

Rye Neighbourhood Plan

REVIEWED Version 2024

Since mid 2019, this Plan has provided statutory development policies for strategic planners, which have proved effective. After an extensive review described in the separate Consultation Document, it is considered that the context and the thrust of the policies remain relevant and applicable today. With the lack of land with development potential within the Rye and given the serious constraints (flood risk and environmental protected land), which are well documented in the Plan, it was decided by Rye Planners to adopt a 'light touch' review. This version results from work between late 2023 and July 2026. In April 2025, the plan went to an Examiner who required further consultations to enable a full "statement of modifications" to be scrutinised. From late Oct 25 to May 26 there have been discussions with the LPA to agree a revised timeline and housing target numbers. In all there have been three public consultations (two Regulation 14 and one Regulation 16) of the reviewed version of the 2019 Rye Neighbourhood Plan¹. This version reflects formal representations received between 15 Oct 2024 and mid 2025, shown in Red. The post Reg 14 (28 May to 9 Jul) modifications are in Blue.

Rye Town Council as the Qualifying Body, considers the modifications outlined below are NOT so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the (Made) Rye Neighbourhood (Development) Plan (Jul 2019), because the opinion of the Qualifying Body is that by its assessment, as indicated in Statement of Modifications, the modifications are in the two lower impact categories: **Minor (non-material) modifications to a neighbourhood plan; Material modifications which do not change the nature of the plan.**

The review process has followed the recommended sequence by Locality²: site allocation re-assessment; consultation; evidence review; policy review and a plan edit. There have been periodic consultations with Rother Planning Officers; five meetings of the review Steering Group; regular discussion at the fortnightly Rye Planning and Townscape meetings; an open day consultation; discussion at three Annual Town Meetings; several articles in *Rye News* and pieces on social media. Details are in the separate Consultation Document.

The Plan retains a map identifying the area to which the Plan relates and should be read with related documents including: a Statement of Modifications and a statement explaining how the proposed neighbourhood development plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. In support of the Plan the Evidence Document, Site Re-Assessment Document, Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment, Consultation Document and Basic Conditions Statement have all been revised.

¹ Reports by the External Examiner in April 2019 and April 2025.

² <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/how-to-implement-monitor-and-review-your-made-neighbourhood-plan/>

Plan Timeline: 2026 to 2031

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CA14	Speeding
CA15	Rail Connectivity
CA16	Rye and Camber Railway
CA17	Strand Water Project
CA18	Community Infrastructure and Services
CA19	Education
CA20	Health

Version	Comments	Date Prepared	By Whom
V1	Initial draft version	Jan 14	ATBK
V2	Second Draft	Feb 15	ATBK
V3	Third Draft	Feb 15	ATBK
V4	Fourth Draft	Mar 15	ATBK
V5	Fifth Draft	Apr 15	ATBK
V6	Sixth Draft	Oct 15	ATBK
V7 (and 7A)	Seventh Draft	End 15 – Early 16	ATBK
V8	Eighth Draft	Mid 17	ATBK and CT
V9	Ninth Draft	Mod 17	CT
V10	Final to accompany Reg 14 NDP	Dec 2017	ATBK and CT
V11	Reg 15 Plan Proposal	From June 2018	ATBK and CT
V Final	Reflects the recommendations of the External Examiner	May 2019	ATBK
V Reviewed	Reflects the review from mid 2023 to July 25: three public consultations and a preliminary examination	May to Nov 25	ATBK/JE/RF/MP
V Reviewed 31 Jul 25	Reg 16 consultation Discussions about timeline and numbers. Fresh Reg 14 consultation	Nov 25 to Jul 26	ATBK

Rye Neighbourhood Plan – Summary

Rye is an ancient town of national historic importance and high architectural value. It is positioned on and around a rocky sandstone outcrop at the eastern end of Sussex close to the Kent border. Many in the community describe Rye as “rising like a jewel” from the Romney Marsh and backed by the High Weald Natural Landscape³.

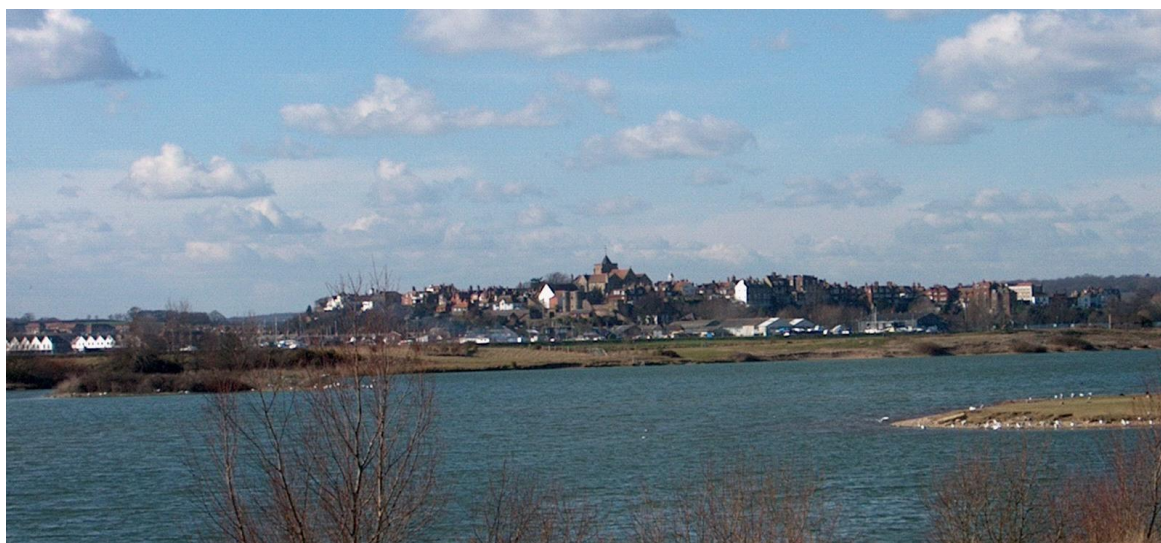


Figure 1 Rye

From 2012, Rye Town Council has led both the making and the review of the Rye Neighbourhood Plan, working with an appointed Steering Group, comprising a mix of councillors and selected citizens. The Plan reflects wide and intensive consultation with those who live, work, or study in Rye and with adjacent Parishes. As made, the Rye Neighbourhood Plan sits alongside the revised Rother District Local Plan. Together they form the future development plans for Rye⁴.

