



POLEGATE TOWN MASTERPLAN

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this proposal for a Masterplan for Polegate was to develop a strategy for the Town which provides a framework for making decisions on current and future proposals, in a manner that is advantageous to the overall improvement of the area. A Masterplan offers a long term sense of direction through which change can be effectively managed and co-ordinated for the greatest benefit of the Town and local area, with a focus on implementation.
- 1.2 The first stage in producing the brief for the Masterplan involved Polegate Town Council forming a Masterplan Working Group to input evidence and ideas. It culminated in the Annual Town Meeting, at which residents were asked for their contributions into the subject headings via small discussion groups.

2. Objectives for the Plan

- i. To provide a strategic document to guide and co-ordinate future development in the Town of Polegate but not to duplicate or seek to repeat national or regional planning policies that are to be found elsewhere
- ii. To provide a document that can inform and supplement the Wealden LDF
- iii. To identify the present local infrastructure and to highlight additions / changes / upgrades that may be required to accommodate present and future developments
- iv. To ensure that the needs of all sections of the community are addressed
- v. To enhance the economic performance and potential of the area
- vi. To improve the quality of life for all residents

3. Working Groups

Issues considered in the Masterplan:

- Community infrastructure
 - Roads / transport
 - Parking
 - Healthcare
 - Education and training
 - Water drainage and sewerage

- Economic performance
 - Retail
 - Employment
 - Housing
- Leisure and recreation
 - Formal and informal play space
 - Sporting facilities
 - Clubs and social / community centres

4. Spatial Vision / Objectives

- i. Ensuring that the location of development to meet Polegate's service and employment needs is co-ordinated with that of Eastbourne and the surrounding areas and that public transport links to Eastbourne are improved through a quality bus corridor.
- ii. Taking advantage of Polegate's position at the junction of the A22 and A27 and at a rail junction, to provide for strategically important employment and civic facilities contributing to the aims of the Hailsham - Eastbourne Triangle Programme.
- iii. Improving / redeveloping the Rail Station and adjoining Town centre with more intensive use of land, an improved environment and choice of shops.
- iv. Taking advantage of the bypass completion to improve the environment and space available for buses, pedestrians and cyclists.
- v. Improving gaps in Polegate's housing stock with the provision of good quality new housing, community facilities, including those for the elderly, a new sports hall and a cemetery.
- vi. Respecting and protecting the backdrop and setting of Polegate against the South Downs.
- vii. Providing new parks and open spaces in and around Polegate
- viii. Maintaining strategic green gaps between Eastbourne and Polegate, and Polegate and Hailsham.

5. Shopping / Retail Centre

The siting of new housing development is critical to the prosperity of retail premises within Polegate. If it is situated too far out from the Town centre then residents will use a car to travel to the larger 'out of town' outlets rather than shopping locally.

It was agreed that the main re-development of the Town centre should focus around The Centre and railway station transport hub area, by compulsory purchase if necessary, including adjacent areas which could be included within a newly developed and expanded centre. With the recommendation that the High Street be designated one way to traffic (south to north) it would become possible to create larger retail units which may, in the future, encourage larger national retailers to Polegate. In order to facilitate this, encouragement should be given to property companies and developers to talk to the Town Council.

Although the Town's commercial premises have many different landlords, it would seem many High Street shops are in the ownership of one common landlord, which could assist regeneration of the parade.

A weekly / monthly farmers market is something that should also be explored and supported.

6. Employment Land

Employment in the Town is currently provided by retail, estate agencies, funeral directors, insurance brokers, nursing/rest homes and small trades people working from home. There is further employment on the Chaucer Industrial Estate. The biggest employers within the Town are probably Britannia, Co-op and the Town's nursing/rest homes. We have no details at present as to how many employees are resident and how many travel from outside Polegate to work in these businesses.

Support was given to the land north of Dittons Road to be allocated as a high quality business park as this would be for predominantly Class B1 use, a mixture of offices, high-tech and light industrial. This has already been identified in the Non-Statutory Wealden Local Plan, which estimates it would provide employment for 600 people.

Support was also given for a 'Public Service Village' to be sited somewhere in the vicinity of the Town but to benefit the Town centre the 'Village' would need to be close enough to encourage workers to use not only the revamped retail facilities but the transport facilities of both rail and bus.

7. Housing

Planning consents have been granted for approximately 250 new homes at the George Wimpey site on land east of Shepham Lane (16e)*. Other sites identified at 16a, 16b, 16d, 16f and 16g could accommodate a further potential 5440 - 9060 dwellings, which could equate to adding 13,600 – 22,650 residents to the Town's population. However, Polegate's preferred option would be that future housing provision be sited within a new settlement at Berwick rather than around Polegate.

In the event of that option not being progressed and if more housing were to be imposed upon the Town, support was given to a total development of approx 800 units within the Town boundaries. This should be located on land south of the bypass, in order that it would be sustainable and would integrate with the existing settlement. There is concern that dwellings on sites 16a, 16b and 16c would constitute an independent settlement due to the positioning of the bypass, which would separate them from the Town. It would be difficult, if not impossible, for facilities on either side of the bypass to be shared with the other, unless by vehicular access. The new homes should be across a broad spectrum from good quality, larger family houses through to affordable housing.

It is highly recommended that the strategic green gaps between Polegate / Hailsham and Polegate / Eastbourne should be preserved. However, some development as either education or playing fields would help preserve and enhance the area between Polegate and Willingdon.

