As the masterplan workshop demonstrated, comprehensive community engagement, participation and, best of all, co-creation, delivers a much richer and better end product than more traditional 'officer-led' consultation exercises.

To get the best results, and to really identify and respond to local needs there is a need for ongoing regular engagement, including traditionally excluded groups, utilising venues where people already meet and feel comfortable in.

Planners and others need to utilise diverse consultation methods without relying on 'tried and tested' methods or the 'usual suspects'.

To build up long-term engagement and involvement, consideration should be made of something like a Citizens' Assembly or similar entity, albeit public engagement should take many forms, using different methods suited to different circumstances. A diverse pool of community leaders should be approached for advice. As one example, Lewes Town Council could consider establishing a Citizen's Assembly to influence Community Infrastructure Levy spending decisions, for instance.

Local residents bring lived and learned experience. They are equipped to take part in deliberative democracy techniques (and should be paid for this, perhaps, to recognise their input) supported by specialist, trained staff to manage this and other consultative processes. It is important to ensure a broad range of voices and service users, user panels, etc are approached – for example like the 'other voices' as shown at the masterplan workshop.

It is equally important too to ensure there is transparent follow up and feedback provided to any co-design and ongoing collaboration to ensure effective outcomes.

Planners and other public bodies should make use of wide communication channels – for example, WhatsApp, Lewesian, Lewes News – and ensure they have access to a comprehensive and up to date data base of existing local networks to facilitate two-way communication.

Equally, it is important to develop a strategy to address barriers to participation – be they physical, digital, financial or cultural – whilst also be supportive through the creative celebration of local achievements - such as Patina.

A strong message from the Other Voices participants was a call to have centres where people can go and spend time, and that are free and available for the community. An example of this is "Warm Welcome" that operates from the "Front Room" at the Baltic Museum on Tyneside.

"The **Front Room** at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead is a free, welcoming community space designed to foster connection, comfort and inclusion. Located on the mezzanine level, it offers visitors a relaxed environment to meet, rest,

enjoy a hot drink or lunch, and engage in conversation. As part of Baltic's *Experience Your Baltic* initiative and the local *Warm Spaces Network*, the Front Room responds to community needs during the cost-of-living crisis by providing warmth, Wi-Fi and refreshments in a non-judgemental setting. Regular activities such as the Sewing Bees, Language Café and Creative Climate Club encourage creativity, cultural exchange and social interaction. The initiative reflects Baltic's wider mission as a *Gallery of Sanctuary*—to support people seeking refuge, celebrate diversity and make art spaces more accessible and socially engaged”.

There are some spaces in Lewes that do some of this, some of the time. But Lewes would benefit from its own comprehensive and fully resourced “Front Room”.

We therefore propose that in the context of the proposed Supplementary Planning Document as referred above that the following community engagement and participation policies should be included in the next Reg 19 version of the draft Local Plan with respect to Lewes:

Policy SDXX – community engagement and participation – with specific reference to the need to build effective and inclusive engagement and participation structures that are inclusive, transparent and two-way, and that are resourced and supported through the mechanisms discussed in this section of the report.

Site allocations

We would expect more detail on each of the sites below, and associated infrastructure, to be developed during the preparation of the Supplementary Planning Document for the Lewes Special Policy Area of Lewes and the refresh of the Lewes Neighbourhood Plan.

Site A

Policy Strategic Site Policy SD57: North Street Quarter, Former Bus Station and Adjacent Eastgate Area, Lewes

Key issues:

Three elements of overall strategic site in separate ownership and being taken forward separately. Evidence from planning applications and pre-application discussions taken into account, as well as changes to the Use Classes Order.

LPG COMMENT 1: The absence of a Special Policy Area designation for Lewes, and / or a set of Supplementary Planning Document delivery criteria for these three sites has contributed to the situation in which consent has already been given for an alternative use on the Bus Station site, without a satisfactory temporary or permanent replacement of bus interchange facilities in Lewes Town Centre: in contravention of the direction in Para 5 c) of the Reg 18 Plan.

Similarly flood prevention and mitigation measures, access and movement requirements etc cannot be effectively incorporated into each site without considering the three sites and the town centre patterns of use, movement etc as an integrated operating area, which the Lewes Movement Strategy seeks to do. Particular attention will be needed to create edge-of-town car parks elsewhere and improved public transport and active travel infrastructure, in and around the town centre. The statements in Paras.1 and 2 of the Reg 18 Plan underestimate the need for integrated site planning and project delivery across Policy Area SD57, and undermine the Park Authority's capacity to secure the contributions required from each site owner.