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to balance the need for coherent growth and development to improve economic and social well-being, with Rye’s unique maritime historic character and role as a market town, a centre for tourism, leisure and culture; its enterprise and its commercial and fishing port. Planning must achieve ‘**a thriving town for the 21st Century**’ with measures to handle climate change and all types of flood risk, protection for surrounding and protected biodiversity and greenery.

³ <https://highweald.org>

⁴ Section 38 (6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (formerly S54A of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990).

The Plan does this through policies that seek to achieve the following:

Housing (policies H1-H8):

- Allocate sites to accommodate at least 325 new dwellings to 2031.
- Support well-designed small-scale development on windfall sites.
- Encourage small (1-2 bedroom) homes (affordable) for younger people and homes into which older people can downsize.

Quality Design (policy D1):

- Support imaginative, high-quality design to include “secure by design”.
- Protect the unique character of Rye, by keeping a sense of place and avoiding adverse impact of the adjacent High Weald Natural Landscape.
- Use the Rye Character Assessment to inform all new development.

Reduce Flood Risk (policy F1):

- Use opportunities provided by new development to reduce the causes of flooding, such as the management of water courses, ditches and sewers, taking into account future climate change scenarios.
- Apply the **sequential test** to all development sites to explore ways of moving development away from areas at highest risk of flooding to any alternative lower risk sites.
- Where development is necessary in areas of flood risk, the **exception test** has been applied to assess whether there are wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk and whether the development can be designed to be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

Enterprise, Employment and Business (policies B1-B3):

- Encourage development in three zones: the core business area of the Town Centre; in small sites around the Citadel; and in the maritime/fishing industry, considering the potential at Rye Harbour, which is closely linked to the Town.
- Support Rye as a visitor destination.
- Deliver Total Potential Employment Growth of 3000 sq m of floorspace.

Traffic Management (policies T1):

- Encourage more walking, wheeling and cycling.
- Encourage better connectivity and the use of public transport.
- Tackle traffic flow and consider parking issues.

- Encourage more Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs).

Infrastructure (policy I1):

- Protect and enhance valued community facilities and services.

Environment: Natural and Historic (policies E1-E3)

- Protect strategic gaps and green spaces around Rye.
- Consider enhancing green infrastructure and other protected habitats.
- Demand bio-diversity net gain for all developments.
- Require new development in historic areas to have regard to the characteristics documented in the Rye Conservation Area Appraisal.
- Support renewable and low carbon energy.

Community Aspirations:

The Plan records all those related community aspirations raised during the consultation process which fall outside of the planning system but nevertheless are important to the community and will be pursued with partners through individual projects as funding allows. These include Heritage; Enterprise; Town Promotion and Tourism; Green Tourism; Traffic and Parking; Rail Connectivity; Strand Water Project; Community Infrastructure and Services; Education; and Health.

Section 1 – Introduction

How is the Plan Set Out?

Section 1 is the introduction, which sets out why the Town Council decided to prepare a neighbourhood plan, its legal and policy context and the procedure to be followed.

Section 2 sets out the vision and objectives. It provides the guiding principles for making the plan. These were derived directly from community feedback received during numerous engagement events.

Section 3 summarises the characteristics of Rye The full version is in a supporting document 'Evidence Background Paper'.

Section 4 sets out the planning policies for Rye and their supporting text. It is these policies that will become part of the statutory Development Plan for Rye once the reviewed Neighbourhood Plan is re-made.

Planning policies are in blue boxes.

Section 5 covers community aspirations. These are aspirations relating to matters for which work with partners is required, and therefore cannot be influenced by planning policies alone. Whilst Rye Town Council is committed to achieving these aspirations, it has no funding to do so and therefore are matters outside of its authority. Design and implementation is dependent on the agreement of partners and secured funding.

Community aspirations are in green boxes.

Section 6 sets out how the Plan will be delivered and how this delivery and the impacts of the Plan will be monitored. This includes a list of local priorities for funding.

Appendix A acknowledges the work of all those who have been involved in the preparation and review of this Plan.

Appendix B is a Policies Map which shows the major sites affected by planning policies in the Plan.

Supporting Documents:⁵ The following support documents are retained.

- *RNP Support 1: Evidence and Background (reviewed March 2024)*
- *RNP Support 2: Rye Site Assessments (reviewed and amended up to July 2025)*
- *RNP Support 3: Consultation Statement (reviewed and amended July 26)*
- *RNP Support 4: Strategic Environmental Assessment (Summary – 4A and Assessments 4B); supporting sequential and exception flood risk assessments (4C conforms to NPPF 2024)*
- *RNP Support 5: Basic Conditions Statement (July 26)*

Why do we need this plan?

- 1.1 Rye Town Council agreed to make a Neighbourhood Plan in early 2013. The Council wanted the people of Rye to have a say in all aspects of the future of the town but most importantly it wanted local people to decide where new housing and other development should go, rather than leaving this decision to others. After 5 years as made, the Plan has been reviewed and revised from 2024.
- 1.2 The Rye Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision for the area that reflects the thoughts and feelings of local people with a real interest in their community. There are objectives on key themes such as traffic and moving around, housing, design, flood risks, employment, the environment, green spaces and community facilities. It builds on the knowledge and views of many groups in the town and sets out what the Town Council and its partners will focus on.
- 1.3 In this review we have set out to reflect both current and emerging national planning policy and guidance in the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), as well as the present and emerging (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan and its related Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA 2024). In the review, Rye has reflected the Mar 2026⁶ revised guidance for “basic conditions” for neighbourhood planning. Importantly, the plan is considered to conform to the policies of revised NPPF which presumes in favour of sustainable development with its three governing factors: socio, economic and environmental. This can be defined in a brief form as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

⁵ All supporting documents are part of the audit trail of the Neighbourhood Plan process; are dated as at the time of the External Examination and therefore do not reflect the Examiner’s recommendations.

⁶ Revised Basic Conditions March 2026

- 1.4 The Town Council remains committed to developing and strengthening the contacts and groups that have evolved as a result of the Neighbourhood Planning process. By working together to implement the Plan, Rye can only be a better place to live, work and enjoy.

What does the plan do?