New infrastructure would be required to accommodate further housing e.g. employment land / Folkington Link / further improvements to the A27 / hospital provision / new health centre / primary and secondary schools / sewerage works / reservoir / rail link / parkway station / additional railway car parking / residents' parking permit scheme / cemetery / park / revitalised and expanded High Street / multi use sport and youth facility.

**(Ref nos refer to WDC Core Strategy Issues and Options document 2007)*

8. Roads & Parking

Support was given to making the High Street one way to traffic from south to north, thereby preventing it becoming 'clogged' at the busy times, whilst still encouraging shoppers. It was also felt that if times of deliveries by lorry could be restricted to before 12 noon, this would assist traffic flow. The Cophall roundabout seems to be the main obstacle to effective traffic flow around the outside of Town. It should be redeveloped in accordance with its original specification, with an upper tier for local traffic.

The need for either a multi storey car park or a park & ride scheme has been identified. Residents compete with commuters for on street parking spaces outside their homes during the day. Council will encourage the rail company to make more affordable car parking available to their customers, which would subsequently alleviate problems in the roads within the centre of Polegate.

9. Transport

There was support for the creation of an integrated transport hub of rail and bus services, to be situated at either the existing railway station or on land at Black Path which is owned by the rail company and which could be developed into a shoppers / railway car park. This could be a partnership between the Town Council and rail company and could have prioritised usage for the Town's shoppers and rail users.

A new footbridge should be constructed to link the north and south sides of the Town across the railway crossing and the railway station should be upgraded to form the centre of this enterprise. The Polegate – Pevensy link should be supported so that travellers do not have to waste 17 minutes going in to and out of Eastbourne on the Brighton – Ashford link. There should be a shuttle service to Eastbourne which could include a link to the DGH, with reduced rates for the elderly. The Hailsham line should be reinstated which would bring more people into the Town to use transport links. Support was given for the Lewes – Uckfield line as this would help remove more traffic from the congested roads.

10. Healthcare

The Town is in need of an improved health centre to serve all residents. There are currently two medical practices in the Town, one situated in the High Street and one at Polegate crossroads. Both are busy but are accepting new patients. There is a dental practice situated at Polegate crossroads and two independent pharmacies and one opticians within the High Street.

Support was given to a centrally located, purpose built polyclinic, which would facilitate the expansion of clinics and services and fill the gaps created by the downgrading of certain departments at Eastbourne District General Hospital. In particular, Polegate's large population of elderly residents would benefit from the local provision of minor surgery, X-ray, complementary therapies, dental treatment, pharmacy etc. Potential sites are to be identified, which should include land designated for future development.

11. Education / Training / Skills

The local Schools Organisation Plan anticipates the need to provide new secondary and primary school accommodation in Hailsham and Polegate, depending on housing schemes as identified. The Core Strategy only identifies the need for a new secondary school for Polegate, but with the possible new housing, it was felt that a new primary school would be required as well.

Support was given to a school which would be from nursery to 6th form. The school would provide facilities not only for the pupils but for the surrounding community, with a separate sports hall which could be used outside the school's core hours. The Town's schools could be federated by a super head. Adult education should be developed within Polegate and its environs and further development of the community aspect of Willingdon Community School should be encouraged.

12. Leisure and Recreation

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The Town is served by the existing recreation grounds/leisure areas of:-
Oakleaf Play Area
Brightling Road Skatepark etc
Brightling Road Meadow
Wannock Road

Support was given to further expansion / development of recreational facilities within the Town boundaries to meet the identified large deficiency in the area of amenity greenspace and future needs, to include a purpose built youth / sports club and other teenage areas, and provision for the following leisure activities: football pitches, multi sports courts, bowls, tennis and petanque.

Support was given to the extension / creation of cycle ways, especially with the proposed National Park designation which would hopefully encourage more people to visit the area for recreational pursuits. Also to a park within the Town boundaries, which would include an ornamental pond and garden areas with seats. The park could possibly provide facilities for some of the leisure activities mentioned above. Council felt that an area of Brightling Road could be explored for this purpose.

13. Clubs and Social

Although all the existing halls in Polegate are very well used by a variety of organizations and by all ages, there was support for further facilities within the Town, especially a purpose built sports/youth hall. The Community Centre, which is the main focus for social clubs and groups, is in need of replacement with a contemporary building which could incorporate a library, computer suite, conference room etc.

14. Water and Sewerage

Where new housing is involved, the water service companies have a legal statutory duty to provide both services. At this time, a new water mains is being built from a reservoir north of Bexhill to the Hailsham area. It is known that a new sewage treatment plant will be needed for Polegate's new estates, the plant at Hailsham being at maximum capacity. Support must be given to urge Wealden to put these services in place prior to any housing development taking place and, if necessary, with developers contributing to the costs of any new works and facilities via Section 106 Agreements.

15. The Elderly

The need for an affordable respite care, convalescent & long term care centre within Polegate was identified as a priority. Hailsham is not an acceptable alternative as the bus service is inadequate and the existing home is a distance from public transport. Relatives, often elderly themselves, need to be able to drop in for frequent short periods. There should also be excellent home-care provisions and support groups for carers, as well as the previously identified variety of suitable social activities.

16. The Way Forward

This Masterplan will provide a foundation for future proposals for the development of Polegate. It is a working document and will be subject to regular reviews, amendments and inputting of additional information.

It is the aim of Polegate Town Council that consultation will continue, in order to ensure that the Masterplan is representative of the wider community.