Policy Text:

OVERARCHING CRITERIA

LPG COMMENT 2: Without prejudice to the ongoing determination of the Human Nature planning application for Area A, it would be prudent to re-consider these criteria for Policy Area SD57 to enable other approaches to the development of these sites (in various ownerships both in Area A as well as of Areas B and C) unconstrained by the particular objectives and characteristics of the Human Nature proposal. From the Workshop, these could include:

- Refocussing on site/area wide flood resilience rather than protection by flood barriers

- Town centre development typologies should encourage mixed uses with residential uses above a wide range of the other uses advocated at ground/street level: public services, employment, workshop, community spaces, effectively replicating historical patterns of plot use in the town centre, [and more modern modes of development as in the exemplar development of the French Quarter in Tübingen, Germany]. Flexibility in use class designations for these spaces could facilitate a more organic and incremental approach to neighbourhood and community development that can also ensure residential uses and quality of life are not residualised by these other uses.
- Phasing developments integrated with temporary/meanwhile uses that can contribute to short/medium term housing and employment needs, and contribute to the cultural life of townspeople of all ages. For Area A, this could draw on the experience of the use of the Phoenix site before these uses were summarily terminated by Santon Group in 2014. It was home to a thriving makers and artists community with 450 jobs in 55 businesses using over 14,000sqm of work space, with a footfall of nearly 4,000 visitors a week in July 2014 (Phoenix Estate Survey, July 2014, Lewes Phoenix Rising)
- The blight to the town centre caused by these three sites remaining undeveloped for so many years needs to be recognised in planning terms as a significant potential barrier to attracting new investment to the town; and that the town's general competitiveness, as well as quality of life, is at risk.

AREA A: NORTH STREET QUARTER

Housing

LPG COMMENT 3: Specifying a number based on the current planning application, the viability and deliverability of which is unproven, could be an unnecessary constraint on developing alternative approaches as suggested in Comment 1 above.

The Workshop supported the principle of a low-car development (with mobility hub) and the specific inclusion of smaller homes for existing older Lewes residents in all tenures and levels of affordability, needing to relocate to the town centre for mobility within their current home, town accessibility, health and social reasons. It also supported the representations previously made by the Town Council to facilitate the inclusion of co-housing and co-living typologies to meet the needs of both these older residents, and of younger people trying to remain and / or work in their home town in an affordable home. [Both forms are becoming more widely adopted by both commercial and not-for-profit developers, as well as Homes England and community led housing development entities: more detail and contact information available in request.]

Employment

LPG COMMENT 4: Specifying a quantum based on the current planning application, the viability and deliverability of which is unproven, could be an unnecessary constraint on developing alternative approaches as suggested in Comments 1 and 3 above. The original 'at least' might be a better approach, with some flexibility to be able to respond to demand for various space uses that might emerge from the temporary/meanwhile use strategy proposed in Comment 1 above.

LPG COMMENT 5: Prioritise affordable light industrial space making use of existing buildings as far as possible, including low rent start-ups, (with shared facilities such as laser printers, kitchens, toilets etc) with associated residential use targeted at workers (social rent studio flats for single people or small families who have businesses on the site).

Other

LPG COMMENT 6: There should be space for markets and events to house the existing Farmers Market and to provide for other town events and festivals given the current absence of a “Town Square”

LPG COMMENT 7: As expressed by the Workshops, the site has the potential to play a key role in a blue corridor / blue economy, and should also become part of a green corridor to the north of Lewes with a greenway path on both sides of river – with one pedestrian only - with gates removed on existing river routes to make it easier to cycle / wheel, and a path to Cliffe High Street along the west side of the river.

AREA B: FORMER LEWES BUS STATION

Any proposals should be based on the following uses and broad quantum of development:

- a) Approximately 35 residential units; and*
- b) Approximately 210 square metres of Class E floorspace.*
- c) Alternative uses on the bus station site are subject to the facility being replaced by an operationally satisfactory and accessible site elsewhere.*

LPG COMMENT 8: Until this criterion has been satisfied, the requirements in a) and b) above cannot be determined. See also Comment 1 above.

If housing is to be permitted on this site. Particular consideration should be given to air and noise quality, safe pedestrian access to the site, outdoor amenity space, and affordability levels that target the occupancy of people needing to live in the town centre.

The affordable housing requirement should not be diluted by the device of viability assessments using estimated Benchmark Land Values rather than or without declaring the actual price paid by the applicant.

AREA C: EASTGATE WHARF

Any proposals should be based on the following uses and broad quantum of development:

LPG COMMENT 9: The site possibly offers the best off-road alternative town centre location for replacement bus interchange facilities, and the other uses previously incorporated in the old bus station building, all of which were considered to be the justification for the formal designation of the building as an Asset of Community Value. The location and design of these replacement facilities, (some of which could

still be retained in Area B) should be determined before making other decisions on site capacity here.

LPG COMMENT 10: The affordable housing requirement should not be diluted by the device of viability assessments using estimated Benchmark Land Values rather than or without declaring the actual price paid by the applicant.