- 1.5 The Rye Neighbourhood Plan continues to provide an opportunity for the residents of the town to look forward and shape the way the town will develop: to say how we want the layout of the town to evolve, in terms of housing, business premises, schools, community, support facilities, such as medical services, leisure and tourism facilities as well as improved streets and transport. Importantly, the Plan also says how we want both our built environment and the surrounding natural environment to be conserved, enhanced and responds to Climate Change, as new development takes place.
- 1.6 This does not mean that everything that happens in Rye in future will be exactly what the community wants. The national and local context for planning is continually changing and will influence what development happens where. However, a Neighbourhood Plan is an opportunity for a community to set out its vision for the area and to increase its influence on how it accommodates change in the future.

Who drafted this plan?

- 1.7 This Plan was prepared and reviewed by Rye Town Council as the 'qualifying body' in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. The development and review of the Plan has been overseen by a Steering Group selected by Rye Town Council. The individuals were drawn from Rye Town Council and local citizen volunteers.
- 1.8 Whilst some funds have been made available by the Town Council, additional funding has been provided by Planning Aid and RTPi by grant. From 2026, such grants have ceased. It should be underscored that the Plan would not have been possible without the efforts of local volunteers. Once the initial draft was developed we did benefit from scrutiny by consultants: from AECOM via Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS).
- 1.9 Individuals and organisations that have assisted in the production of this plan are acknowledged in the Appendices.

What is the Process?

- 1.10 The process of creating this Plan involved a series of stages. First, there was scoping by the Steering Group, then followed community engagement events, workshops and conversations to understand the issues and to collect ideas on how they should be addressed. All these are documented in the Consultation Statement in RNP Support 3. This process was then repeated for the review.
- 1.11 As the issues were identified, the Steering Group formed some sub-groups to focus on specific themes. Once these had been established, the group confirmed the vision, planning principles and the objectives. A thorough literature review was carried out to ensure that all earlier work back to the 1990s was captured. This guided the selection of many early options. Throughout, the Steering Group considered sustainability and the impact on the environment.
- 1.12 In 2019, the process of preparing the Rye Neighbourhood Plan is set out in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 comprising:
 - a. Undertaking background research and evidence baseline work and informal public and stakeholder consultation (2013-2017);
 - b. Publishing a Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan and the draft Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for a statutory six-week public consultation period;
 - c. Revising the draft Neighbourhood Plan and SEA where appropriate in line with consultee responses;
 - d. Submission of the Neighbourhood Plan and SEA to Rother District Council for a legal check;
 - e. Publication of the Neighbourhood Plan for a further 6 weeks by Rother District Council;
 - f. Examination by an External Examiner appointed by Rother District Council in consultation with Rye Town Council (see section below).
- 1.13 The Examiner of the made 2019 plan considered whether the Neighbourhood Plan met the 'Basic Conditions', set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to neighbourhood development plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. They are:

- a. “To have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan;
- b. The making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- c. The making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan and the emerging plan for the area of the authority;
- d. The making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with any residual EU obligations;
- e. Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the plan⁷”.

1.14 The Examiner recommended that the 2019 Neighbourhood Plan was modified in accordance with his recommendations, which it was. It then went forward to local Referendum, which it passed. The process is all documented on the Rye Town Council and Rother District Council websites.⁸

1.15 From mid 2023, after 5 years as made, the Plan has been reviewed by the reconvened Steering Group comprising councillors and citizens with relevant experience. The adopted policies of the Rye Neighbourhood Plan were reviewed to assess whether they were still fit for purpose; compliant with the emerging changes of the 2024 NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the emerging Draft Regulation 18 Rother Local Plan. The review process followed the recommended sequence by Locality⁹: site allocation reassessment; consultation; evidence review; policy review and finally a plan edit. After consultation with Rother Planning Officers, five meetings of the Steering Group, a full site reassessment, an open day consultation, discussion at two Annual Town Meetings, several articles in *Rye News* and pieces on social media, this revised text reflects the conclusion that the Plan would benefit from a “light touch” review. In summary, the overall review and compliance-check concluded that the policies required only minor updating.

⁷ Regulation 32 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) prescribes the following basic condition for the purpose of paragraph 8(2)(g) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act: “The making of the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European Site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European Offshore Marine Site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats Regulations 2007) either alone or in combination with other plans or projects”.

⁸ <https://www.rother.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/made-neighbourhood-plans/>

⁹ <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/how-to-implement-monitor-and-review-your-made-neighbourhood-plan/>

- 1.16 Concurrent with the review, Rother District Council has been updating its Local Plan,¹⁰ which is emerging as a Reg 18 draft Local Plan and after the General Election in 2024, Labour has drafted NPPF 2024¹¹. While the timing of the revision of higher policy has not been ideal, any neighbourhood plan must be prepared in the context of national and local legislation and policies. The Steering Group has endeavoured not only to reflect current policies but also the emerging higher level policies.
- 1.17 The Rother District Council emerging draft Local Plan updates the Core Strategy (2014) and the 2019 Rother DC Development and Site Allocation (DaSA). The Plan has been out for two rounds of public consultation, which has enabled the Rye NP review to reference the emerging and proposed Rother policies. Part of the review has been to provide input to the 2024 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), which considers the potential for development in and around Rye. The Rye input was in the form of a site re-assessment of July 2025.
- 1.18 Rye has noted the relevant studies linked to the Rother Local Plan:
- Housing and Employment Needs Assessment (HENA) (with Hastings BC).
 - Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy – jointly with Hastings BC.
 - Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation Needs Assessment – jointly with other East Sussex Local Planning Authorities.
 - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).
 - Retail, Leisure and Town Centre Uses Study.
 - Climate Change Study.
 - Transport Assessment, including West Bexhill study.
 - Local Wildlife Site Review.
 - Habitats Regulation Screening. For Rye, of particular relevance are the following:
- Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Ramsar site
- Dungeness Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Rye Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Rye Harbour Local Nature Reserve

¹⁰ <https://www.rother.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/emerging-local-plan/local-plan-review/>

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (from 2022 now the High Weald National Landscape)

Local Geological Site at Camber Dunes

Southern Water Clean Rivers and Seas Plan

National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems

DEFRA's Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan

Rother studies: the first two studies might affect this plan, once their outcomes are available.

- Rother Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (To be updated 2026)
- Rother Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) (Modelling work by Aecom – to come 2026)
- Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) 2024
- Windfall Assessment/Methodology
- Settlement Review Study
- Density Study
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Appraisal
- Equalities Impact Assessment

The Rye work has sought to anticipate Future Studies such as the:

- Full Viability Assessment of the Local Plan
- (Community) Infrastructure Levy Review
- Green Infrastructure Study
- Visitor accommodation Study
- Blue and Green Infrastructure Study

What area does this plan cover?

