



West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016

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environment is minimised. Development outside but near to an AONB should not detract from the natural beauty, distinctive character and remote and tranquil nature of the Area. This includes development which would be unduly prominent in the Area, or detract from views into or out of the Area, particularly when viewed from roads, rights of way or other public places.

Settlement pattern and strategic gaps

Policy CH3

- (a) **In order to ensure that West Sussex continues to be a county with a network of small to medium-sized towns and villages, the separate identity and character of all settlements will be maintained and, where possible, enhanced. Development which would undermine this objective or lead to the actual or perceived coalescence of settlements should not be permitted.**
- (b) **Development should not be permitted unless the strategic settlement pattern of the County will be maintained. The following gaps between settlements within West Sussex are of strategic importance and development should not be permitted which would undermine their fundamental purpose and integrity:**
- (1) Emsworth and Chichester;**
 - (2) Chichester and Lavant;**
 - (3) Chichester and Bognor Regis;**
 - (4) West Wittering and East Wittering;**
 - (5) Bracklesham Bay and Selsey;**
 - (6) Selsey and Pagham;**
 - (7) Middleton-on-Sea and Littlehampton;**
 - (8) Arundel and Littlehampton;**
 - (9) East Preston and Ferring;**
 - (10) Ferring and Worthing;**
 - (11) Worthing and Sompting/Lancing;**
 - (12) Lancing and Shoreham;**
 - (13) Burgess Hill and Hurstpierpoint/Keymer/Hassocks;**
 - (14) Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath;**
 - (15) Haywards Heath and Cuckfield;**
 - (16) Haywards Heath/Lindfield and Scaynes Hill;**
 - (17) Crawley and East Grinstead;**
 - (18) Crawley and Gatwick Airport/Horley;**
 - (19) Crawley and Pease Pottage;**
 - (20) East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood;**
 - (21) Horsham and Crawley; and**
 - (22) Horsham and Southwater.**
- (c) **District planning authorities will:**
- (1) identify how the separate identity and character of all settlements will be maintained and, where possible, enhanced;**
 - (2) define in local plans, the boundaries of the strategic gaps identified in (b) and, where appropriate, of any gaps identified in the structure or local plans of adjoining authorities; and**

(3) include policies in local plans to:

- (i) ensure that the separate identity and character of all settlements will be maintained and, where possible, enhanced and prevent their perceived or actual coalescence;**
- (ii) ensure that development within strategic gaps:**
 - is consistent with, or is necessary to meet the requirements of, this Plan and local plans;**
 - would not compromise, either individually or cumulatively with other development, the objectives and fundamental integrity of the gaps; and**
 - would maintain and enhance the predominantly open and undeveloped character of gaps; and**
- (iii) where appropriate, allocate land within gaps for uses which will maintain and enhance their predominantly open and undeveloped character.**

323. The County is typified by a pattern of mainly closely-spaced small and medium-sized towns and villages. The loss of gaps between settlements would threaten not only the separation and setting of the settlements on both sides but also the overall character of the County. The need to avoid the loss of separate identity continues. Therefore, in order to maintain the overall character of the County, this Plan seeks to maintain the separate identity and character of all settlements and prevent them coalescing. Policy CH3 seeks to achieve this by placing greater restraint on development within gaps than is usually applied in the countryside to prevent creeping coalescence, for example, through the proliferation of development which would otherwise be acceptable outside built-up area boundaries under Policy LOC2.
324. Coalescence does not mean exclusively the physical joining of settlements but also includes a perceived joining of settlements due to physical development and/or a level of activity which reduces their visual separation and the sense of travelling between settlements. The towns and villages of the County have their own distinctive character which derives partly from the relationship between the settlements and the open areas and countryside around them and the relationship between the towns and villages. In order to protect their separate identity, the predominantly open and undeveloped character of the land between settlements should be maintained to ensure that there is an actual and perceived visual break between the settlements. Attention will need to be paid to the impact of development either on its own or cumulatively with other development in reducing this visual separation and diminishing the sense of an absence of activity. The essential feature of gaps is the relative absence of development not their landscape quality.
325. Some gaps between settlements are of strategic importance. Accordingly, strategic gaps are planning policy designations which are applied to areas between certain settlements which should be kept apart in order to maintain the strategic settlement pattern of the County. In general, these areas are the gaps between the main settlements and the main settlements and adjoining settlements. The concept of strategic gaps has been important to West Sussex for many years and is well-understood within the county. The essential feature of them is the relative absence of development rather than their landscape quality.
326. Policy CH3 lists the gaps which are of strategic importance. Some of the Strategic Gaps include existing villages and small towns within them which should be kept apart, for example, Southbourne, Nutbourne, Chidham, Bosham, and Fishbourne within the Emsworth to Chichester Gap and Copthorne and Crawley Down in the Crawley to East Grinstead Gap. There is a need to protect the separate identity of the settlements within gaps as well as the identity of the settlements which they lie between.
327. Local plan reviews must consider how the character, separate identity and separation of all settlements will be maintained, and where possible, enhanced, for example, through the designation of local gaps. They must also consider the function of, and justification for, the designation of the strategic gaps when they define their boundaries which should follow physical features on the ground, taking into account the need to accommodate the