In addition, any proposal will need to demonstrate that:

- a) *It provides an appropriate level of public car parking provision.*

LPG COMMENT 11: The quantum of parking to be retained should be defined by specific criteria so that 'appropriate' can be objectively assessed. In this location, there must be a case for a substantially car-free development, both as part of the town wide Lewes Movement Strategy and to optimise the number of new homes that can be introduced to the town centre.

Site B: East Sussex College site

Policy SDXX: East Sussex College, Mountfield Road, Lewes

The site boundary represents the extent of the site, inclusive of all built development and any required mitigation listed as policy requirements.

POLICY REQUIREMENTS / OBJECTIVES:

To deliver a comprehensive, sympathetic and well-integrated redevelopment of a previously developed site, set out across three distinct land parcels to the north and south of Mountfield Road on the southeastern edge of Lewes that respects the townscape character and heritage significance of its setting within of the National Park, informed by a landscape led masterplan.

LPG COMMENT 1: Although the Workshop welcomed the allocation for housing – albeit to be low-car in nature - it proposed that the development / the College should include training facilities to support apprenticeships and traineeships for construction skills likely to be needed, as well as other employment uses in the town such as hospitality and trades; for example, a training kitchen, light industrial training workshops, alongside incubator space for new / small businesses also linked to college courses with a focus on career entry jobs for young people. We understand that the Priory School needs land, and some of the College land might be suitable. This part of the site should be 'ring-fenced' for facilities and activities that benefit and meet the needs of young people, with consideration of a link to Lewes FC given its proximity.

LPG COMMENT 2: The existing limitations of Mountfield Rd noted below will have an impact on the construction process, as this road is clearly unsuited to heavy plant and machinery. Also some of the sites for new building are close to buildings and activities being retained by the College. The operational needs of the College may need to remain adaptable to changing circumstances over the next few years. Consideration could be given to Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy PL1 A 4) *On certain sites which are not sensitive to landscape or heritage considerations, support will be given to making best use of evolving and innovative solutions such as*

modular housing. This could allow for temporary housing to be provided with high quality demountable systems to fit around the College's programme, whilst ensuring land does not stand idle in the short term. Off Site Manufacture products could also reduce the amount of construction traffic and impact of building operations on the College's functions and other users of Mountfield Rd. The use of an existing temporary slip road off the eastbound carriageway of the A27 might be useable for construction traffic.

KEY MATTERS AND POLICY REQUIREMENTS:

- a) Built development must account for the site's prominent location on the southeastern edge of Lewes, having regard to its green infrastructure function and its interrelationship with the adjacent Railway Land Meadows Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and its wider intervisibility from the south.*
- b) Development should provide a suitable transition in built form and fabric having regard to the more open nature of the southern land parcel including opportunities for public open space with planting to soften the settlement edge and provide for nature recovery. Opportunities for linkages with the likely wider network of green corridors should be explored throughout the site.*
- c) The embodied carbon implications of redevelopment should be fully considered. Development should seek to retain the historic buildings and boundary flint faced walls so far as possible on the southern land parcel and incorporate these into the redevelopment of this site. Demolition materials should also be reused on site wherever possible.*
- d) Development must consider its interrelationship and impact on the adjacent Lewes Conservation Area and designated heritage assets and conserve and enhance the setting of both.*
- e) Development should safeguard and enhance where possible existing vegetation belts on all site boundaries and within the site, having regard to numerous mature trees including many under tree preservation orders on the northern boundary of the south parcel. Development should be planned in a way not to introduce future risk e.g. pressure to fell trees/ remove vegetation due to overshadowing.*
- f) Follow a sequential approach by directing development away from areas of flood risk including the provision of any required flood mitigation measures.*

LPG COMMENT 3: As a significant portion of the southern site is in a flood zone, the opportunity should be taken to use the development to trial and showcase flood resilience measures that can be used to either adapt existing homes in the town, and to mainstream the use of these measures in all affected developments in the town, and the wider region. This could be done in partnership with the Environment Agency, the Building Research Establishment and commercial product manufacturers and system designs, possibly in partnership with the College to support training in specialist design and installation skills.

The site should be developed for low-car high-density housing in accordance and consistent with the housing and other policies referred to above, including the provision of a mobility hub.

Some areas of the site could be rewilded to improve local area sewerage and surface water attenuation

g) Development should provide suitable vehicular and non-motorised user (NMU) accesses onto Mountfield Road and prioritise NMU connections throughout the site, segregated from vehicles wherever possible.

LPG COMMENT 4: To ensure the site's development does not add to the congestion that already exists along Mountfield Road, active travel connections into and out of the site should be enhanced. There should be new active travel connections to Railway Land and Egret's Way, together with improved active travel on Mountfield Road – to be more pedestrian and cyclist friendly, and a new path along the railway line to Cliffe Industrial Estate and the proposed Southerham Park and Ride / Stride facility.

h) Development should provide a link to enable off-campus users to safely utilise the footbridge across the railway line with an on-going link to Mountfield Road, segregated from vehicles wherever possible.