- 1.19 The designated area covered by this plan remains the Parish of Rye, as shown in red in Figure 2 below. In the initial phase there was consultation with Rother District Council to determine the planning relationship between Rye and adjacent parishes. As part of the approval to plan, it was agreed that there would be a protocol to cover this, which has been followed.¹²
- 1.20 The settlement boundary is the dividing line or boundary between areas of built/urban development (the settlement) and non-urban or rural development – the countryside. A settlement is where there is usually a variety of

¹² <http://www.rother.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=27312&p=0>

residential, commercial, employment uses and where services are normally provided and expected, the proportions of each varying depending on the type of settlement. The existing boundaries are established in the 2006 Rother DC Local Plan¹³. In 2019, as part of the policy to conserve the character of Rye, the Plan retains the settlement boundary as an important differentiation between areas where any form of new development would be acceptable and where they would not. To enable the Plan in 2019 there were locations as shown on the plan (Figure 2) where variance was proposed and agreed. The environmental impacts of these adjustments have been considered and are not considered detrimental. This boundary was reviewed in 2023 and 2024 as part of the reassessment of constraints and sites and it was decided, because of the flood risk and biodiversity constraints, apart from two very small changes, to retain it. The detail can be found at 4.81 and in the revised and updated Rye Site (Re) Assessment Paper. The boundary changes have regard for the:

- a. Existing pattern, form and function of settlements, including of closely 'linked' settlements and important 'gaps' of countryside between them;
- b. Character and settings of Rye;
- c. Sensitivity to further development both within the main built-up confines and in more rural fringes;
- d. The amount of land needed to fulfil development needs and requirements;
- e. Availability of local infrastructure and services;
- f. Accessibility to facilities and services, and avoiding scattered and ribbon development;
- g. Environmental considerations, including the need to conserve designated areas of national (High Weald Natural Landscape)¹⁴ and local landscape, archaeological, geological, ecological or historical importance;
- h. Flood risk.

¹³ Rother DC Local Plan - <http://www.rother.gov.uk/localplan2006>

¹⁴ <https://highweald.org>

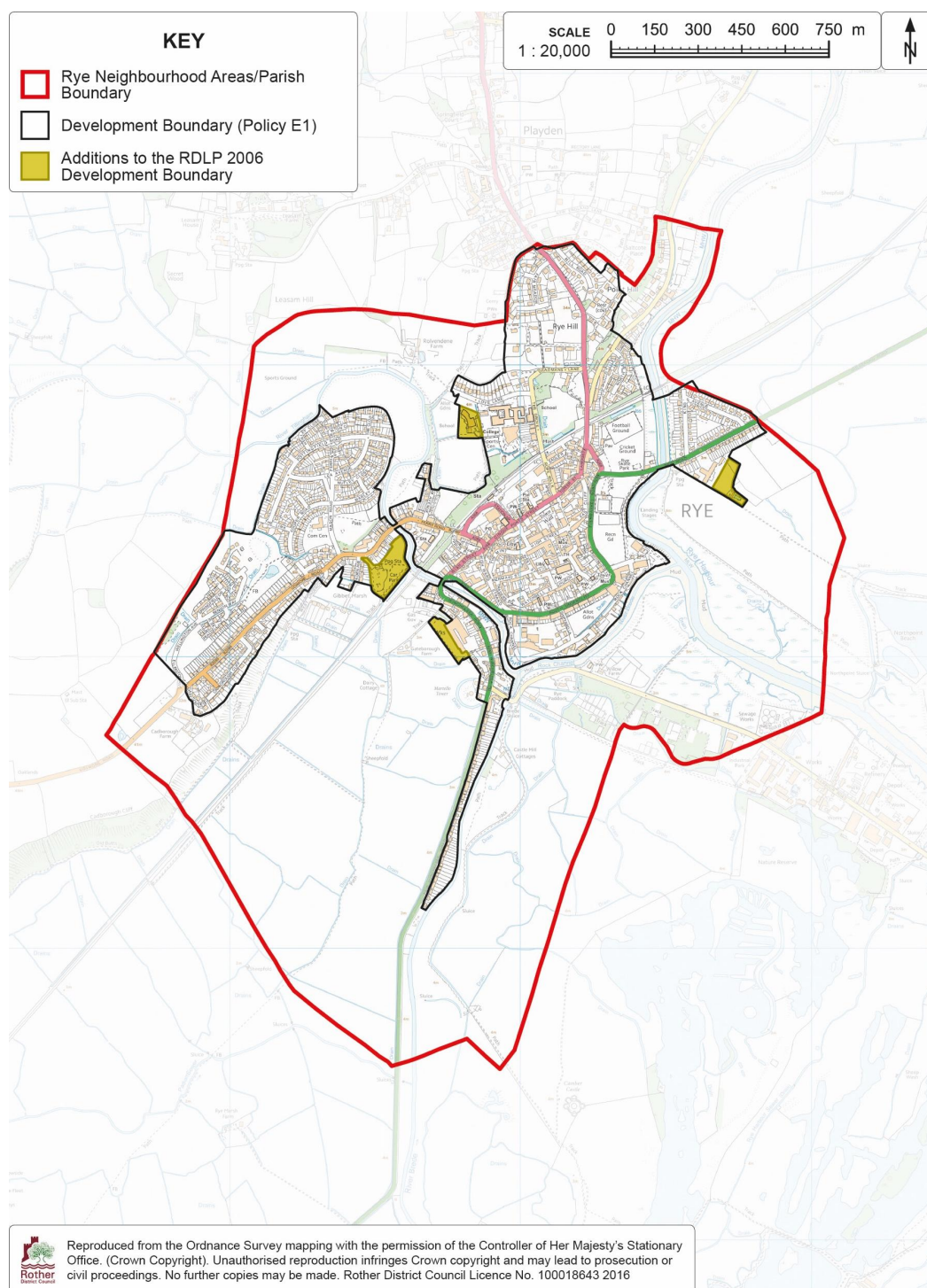


Figure 2 – Rye Parish (Marked in Red contiguous), showing the Development Boundary (in Black) and the sites where boundary changes have been made in the Plan.