development requirements of this Plan and local plans. Strategic gaps should not necessarily include all the land between the settlements; only land which is necessary to secure the objectives of strategic gaps on a long-term basis should be included within them. Continuity with strategic and local gaps designated in adjoining districts and counties must be maintained. This includes the Emsworth Strategic Gap, identified in the Hampshire County Structure Plan 1996-2011 (Review), predominantly between Havant and Emsworth but which extends into West Sussex to Westbourne (in Chichester District).

328. Once a gap has been defined, development within it which would undermine or erode the fundamental purpose and integrity of the gap should not be allowed except in exceptional circumstances (see paragraph 329). Individual developments which do not undermine the fundamental purpose of strategic and other gaps may be acceptable within them, such as agricultural or informal recreational use, such as playing fields. However, regard must be had to the cumulative effects of such development in reducing visual separation and diminishing the sense of an absence of activity.
329. Once the boundary of a strategic gap has been defined taking into account the development requirements of this Plan and local plans, the siting of major development within a strategic gap is unlikely to be consistent with the aims of designation. A lack of alternative sites and the fact that the need cannot be met in any other way could justify an exception.
330. In considering land allocations and proposals for new development, the district planning authorities should consider ways in which to maintain and enhance the predominantly open and undeveloped character of all gaps and the land between all settlements: for example, by allocating land for uses such as woodland, which would have an environmental benefit, or informal recreation, which would have a social benefit. They should also look at ways of improving the landscape and amenity of strategic gaps to enhance their value as open countryside and improve the environment in particular local habitat especially where this may have been lost or harmed due to other nearby development.

District planning authorities should:

- *identify settlements which are at risk of actual or perceived coalescence and identify how the character, separate identity and separation of those settlements will be maintained and, where possible, enhanced for example, through the designation of local gaps;*
- *review the boundaries of the strategic gaps identified in Policy CH3 taking into account the development requirements of this Plan and local plans and the need to secure the objectives of the strategic gaps on a long-term basis; and*
- *ensure a consistent and co-ordinated approach to the treatment of land across administrative boundaries taking into account any gaps identified in the development plan of adjoining authorities.*

Conservation areas and historic towns and villages

Policy CH4

(a) Development should not be permitted unless conservation areas will be preserved and, where possible, enhanced. Development should not be permitted unless the character of the historic towns and villages of the County will be protected and, where possible, enhanced and provided that the overall perception of each historic town or village as an entity, including Arundel and Chichester which are of national importance, will be retained.

(b) Local plans will include policies to ensure that:

- (1) the character and appearance of conservation areas is preserved and, where possible, enhanced; and**
- (2) the setting, character, fabric (including open space), public views in and out, and general ambience of historic towns and villages as a whole are protected and, where possible, enhanced.**

331. Some areas or groups of buildings make a significant contribution to the character of the County. Many are designated as conservation areas recognising their special architectural or

Landbank: A stock of land intended for a particular purpose. In minerals planning, a stock of planning permissions for the winning and working of minerals.

Landfill: The disposal of waste material by tipping into voids (holes in the ground): may be used to landscape or reclaim excavated or despoiled land.

Listed building: A building officially listed as being of special architectural or historic interest as defined in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Local gap: Areas of largely open land between smaller settlements, listed in local plans, which help to maintain their separate identity and prevent their coalescence (see also Strategic gap)

Local Nature Reserve (LNR): A statutory designation of a site of local nature conservation significance, declared by local planning authorities under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949. Other non-statutory local nature reserves are established and managed by a variety of public or private bodies (e.g. county wildlife trusts, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds).

Local plan: A detailed district or borough-wide land-use plan, prepared and adopted by a district planning authority, which is part of the statutory development plan. Consists of a written statement which sets out the district planning authority's development control policies and proposals for land use and transport over a period of about 10 years and an Ordnance Survey-based proposals map. Required to conform generally with the Structure Plan. Under the new planning system, local plans will be replaced by local development frameworks which are portfolios comprising development plan documents and, if required, supplementary planning documents. The use of the term 'local plan' in this document includes the new development plan documents that will be prepared to replace adopted local plans.