LPG COMMENT 5: This should include pedestrians and cycle users of the footbridge, more useful signage and improved lighting addressing the personal safety issues and difficulties for cyclists at the railway bridge.

i) Development must consider the impact on any net loss in parking provision to the College through the redevelopment of the site, justified through a parking survey. Reprovision should consider sustainable options including permeable surfaces,

planting and rain gardens, increased cycle parking and solar PV energy generation.

j) Provide good acoustic design to address any noise impacts associated with the adjacent railway line and the A27 to the south.

k) Undertake pre-determination evaluation of potential archaeological features on the site prior to any planning application being submitted. Appropriate mitigation may be required depending on the outcome of that evaluation

l) Meet the requirements of other relevant national and development plan policies.

The development should contribute towards the cost of other improvements in the town, particularly the edge-of-town car parks and improved public transport and active travel infrastructure.

Site C - The County Hall site

Policy SDXX: County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes

The site boundary represents the extent of the site, inclusive of all built development and any required mitigation listed as policy requirements.

LPG COMMENT 1: The Workshop considered that the Local Plan should designate the two sites proposed for allocation in the Local Plan (LE039 and LE1140) and the two in the Neighbourhood Development Plan (Land at St Anne's Crescent (PL1(52)) and the Former St Anne's School (PL1(53))) as an integrated Policy Area. This should reflect the need for an integrated set of site design principles, possibly incorporated into an Supplementary Planning Document (as a sub-set of the Special Policy Area for Lewes Supplementary Planning Document), particularly related to traffic and movement, and nature enhancement and management, and which also

recognises the challenges for carrying out the development in a planned sequence of phases, not just to mitigate impacts on site neighbours and traffic movements on a highly constrained road access, but to facilitate the most time- and production-efficient mode of delivery. With all the sites being in public ownership, it is a realistic and necessary expectation of the Local Plan to cover both planning and delivery.

POLICY REQUIREMENTS / OBJECTIVES:

To deliver an innovative, comprehensive, sympathetic and well-integrated redevelopment of a large, prominent and complex site, close to the centre of Lewes, that respects the townscape character and heritage significance of its surroundings and setting within the National Park, informed by a landscape led masterplan.

The site is set out across three distinct land parcels, governed by site topography and vegetation cover. This will present a series of challenges, including on how best to join up development and open spaces and gain appropriate site access for vehicles and non-motorised users (NMUs), to provide a coherent, high-quality and inclusive scheme

Options are at an early stage and being explored by the freeholders East Sussex County Council. Redevelopment potential, including the extent of the retention or demolition of existing structures is to be determined.

LPG COMMENT 2: Assuming that choices about the future use of County Hall will be deferred pending the outcome of decisions to be made by the new Mayoral Authority and after Local Government Reorganisation, the allocation of this site for housing may be premature.

The Workshop's key strategic concerns for all 4 sites were:

- Consideration to be given to productive meanwhile uses. See comments on other allocated sites
- Significant parts of the site should be retained for employment including community and public service uses
- Priority for genuinely affordable housing as defined in the Neighbourhood Plan, to include co-housing, council and social housing, comprising smaller units suited to younger families and older people looking to downsize as part of a low-car development (with mobility hub) that would maximise land availability without imposing an additional burden on the town centre road network
- Retain some proportion of existing public parking to take advantage of the location to serve as a dedicated, affordable park and ride / stride service providing a regular shuttle bus service to the town – ideally utilising the existing local and sub-regional bus services on the adjoining Western Road - and make an ongoing contribution to reducing through traffic and avoidable car journeys to the town centre, as referred in the Lewes Movement Strategy
- The site should be considered as a possible location for the Gideon Mantell museum and / or the Lewes Textiles and Design Museum, to be complemented by the protection of one of the oldest shops in the country (the former Hugh Rae shop in the upper High Street) representing 800 years of clothing production on one site.

KEY MATTERS AND POLICY REQUIREMENTS:

- a) Development must account for the site's prominent location, having regard to its steep topography and green infrastructure function, particularly its interrelationship with the adjacent Lewes Cemetery Site of Importance for Nature Conservation/Local Wildlife Site.*
- b) Regard should be made to the Lewes Neighbourhood Development Plan designations for housing on two areas of this site – Land at St Anne's Crescent (PL1(52)) in the northwest area of the site (the north parcel); and the Former St Anne's School (PL1(53)) in the south area of site (the south parcel).*
- c) Development must consider its place within and its interrelationship and impact on the Lewes Conservation Area and designated heritage assets, including the Grade I listed Church of St Anne, and conserve and enhance the setting of both. Development must also consider the non-designated heritage asset, St Anne's School located within the south parcel, and seek to retain any notable elements of this disused facility.*
- d) Careful consideration should be made to the design, particularly building heights given the site's intervisibility from local and distant views including utilising locally characteristic materials.*
- e) The embodied carbon implications of redevelopment should be fully considered throughout. Demolition materials should be reused on site wherever possible.*

LPG COMMENT 3: The form and height of the County Hall structures suggest that they may be suitable for residential conversion. This potential reuse of these buildings for residential and any other uses should be evaluated against demolition and redevelopment, as part of optimising the requirements of e), which should also consider on-site renewable energy generation.