Section 2 - The Vision and Objectives

Background

- 2.1 Throughout the plan making and review processes there has been continual consultation with and involvement by people across Rye. From the early stages in 2013, detailed work on the themes was delegated to working groups, which have reported back to the Steering Group. There have been public events and numerous face to face conversations. A website was launched in mid 2013, supported by Twitter and Facebook. From 2023 to 2026 the dialogue was restarted and has been recorded in the updated Consultation Document and review summary.
- 2.2 The overwhelming view from local people is that Rye's strengths lie in its character as an historic market town, a tourist destination with unique historic character and a working port, located on the eastern boundary of East Sussex¹⁵ and bordered by the High Weald National Landscape and Romney Marsh. Residents and visitors alike value the unique heritage and natural assets of the Parish. Indeed, both contribute to the reasons for people living in Rye and wanting to visit it. Both the heritage and environment provide opportunities for social interaction and importance for individual health and mental wellbeing. People want to ensure that Rye retains its unique character as:
- a. A market town. Rye serves a large area of rural villages covering the coastal area from East of Hastings to Romney Marsh and North to the eastern boundary villages of East Sussex. Rye attracts a significant number of visitors (about 1 million¹⁶) throughout the year.
 - b. A town with a striking and much valued visual appearance in the landscape. Its historic centre sits on a sandstone outcrop rising sharply above the low-lying surrounding salt marshes and tidal waters.
 - c. A working fishing port for one of the surviving fishing fleets on the South Coast. Rye Harbour is located to the immediate south-east of the town and has a commercial quay for ships to 84 metres. The port of Rye comprises the three-river system (Rother, Brede and Tillingham) from their sluices, holding water levels above the tidal stretches, down to the sea.
- 2.3 The emerging draft Regulation 18 Rother Local Plan sets a vision and strategic objectives as they apply to Rye. As both chime with the aspirations of Rye Town Council, these have been linked to the Rother District Council's two overall Priorities:

¹⁵ Rye – Historic Character Assessment Report September 2009 by R. Harris. Part of the Sussex Extensive Urban Survey (EUS)

¹⁶ Figures estimated by Rye Town Council from the number of visitors to attractions across the Town.

a. Green to the Core; The emerging Rother Local Plan has an ‘Overall Priority’ to be Green to the Core. This includes ensuring that planning decisions mitigate and adapt to the Climate Emergency to fully support the transition to a net zero and resilient future in a changing climate. Local planning authorities have a legal duty to ensure that planning policy contributes to the mitigation of, and adaption to, climate change. The Country’s built environment is constantly changing and “urban creep” – home extensions, conservatories, and paving over gardens for parking – can all add to the amount of water going into sewers and drains. Green spaces that absorb water are covered over with hard surfaces that will not. Southern Water suggest that “urban creep” results in a larger increase in predicted flooding than new housing, because it adds more rainwater to systems. Local plans must set out the district’s baseline carbon dioxide emissions and the actions needed to reduce emissions over time. In addition, the Plan takes account of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria as below.

- Environmental criteria include aspects such as the energy impact of an organisation and activities relating to tackling carbon emissions and addressing climate change. All development should demonstrate biodiversity net gain.

- Social criteria include relationships with labour, aspects around inclusion and diversity, and also the opportunities the company provides to the public through projects or products.

- Governance criteria can include processes and controls to understand and report on specific impacts or opportunities, such as: opportunities to support diverse communities; tackling of inequalities in health and wellbeing; enabling provision of suitable homes and living spaces; improvements to local services as part of developer contributions¹⁷; biodiversity enhancements partly through site design or off-site contributions; generation of new partnerships to shape places for the future; investment in and strengthening of the local workforce through opportunities in construction.

b. Live well Locally¹⁸. The ‘Live Well Locally’ concept as an overall priority of the Local Plan underscores Rother’s dedication to cultivating healthy,¹⁹ sustainable, and inclusive communities that support residents across the age spectrum. Live Well Locally aims to create an environment where individuals

¹⁷ Developers’ contributions include Community Infrastructure Levy which provides infrastructure in the Infrastructure Development Plan. <https://rdcpublic.blob.core.windows.net/website-uploads/2026/02/2026-01-Rother-IDP-Part-A-1.pdf>

¹⁸ Multiple References: CMO’s Report 2023: Health in an Ageing Society; ESCC Annual Health Report 2022 – 23; CMO’s Annual Report on Health in Coastal Communities 2021; TCPA Reuniting Health with Planning in promoting healthy communities; RTPI Mental Health and Town Planning; Ageing Better – State of Ageing 2023

¹⁹ Health Effects of Climate Change (HECC) in the UK 2023

of all ages can live, work, and play with dignity and independence. Rother seeks to foster a dynamic and vibrant community that values diversity and inter-generational connections.

Emerging Draft (Regular 18) Rother Local Plan : Adopted Vision for Rye

- ❖ The important historical character of Rye will be preserved and enhanced, maintaining a strong retail and services core with access to sustainable green tourism and leisure opportunities. Areas at risk from flooding and sensitive environmental areas will be protected from inappropriate development and the high-quality biodiversity and landscape designations will be sensitively managed and enhanced, including community access, through biodiversity net gains from development.
- ❖ The key employment areas within Rye Harbour will be retained, along with other commercial areas across the town. This includes maintaining the viability of the Port of Rye as a working harbour, while having regard to protecting the integrity of internationally designated habitats. Key tourism areas such as Camber will be promoted through improved accessibility to reduce the dependency on the car, including better utilisation of existing cycle and pedestrian routes.
- ❖ The eastern cluster of settlements will be better connected by sustainable transport infrastructure, with Rye acting as a key transport hub, and local economies will continue to grow, respecting the historic development pattern of rural communities over time. The strengthened connections to Rye as a sustainable market town, will allow for sensitive development in adjoining villages.

Emerging Draft (Regular 18) Rother Local Plan Strategic Objectives (Extracted as they apply to Rye and are reflected in the adopted Rye policies)

- Deliver net zero carbon ambitions through effective and supportive planning policies.
- Maximise opportunities for nature recovery and biodiversity net gain; preserve the historic landscape character of the High Weald National Landscape and protected habitat areas around Rye; ensure sensitive development that allows communities to thrive.
- Promote high quality design and protect and enhance Rother's built and natural heritage, while providing opportunities for recreation and tourism.
- Facilitate the delivery of housing to meet the needs of the community, ensuring a variety of high-quality sustainable, zero carbon ready dwellings that meet the needs of Rother's wider population.
- Create economic prosperity, meeting the employment needs of the wider population, improving the quality and variety of jobs, and being flexible to the changing needs of the economy.
- Focus growth in sustainable locations across Rye in places with access to infrastructure and community facilities.
- Enhance the sustainability and connectivity of Rye through sustainable transport measures and improved internet network coverage.
- Support and achieve safe, healthy, vibrant and mixed communities where the physical and mental health of residents is a high priority. Create high standards of inclusivity and access to community facilities.
- Balance strategic planning with the opportunities for local delivery through neighbourhood planning.