Local planning authority: In West Sussex, the County Council and the District and Borough Councils are the local planning authority. See entry for District planning authority.

Local Transport Plan: A five-year plan, which is drawn up by the Transport Authority in association with the local authorities and subject to widespread consultation. It includes future investment plans and proposed packages of measures to meet local transport needs.

Low-cost housing: Housing for sale or rent on the open market at the lower end in terms of price.

Minerals Planning Authority: The local planning authority responsible for planning control over mineral working and other minerals-related development (the County Council in West Sussex).

Minerals Planning Guidance (MPG): Guidance issued by the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions relating to minerals planning.

Nature conservation: The conservation of the abundance and diversity of habitats, species and geological/geomorphological features

National Park: Areas designated by the Countryside Agency, subject to confirmation by the Secretary of State, under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The statutory purposes of designation are to conserve and enhance their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, and to promote opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities. In 1999, the Government signalled its intention to establish a National Park within the general area of the Sussex Downs and East Hampshire AONB.

National Nature Reserve (NNR): A site of national nature conservation importance, managed by English Nature and established under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Net site density: Based on the net developable area, that is, only those areas which will be developed for housing and directly associated uses. Includes access roads, private open space, car parking areas, incidental open space and landscaping, and children's play areas. Excludes major distributor roads, schools, open spaces serving wider areas and significant landscape buffers.

Park and ride: Facilities which seek to reduce urban congestion by encouraging motorists to leave their vehicles at a car park on the edge of towns and proceed into the centre by public transport, usually buses direct from the parking area.

- Restoration:** In minerals and waste planning, the return of land to its former condition using subsoil, topsoil and/or soil making material.
- Safeguarding:** Protecting a resource, such as mineral deposits, or an allocated route, site or area by preventing building or other development. May refer to landfill capacity such as worked-out pits, other man-made voids or natural small depressions which could be used for waste disposal.
- Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM):** A nationally important archaeological site included in the Schedule of Ancient Monuments maintained by the Secretary of State under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.
- Semi-natural habitats:** Areas where plant and animal species are determined primarily by physical characteristics (such as soil type and drainage) and by the interaction between species (such as grazing by deer). Such habitats are generally recognised as being of high nature conservation value.
- Semi-natural woodland:** Woodland which does not originate obviously from planting. Includes sites which are considered 'ancient', secondary woods on ancient sites, and woods which may have developed on former settlements or quarries.
- Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI):** A non-statutory designation covering sites in West Sussex which have a significant wildlife value.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** A site statutorily notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) as being of special nature conservation interest. SSSIs include wildlife habitats, geological features and landforms.
- South East Economic Development Agency (SEEDA):** A Regional Development Agency established by the Government in April 1999 to take the strategic lead in promoting the sustainable economic development of the South East region.
- South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA):** This is the regional chamber for the South East and represents the South East's interests. It took over responsibility for regionally important land-use and transportation matters from SERPLAN (the London and South East Regional Planning Conference) in April 2001.
- South Coast Multi-Modal Study (SoCoMMS):** The Government has commissioned a transport study of a 150-mile arc between Southampton and Ramsgate (East Kent). The study will make recommendations for a long-term strategy to address passenger and freight transport movement needs on the key transport corridors.
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC):** A site of international importance designated under the EU Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (the Habitats Directive).
- Special Protection Area (SPA):** A site identified as an important habitat for rare and vulnerable birds under the EU Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds.
- Strategic Gap:** Area of largely open land between settlements, listed in the Structure Plan, which helps to maintain the separate identity and amenity of major settlements and prevent their coalescence with each other or with very close small settlements. The boundaries are defined in local plans (see also Local Gap).
- Strategic Road Network (SRN):** A road network designated in the West Sussex Structure Plan, comprised of the M23 motorway, the trunk roads, and some other class A roads of more than local importance. These are the main routes which are best able to cater for trips starting or ending outside West Sussex.
- Strategic Locations:** Broad locations for major mixed-use development, including housing, identified within the Structure Plan. The precise locations and boundaries, mix of uses, and phasing of development will be identified in the relevant local plan
- Structure Plan:** Sets out the County Council's general strategy, policies and main proposals for land use and transport over a period of about 15 years. Consists of a statutory written statement (the policies) and key diagram together with non-statutory explanatory memorandum. Under the new planning system, structure plans will no longer be prepared and