- f) Development should safeguard and enhance where possible existing vegetation belts on all site boundaries and throughout the site, with regard to the presence of numerous mature trees, including many under tree preservation orders. Development should seek to break up the extensive areas of hardstanding present across the site (also see (k)). Opportunities to link vegetation belts together into a network of green corridors within the site, including any areas of hardstanding and to adjacent areas, should be explored. Regard should be made to the open and verdant nature of the south parcel, including opportunities for public open space and planting to provide for nature recovery.*

LPG COMMENT 4: In integrating housing into this setting, consideration could be given to working with a co-housing group, which, in addition to self-managing their homes, could provide a focus for the long-term management of the natural elements of the development (with consideration given to the protection of green assets), which would also draw on the many active volunteer networks in the town interested in this kind of role.

- g) Development should be planned in a way not to introduce future risk e.g. pressure to fell trees/ remove vegetation due to overshadowing.*
- h) Provision of any required surface water flood mitigation measures.*
- i) Development should provide suitable vehicular and NMU access and connectivity, seeking to improve wherever possible.*

- i) It is not clear whether the vehicular access into the southern land parcel from Rotton Row is suitable for residential use and if it is feasible to improve this due to the likely extent of vegetation clearance and engineering required; and/ or whether the surrounding highway network has capacity. Options for a vehicular and NMU link between the southern and central parcel to access the site by alternative means should therefore be explored.*
- ii) NMU connections should be prioritised throughout the site, segregated wherever possible. Development should seek to provide an appropriate step free north/south link between St Anne's Crescent/ High Street and Rotten Row.*
- j) Development should seek to incorporate Public Right of Way footpath (reference LTC/44/1) that crosses the north parcel, into the scheme design.*
- k) Development must consider the impact on any net loss in parking provision justified through a parking survey. Any re-provision should consider sustainable options including permeable surfaces, planting and rain gardens, increased cycle parking and solar PV energy generation.*
- l) Undertake pre-determination evaluation of potential archaeological features on the site prior to any planning application being submitted. Appropriate mitigation may be required depending on the outcome of that evaluation*
- m) Evidence that any loss of office space meets the requirements of policy SD35 and Appendix 3, which seeks to safeguard existing employment sites*
- n) Meet the requirements of other relevant national and development plan policies.*

The development should contribute towards the cost of other improvements in the town, particularly the edge-of-town car parks elsewhere and improved public transport and active travel infrastructure, including an improved cycle path to Brighton.

Policy SDXX: Land at the rear of 49-55: St Anne's Crescent, Lewes

POLICY REQUIREMENTS / OBJECTIVES:

To deliver a sympathetic and well-integrated redevelopment of a prominent site in the centre of Lewes that respects the townscape character and heritage significance of its immediate surroundings and its setting within the National Park, informed by a landscape led masterplan.

KEY MATTERS AND POLICY REQUIREMENTS:

- a) Development must account for the site's prominent location, having regard to its topography and green infrastructure function, including its interrelationship with the adjacent Lewes Cemetery Site of Importance for Nature Conservation/Local Wildlife Site.*
- b) Development must consider its place within and interrelationship and impact on the Lewes Conservation Area and conserve and enhance its setting.*
- c) Development should provide suitable vehicular and non-motorised user (NMU) access onto either Winterbourne Hollow, seeking to minimise any conflict with those accessing Lewes Cemetery; or through the adjacent car park to the east (part of a proposed allocation – County Hall, St Anne's Crescent SDXX), in both cases minimising any conflict with the PRow footpath (reference LTC/44/1). In any case,*

NMU access should be improved by ensuring the section of the PRow footpath to the south of the site is capable of year-round use with appropriate surfacing. The upgrading of this footpath to enable shared use by cyclists should also be investigated and implemented if feasible, working with the adjacent landowner.

d) Development should safeguard and enhance where possible existing vegetation belts on all site boundaries and throughout the site. Development should seek to incorporate the numerous mature trees within the site into scheme design. Development should be planned in a way not to introduce future risk e.g. pressure to fell trees/ remove vegetation due to overshadowing.

e) Meet the requirements of other relevant national and development plan policies.