2.4 Taking these principles and applying them to all that we have heard from the people of Rye, particularly about current issues, has enabled us to retain a Vision of Rye to 2040 and Objectives to achieve that Vision.

Rye Neighbourhood Plan Vision

The vision for the Rye Neighbourhood Plan is encapsulated by the line, **‘a thriving town for the 21st Century’** within a high quality landscape.

Strategic Objective

To plan a coherent and sustainable development of Rye with the aim of improving the economic and social well-being of the community and to maintain and enable healthy lifestyles; considering in particular Climate Change and its effect on vulnerability to flooding, its role as a market town, a centre for tourism, leisure and culture; its enterprise and its commercial and fishing port, all in the context of its historic maritime character surrounded by important biodiversity designations, which should all be conserved.

Detailed Objectives

Objective 1: Rye must continue to feel ‘compact’. We have a population in excess of 4,500 and up to one million visitors each year. We know there will be growth, but we want to enable this without allowing the town to “sprawl” into the surrounding green spaces. At the heart of this feeling of compactness is “walkability”.²⁰ The majority of people living in Rye are within about 15 minutes’ walk of the High Street. We want to keep it this way. Towns that move their residential and shopping areas to the perimeter quickly lose their soul, becoming uninviting and unattractive.

Objective 2: Rye must continue to act as a centre for the surrounding area. As with any market town, Rye supports many people (estimated up to 20,000²¹) from the surrounding villages (Rye and its village cluster). In turn, these people make a

²⁰ Barton and Grant Health Map – achieving healthy outcomes : walking, cycling and wheeling

²¹ http://www.rother.gov.uk/media/pdf/i/q/Rye_and_Rye_Harbour_Study.pdf

significant contribution to the town's economy. We need to ensure that Rye continues to provide an appropriate range of employment, shopping, and community services and facilities, including education. We also need to ensure that people can access the town easily – this means sufficient parking, good public transport and a safe environment, with easy walking, cycling and wheeling²² options.

Objective 3: Rye must retain its markets, festivals and events. Central to Rye's character and identity there are many events that must be maintained and helped to flourish. There are two weekly markets: general and farmers'. There are seasonal festivals such as the Sea/Maritime, Arts, Jazz, Christmas, Scallop, Wild Boar and Bonfire events. Others such as the medieval and some sporting events are not currently organised but there is talk of resurrecting them. All these strengthen the town's community spirit, providing a focus for people from the surrounding area and "reasons to visit" for the numerous visitors, making Rye a destination town for many. However, they all attract high volumes of visitors and related traffic resulting in the need to encourage, with partners, sustainable travel. An efficient rail link to London via Ashford is particularly important.

Objective 4: Rye must continue to have a meaningful relationship with the surrounding countryside (The High Weald National Landscape and Romney Marsh). In the same way that most residents live within about 15 minutes' of the Town Centre, they also are within 15 minutes' walk of open countryside. We need to retain the green spaces that bring the countryside into our town and allow the town to 'breathe'. We need to ensure that the size, form and location of new buildings do not cut us off from the glorious views from inside the Town and the stunning look of Rye rising from the Marsh from surrounding areas. The preservation of sight lines is important to most. In making this plan, we must do everything to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, biodiversity, historic built and cultural heritage of the area. Maintain and improve access to nature and to play and recreation increasing physical activity and providing health and wellbeing benefits such as positive mental health. All this is to maintain and improve social cohesion and reduce social isolation and loneliness; to maintain and improve food security through access to healthy food, and growing spaces; with development to aid lifetime with adaptable homes that meet the needs of the aging population; all to maximise opportunities for healthy design principles and active travel, resulting in healthy lifestyles and good mental health.

Objective 5: Rother District Council has declared a climate emergency and this is the defining issue of our times. Local planning authorities have a legal duty to ensure that planning policy contributes to the mitigation of, and adaption to, climate change. With Rye at the junction of three rivers, affected by tidal, ground and spring water and surface flood risk, it is directly affected by climate change and sea level rise. Sea levels are forecast to rise by up to 1m within 100 years. We might expect overtopping of the flood defences within 50 years in extreme conditions aggravated

²² Wheeling refers to people using wheelchairs and mobility scooters – ESx Local Transport Plan 4 2024-2050

by onshore wind and tidal surge. Related to more frequent extreme weather events is the issue of land instability of the escarpments to the north of Rye and around the central core. Those planning developments should take full account of flood risk and coastal change by careful siting and design; strong integration of sustainable drainage solutions to help minimise and control and storage of surface water runoff, by improving habitat, incorporating green infrastructure, all to help reduce the impacts of climate change on urban environments. In addition to flood risk, the Plan seeks to encourage a greater emphasis on a move to more sustainable transport and locally more Walking, Wheeling and Cycling. Therefore every development proposal should be examined to establish sustainability and how it might:

- (1) Reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions. (Policy D1)
- (2) Maximise the use of sustainable materials. (Policy D1)
- (3) Minimise waste and increase recycling and composting. (Aspiration 18)
- (4) Conserve water resources. (Policy D1)
- (5) Incorporate sustainable infrastructure, including green spaces. (Policies D1 and E1)
- (6) Take full account of flood risk and coastal change, including any land instability, by careful siting and design; integration of sustainable drainage solutions; improve habitat, incorporate green infrastructure. (Policy F1)
- (7) Demonstrate how sustainable travel measures will be delivered both within and link with infrastructure outside of development to reduce climate change impacts.²³²⁴ Encourage and enable more people to walk, wheel and cycle and to use public transport. Encourage more electric vehicles and therefore provide more Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) (Policy T1)
- (8) Consider the environment and create biodiversity net gain. (Policy E1)
- (9) Deliver healthy, safe and inclusive communities (Policy I1)

²³ The policies are in alignment with the recently approved ESx Local Transport Plan 4 2014 to 2050