LPG COMMENT 5: - to follow

Site D - Old Malling Farm

Policy Allocation Policy SD76: Land at Old Malling Farm, Lewes

LPG COMMENT 1: Whilst this site benefits from a planning consent, it is presently stalled as the contractor has gone into liquidation. Groups in Lewes have always had reservations about this development and see this as an opportunity to re-consider the detail of the site allocation in the belief that a new contractor will be likely to seek to make modifications to the scheme.

The Workshop would support a redesign to a higher density, with smaller homes of mixed tenure.

The new design should optimise solar energy gain by achieving a more suitable orientation across the site. It should be gas-free – prioritising heat pumps, Passivhaus design, swales / suds, etc. It should also address the shortage of sewerage capacity in the area.

A high quality walking and cycling route to town should be required to enable a more low-car housing development to be achieved with the increase value generated by the increase in units contributing to the cost of a route cut through the railway embankment and along the line of old railway line to provide an active travel route into town – as well as to countryside to the north with new bridge over the river - to facilitate the Lewes – Uckfield greenway.

There should be a pathway around the Mayhew Way side of Malling Field with new paths across the Field.

There should also be a bus route extension to serve the site paid for by the developer, on a reducing scale, for the first 3 - 5 years.

There should be a Mobility hub and car club, etc., together with a Community Centre.

The development should contribute towards the cost of other improvements in the town, particularly the edge-of-town car parks elsewhere and improved public transport and active travel infrastructure,

Site E - Springman House

Policy SDXX: Springman House, 8 North Street, Lewes

POLICY REQUIREMENTS / OBJECTIVES:

To deliver a sympathetic and well-integrated redevelopment of a previously developed site in the centre of Lewes that respects the townscape character and heritage significance of its immediate surroundings and its setting within the National Park, informed by a landscape led plan.

LPG COMMENT 1: Similar to Comments on Policy Area SD57, to which this site is adjacent, one objective should be to counteract the blighting effects of these buildings that have remained un-refurbished or undeveloped for a number of years, for no publicly available reason. Consideration should be given to a range of possible interim uses in the short to medium term, including workspaces, studios, co-living or HMO type accommodation for single people needing an affordable housing option in the town centre, (including the local firemen currently living in very unsatisfactory temporary accommodation elsewhere on North St.) A feasibility study could be carried out, with the cooperation of the current owner, to established the viability of such uses. (It should be clarified with the current owner whether the existing buildings are a dangerous structure, as sometimes alleged).

KEY MATTERS AND POLICY REQUIREMENTS:

- a) Development must consider its place within and interrelationship and impact on the Lewes Conservation Area and designated heritage assets and conserve and enhance the setting of both.*
- b) Development must provide suitable vehicular and non-motorised user (NMU) access.*
- c) Provide good acoustic design to address noise impacts associated with the adjacent roads and town centre location.*
- d) This site is within an Archaeological Notification Area. Undertake pre-determination evaluation of potential archaeological features on the site prior to any planning application being submitted. Appropriate mitigation may be required depending on the outcome of that evaluation.*
- e) Meet the requirements of other relevant national and development plan policies.*

LPG COMMENT 2: The Key Matters should establish definitively if any aspect of the development of this site is contingent on the nature and timing of development in Area A Policy Area SD57.

LPG COMMENT 3: The Workshop considered and would support the alternative allocation of this site for a hotel, in addition to the Shelleys Hotel site below (NB, The Premier Inn and White Hart are doing well.)

Site F - Astley House

This is an Ideal housing site – it is on bus routes and near shops.

It should comprise 50% social housing of small houses to rent / buy for keyworkers and single people - whatever the data analysis suggests is the greatest need.

Site G - Brook Road and Cliffe Industrial Estates

These sites should be protected and preserved for employment uses in accordance with the employment policies above – with retail or other uses prohibited.

There is a need to extend the boundary of the Principal Employment Site at Brooks Road to cover the full extent of the former Caffyns site.

Caburn House is under-used and should be brought back into productive use as soon as possible.

Site H - Shelley's

Consideration should be given to the use Compulsory Purchase Order and other powers to bring the site forward for development and / or interim use.

The preferred use is as a high-quality hotel.

Site I - Homebase building site

Consideration should be given to the use Compulsory Purchase Order and other powers to bring the site forward for development and / or interim use.

Associated infrastructure

The developments above need to contribute towards the provision of new and improved affordable and accessible edge-of-town car parking with associated mobility services; as well as a medium term subsidy to enhanced public transport links (and a high quality bus station / interchange) enabling a regular shuttle bus (or similar) service into the town centre and Industrial Sites (North Street, Brooks Road and Cliffe) to provide easy access to the town's commercial centre for people coming in from the villages as well as for visitors who are not coming by train.

As well as the proposals for County Hall, and possibility of the Racecourse, we identified the **Grey Pit at Southerham** as a possible site for a large edge of town carpark with park and ride / strtide / mobility hub services. This has been promoted for many years, and we do know that the Firle Estate is open to discussions about its use for this purpose. Consideration should also be given to muti-decking existing edge of town car parks to provide more capacity on existing sites, subject to careful design considerations.

There also needs to be significant investment in public realm improvements (wider pavements, dropped kerbs, raised crossings at junctions, pedestrianisation and other

highway re-modelling) to enable improved accessibility and 'sense of place' as well as investment in active travel infrastructure, including secure and safe cycle parking including on-street hangars as referred in the Lewes Movement Strategy.

Who will make all this happen...and how?

Lewes has been dogged by a litany of 'stalled sites' for the past 20 years or so. A typical and scarring example of this is the North Street Quarter. Successive developers and development proposals have come forward. Planning approvals have been granted or, as in the most recent case, there has been a resolution to approve. But the site still lies empty, and thriving businesses, many of them meeting the needs of the town, were thrown out with little or no warning.

Stalled sites are not unique to Lewes, but are an indication of how difficult it has become for the planning system on its own to ensure that, not only are public policy priorities embedded securely in planning permissions and agreements, but that schemes actually happen in a timescale that meets local needs in the relevant plan period. Speculative land trading, systemic erosion of planning obligations, unrealistic land price expectations, inflation in materials and labour costs, contracting bankruptcies, investor caution, and reduced demand side purchasing power are all factors currently choking off new housing supply in Lewes and elsewhere. Reducing the price for land for affordable housing is no longer enough to secure affordability. Government grant is limited and cannot be used to best effect in small and often inefficient units of production as part of bigger schemes that come forward in an unprogrammed way.

The example of the bus station closure in Lewes Town Centre is typical of a situation that must be as frustrating to the National Park as it is to Lewes citizens and visitors. Good planning and then practical delivery of a replacement is dependent on contributions from three town centre developments, not one of which is currently in development mode. None are likely to be happening in the next year or two or more.

Lewes needs a delivery body to break this log jam and bring sites forward for development in a timely and appropriate manner; a body that has the powers and access to resources to make this happen.

The Mayor of the new County Authority will be directly responsible for the delivery of central government's housing completion targets, and will similarly need a means of ensuring that Lewes' contribution to the county target will be met in the required timescale. As things stand, and on the evidence of recent experiences in Lewes, the Mayor would have no capability to achieve either the raw numbers or the expectations of citizens in Lewes as expressed in this paper and earlier consultation representations.

Historically, the integrating tasks of managing town and city expansions, redevelopment and regeneration have been entrusted to urban or New Town development corporations, with a combination of land assembly powers and the ability to optimise the use of public sector land and grant programmes through effective procurement of investor and developer partnerships. The recent New Towns Taskforce report has put the focus back on development corporations as the optimal vehicle for complex investment and delivery programmes with multiple land uses and requiring integrated and mutually supportive sustainable development outcomes, as required in the National Planning Policy Framework (para. 8) A development corporation retains control over the types and pace of development,

and can coordinate the complexities of implementing several projects simultaneously. In Lewes, just the impact on the town as a whole of construction traffic from any one site, let alone several at the same time, will require skilful planning and hands-on management.

The workshop enthusiastically proposed the establishment of a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC). Anxieties about the possible lack of local accountability and historical reputations of large and remotely managed development corporations will need to be considered. However some existing Combined County Authorities have been experimenting with MDCs of different sizes appropriate to the scale of the task. For example, a modest MDC is currently being set up in Rochdale by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to focus on the revival of the town centre in Middleton, with innovative cooperative principles to be embedded in its governance; all of which will fit well with the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill's ambitions (s.58) for more effective localised governance arrangements as part of the local government reorganisation.

As well as working with established investors and housing providers, an MDC could work alongside the Town Council, the Lewes Community Land Trust and a possible new Lewes 'Town Building Company' to steward some of the housing and other assets of community value created by new developments or those arising from local government reorganisation. Again, the New Towns Taskforce has emphasised the importance of community place stewardship bodies and of involving them from the outset in the planning of new development.

Some of these assets could be partly paid for through public subscription, community share issues, etc to ensure that Lewes people have a real stake in ensuring that new developments meet their needs. For those who may think this is unrealistic, it should be noted that, in the 1990s, both the Star Brewery and the Needlemakers were earmarked for demolition by the Council. Lewes residents stepped forward, and raised the money to buy them. They were turned into the wonderful employment, retail, and hospitality facilities that we have today.