²⁴ Draft policy LWL3 and 4; LWL7 and 8 of the emerging Rother Local Plan

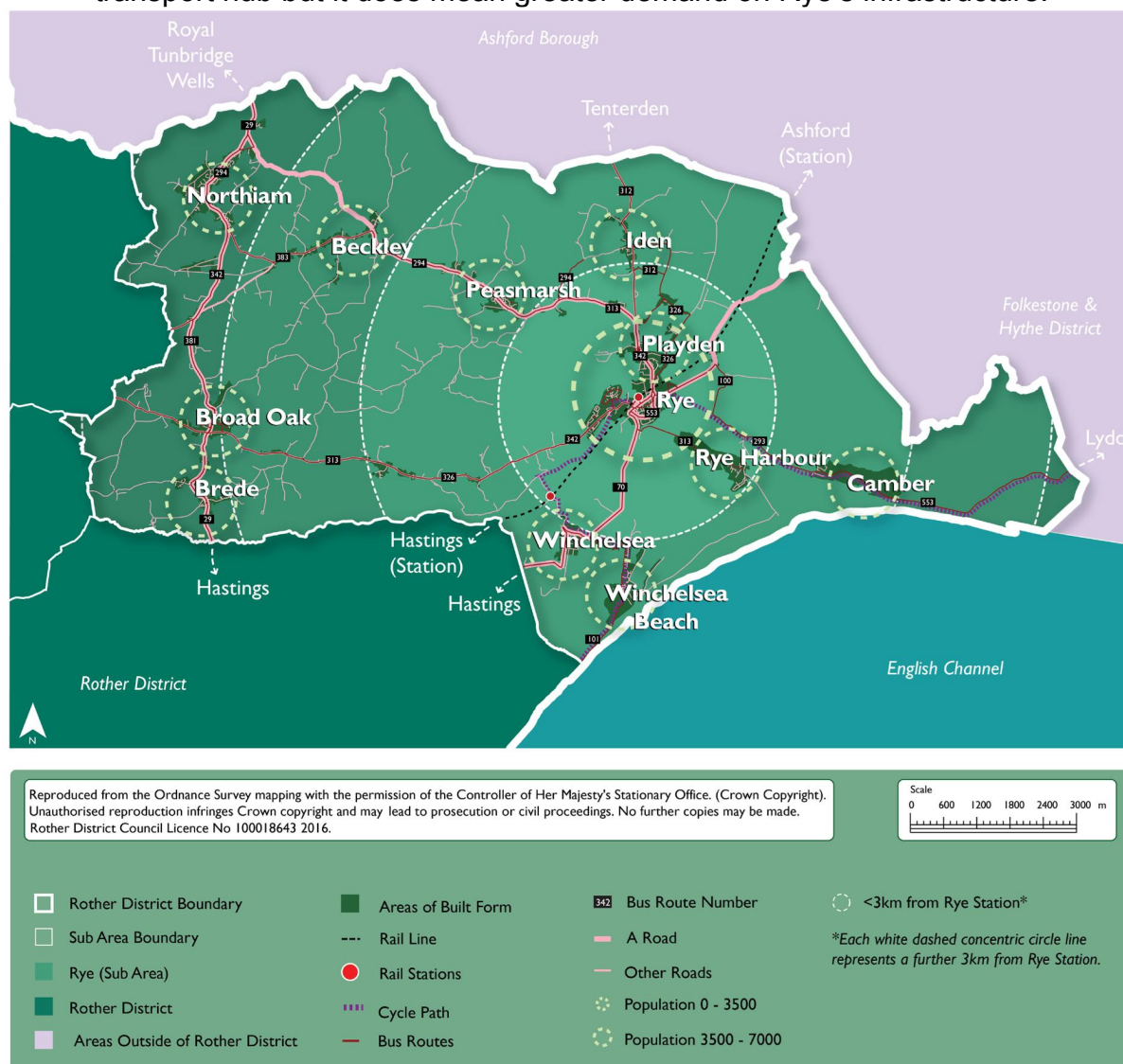
Section 3 – The Character of Rye



Figure 3: Rye from the Southeast

- 3.1 Rye is a historic market town and port in the eastern half of Rother district near the border with the county of Kent. The town is the main service and employment centre for a cluster of villages in eastern Rother. Rye Harbour is a satellite village to Rye and is located to the south-east of the town (outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area). The area surrounding Rye is heavily constrained by landscape and biodiversity designations and land prone to flooding but in recent years there has been some growth to the west of the town. The population of Rye Parish is recorded as being 4,480 in 2021.
- 3.2 Some parts of Rye's built-up areas border on adjacent parishes (Rye Foreign, Playden and Icklesham). Compared to the District as a whole, there is a higher proportion (15.6%) of children up to 15, and adults aged 30-44 (15.3%), but fewer adults aged 45-64 (27.5%) and as many aged 65+ (27.7%) in Rye in 2014-16. Other population data can be found in the East Sussex JSNA Rother District Profile and East Sussex in Figures. Public Health profiles can be found at Fingertips Public Health Profiles: Rother.
- 3.3 Rye is a traditional market town, having lost its cattle market in the early 2000s. It attracts significant number of visitors throughout the year, but in particular the summer months, because of its historic character, its proximity to attractive countryside and the popular beach at Camber Sands, it acts as a 'gateway' from London, the Southeast and Europe for visitors to popular local beaches and countryside.
- 3.4 The settlements within the eastern part of the district depend on Rye for facilities and services. Rye functions as a key transport hub - rail, bus and tracks for wheeling, walking and cycling - for travel within and outside of the district. While some of these settlements link radially to Rye, there is also a network of settlements which form a cluster, see Figure 4 below, with Rye as a key destination. This cluster is supported by existing bus services - routes 100, 101, 312, and 313 - that could be enhanced through the development strategy of the emerging Local Plan. Sensitive and small-scale level of growth

can delivered in the cluster of settlements that connect to Rye as a main transport hub but it does mean greater demand on Rye's infrastructure.



25

Figure 4: Rye and its Eastern Cluster of Villages
Emerging Rother Local Plan 2020 to 2040 (Regulation 18) version April 2024. Bus connectivity is linked here.²⁶

3.5 As a Cinque Port town, the town centre around and including the ancient Citadel, forms the historic core, with many buildings listed in 1951, designated as a Conservation Area in 1969, and reviewed in 2006 (see map of

²⁶ <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roads-transport/public/journeyplan/bus-information-downloads>

Conservation Area in Figure 30). The town centre is of very high architectural value, with a predominantly medieval street layout and building stock, with around 290 listed buildings²⁷. Equally important is the town's visual appearance in the landscape, with the Citadel on a sandstone outcrop rising like an island above the low-lying surrounding salt marshes and tidal waters, against a backdrop of the High Weald Natural Landscape.