As custodian of the public interest in the substantial amounts of public land allocated for development in the Local Plan, the MDC would have to have regard to the new statutory objectives which the English Devolution Bill will attribute to Strategic Authorities and their agents, e.g. MDCs. These objectives replicate the statutory objectives of Homes England from the Housing & Regeneration Act 2008, which enables land to be sold at the 'best consideration reasonably obtainable', whatever the price achieved, as long as it is in fulfilment of those objectives. As many said at the Masterplan event, '**Public Land for Public Benefit!**'. However, the MDC would also be in a position to ensure that the legal principles of the Parkhurst Road judgement in 2018 are rigorously adhered to viz. that a market value must *"adequately demonstrate proper consideration of, or give adequate effect to, the guidance in Planning Policy Guidance or the requirements of the development plan"*. It would also be well-placed to ensure that this legal requirement will be applied equally to the use of public and private land, including any that is acquired compulsorily or by negotiation by the MDC.

Workshop invitees and attendees

Invitee	Organisation	Thematic workshop
Adrian Ross	Lewes Town Council	Land Use
Adrienne Soudain	Sustrans	Active Travel
Andrew Barry		
Alex Pringle	SDNPA	Active Travel
Andrew Simpson*	Chamber of Commerce	Employment*
Anna McKeon		Public Engagement
Anthony Dicks	Conservation Area AG	Land Use
Alex Penn		
Ben Hall	Lewes Football Club	Sport
Brian French	Malling	Active Travel
Bronagh Liddicott	Friends of Lewes	Land Use
Carol Kirby	Nevill	
Chris Rowland	OVESCO	Land Use
Chris Chatfield	Compass Buses	
Charlie Dobres	Lewes Football Club	Sport
Claire Tester	SDNPA	Employment
Daniel Steward-Roberts	LDC	Active Travel
Debbie Twitchen	Landport	Housing
Dinah Morgan	Lewes Climate Hub	Public Engagement
Edwina Livesey	Lewes Town Council	Land Use
Esme Hilliard	Southover Good Neighbours	Public Engagement
Fiona Abbott	Soulfit	Sport
Geraldine Hoban		
Gill Short	Cliffe Residents Assn	Housing
Hannah Coldwell	COO, East Sussex College	
Ian Dodds	Business consultant	Employment
Ian MacKay*	Architect	Land Use*
Imogen Makepeace	Lewes Town Council	
Jean Lawrence	Lewes Area Access Grp	Active Travel
Jennifer Chibnall	South Downs Society	Housing
James Harris	ESCC	
Jamie Butcher-Hann	ESCC – LCWIP	
Jamie Lloyd	Get Bikery	Active Travel
Jane Foote	STAG / GRRRA	Housing
Jessica Hanman		
Jody Slater	SDNPA	Sport
John Lamb	Malling	Sport
Johny Denis	ESCC / LDC	Employment
Jon Curtis-Bignall		
Jon Wheeler	ESCC – highways	
Juliet Oxborrow*	Lewes Climate Hub	Sport*
Kevin Moore*	Lewes Living Streets	Active Travel*
Kia Makepeace	Nevill RA	Housing
Kevin Scott	Chamber of Commerce	
Laurence O'Connor	LDC	Housing
Lesley Healy	Nevill	

Lesley Boniface	James MacCleary MP office	
Lisa Simmonds	ESCC – LCWIP	
Liz Thomas	Lewes Neighbourhood Plan	Housing
Martin Thomas	B&H Buses	
Nathaniel Hepburn	ESCC	Sport
Natalie Pearson	Pinchpoint	Public Engagement
Nava Kazam	Farmers' Market	Employment
Nadem Din	Lewes District Council	
Neil Maguire	ESCC – buses	Land Use
Nicki Myers	OVESCO	Land Use
Nicola Fumer	Architect	Employment
Paul Bevan	SDNPA – planning committee	
Peter Earl	Friends of Lewes	Employment
Peter Masters	Lewes Athletic	Sport
Rob Green	SDNPA	Housing
Robin Walden	Chamber of Commerce	Employment
Ros Brewer	Community Land Trust	Housing
Ruby Makepeace-Somerville	Food Bank coordinator	
Richard Moore		
Sarah Earl	Patient Voice / Play Council	Land Use
Sarah O'Kane	Nevill	Active Travel
Shane Snow	DfT / Active Travel England	Active Travel
Sheila Webb	Southover Good Neighbours	Housing
Sofia Kesidou		
Silvia Clausin*	Community Engagement	Public Engagement*
Stephen Hill*	Community Land Trust	Housing*
Steve Pearce	Cycle Lewes	Chair
Sue Carroll	Safer C7 Project	Public Engagement
Susanne Wolf	Save Lewes Bus Station	Active Travel
Suzy Nelson	Nevill	
Tony Kalume	Diversity Lewes	Sport
Vanessa Rowlands	SDNPA	Public Engagement
Wendy Maples	ESCC	Sport
Yad Luthra	Business – Belle & Co	Employment
	Winterbourne	
	South Street	
	Priory School	
	Southern Water	
	Taxi Drivers	

*workshop facilitator