- 3.6 In Rye, there are pockets of social and economic deprivation - parts fall into the most deprived 10% in the Country ²⁸- within the town with high levels of child poverty, relatively low levels of income, high unemployment rates and significant barriers to housing and services²⁹.
- 3.7 The local economy of Rye and the surrounding areas is much reliant on the tourism and hospitality industry. Rye enjoys an abundance of quality hotels and guest houses located within the town itself. Approximately 70% of the Guest Houses and Bed and Breakfasts located in Rye have been awarded a 4 star or higher rating, with 25% of these providers achieving the highest possible rating of 5 star GOLD. The main attraction is the historic core of the town (known by some as the Citadel) and the surrounding countryside.
- 3.8 Rye boasts a high cultural offer, including a number of annual festivals, such as the high-profile Rye Arts Festival and the Rye Bay Scallop Festival, a strong arts and literary community, with several art galleries, and the long tradition of the Rye potteries.
- 3.9 The Port of Rye and Rye Harbour Road Industrial Estate are main centres of employment for the town and the surrounding settlements. However, the local economy suffers from high seasonal unemployment relating to the tourism sector and wages are relatively poor compared to county and regional levels.
- 3.10 The countryside surrounding Rye is subject to a number of environmental designations, signifying its landscape character and conservation importance. There are Ancient Woodlands and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas. The low-lying river valleys and surrounding marshland are important to the settlement as they are particularly rich in biodiversity with several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). Natural England has recently designated a Ramsar³⁰ site to the southeast of Rye. The surrounding area to the north and west is on higher ground and is designated as part of the High Weald National

²⁷ Historic Character Assessment Report: Rye Sep 2009 (Sussex Extensive Urban Survey (EUS))

²⁸ ESCC in figures

²⁹ See further information about the Indices of Multiple Deprivation in the Sustainability Appraisal.

³⁰ The Convention on Wetlands, called the Ramsar Convention, is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and use of wetlands and their resources. It is named after a city in Iran.

Landscape (NL). These designations are shown in the maps at Figures 26A and 26B.

- 3.11. Rye contains important archaeological remains and scheduled monuments. It is considered by Historic England that there is a much larger number of sites of archaeological remains (recorded on the Sussex Historic Environment Record (HER)³¹ held by East Sussex County Council), some of which may be of national importance. The government's definition of the historic environment (which may otherwise be thought of as cultural heritage) within the glossary to the NPPF, is very broad, including planted and managed flora as well as all evidence of the past interaction of people and place, including surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged. In addition to designated heritage assets (listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, battlefields and protected wrecks)³² there exists considerable scope for further heritage assets to be identified as 'non designated heritage assets', within the definition set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, the Planning Practice Guidance and the emerging Draft (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan District draft policies require that decision-making aims to sustain the significance of all heritage assets, including non-designated assets, such as the archaeological sites and historic buildings recorded on the County HER 1to3.
- 3.12 Further details of the key characteristics of Rye are in the supporting document 'Evidence Background Paper' (RNP Support 1). This includes a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) study.

³¹ <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/archaeology/her>

³² **Rye Rebuilt** (2009) by David & Barbara Martin with Jane Clubb & Gillian Draper and the **Rye Historic Character Assessment** (2009) by Roland Harris.

https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/1744/rye_eus_report_maps.pdf

Section 4 - The Planning Policies

Housing

- 4.1 The level of housing growth for Rye is derived from an assessment of the Rother District-wide spatial options and as set out in the emerging Draft (Regulation 18) Rother DC Local Plan Policy. In 2016 the Development and Site Allocations document³³ proposed an allocation of 40 dwellings at Rye Harbour. This remains in the latest Rye figures in the emerging Draft (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan as as such, is retained in this plan.
- 4.2 Early work on the Neighbourhood Plan in 2014 considered the role of the town in the district and the scope for development on the sites identified in the 2013 SHLAA. This has now been updated to reflect evidence in the form of Rye Site Reassessment as input to the Rother draft Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) 2024³⁴. In this work there was consideration of the unique landscape and setting of Rye and how development would impact on the setting. In addition to major allocations Windfall sites were also considered in the Rye site assessment. There have been numerous conversations with land-owners, architects and potential developers to assess achievability and viability of development on all the sites considered.
- 4.3 There are considerable constraints on development which have been reflected in planning documents over the last 10 years. Earlier text is copied here for ease of reference. *“Due to its topographical and landscape context and statutory designations, including the Area of Natural Landscape, Rye is heavily constrained and further opportunity for development on the periphery of the town is confined”*. The strategy for Rye and Rye Harbour is the development of key brownfield sites and infill within the built up urban area. Given the environmental constraints surrounding Rye, the uncertainty surrounding the deliverability of existing allocations and limited further opportunities within the existing built-up area, as identified initially in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2013 and later in the HELAA 2024, the process of identifying key sites suitable for development has been challenging”. The two key factors — protected habitats and flood risk – have been carefully considered in the allocations and the significant work on a review of the development boundary. Rye Town Council has resolved that any abandonment of the development boundary would require very strong sustainable arguments for doing so.
- 4.4 As a result of discussions with the LPA in early 26, target numbers in this reviewed plan are taken from the emerging Draft (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan and exceed those of the 2019 plan.

Figures from the draft emerging (Reg 18) Rother Local Plan indicate Rye in the “Greater opportunities for growth” category, with at least 325 dwellings and 3000 sq m of employment space over the plan period.

³³ <https://www.rother.gov.uk/dasa>

³⁴ HELAA <https://rother.oc2.uk/document/180>

Rye NP Allocations	Housing (Dwellings) Numbers
Expected housing allocations in Rye Harbour Identified in the 2019 Rye Neighbourhood Plan and allocated by Rother DC	40 homes
RNP Breakdown of allocations ³⁵	Tilling Green School - H3: 25 Rock Channel Site A - H4: 80 [divided into (North) and (South)]. Winchelsea Rd East - H5: 10 Winchelsea Rd West - H6: 59 (plus convenience store) Freda Gardham H7: 50 (includes site B3 - for mixed development) Lower School Site H8: 88 New Rd B3 – see H7 Windfall Sites: Tower Street, Tower House, Cyrus Place and East Rock Channel) at least 20 In addition the Rye Harbour figure remains in the Rye allocation as at least 40
RNP Figures	at least 332 plus 40 in Rye Harbour (Exceeds the target of 325 set in the emerging draft (Reg 18) Local Plan)

Note: It is important to note that the housing and employment figures are indicative and provide 'potential' numbers based on the sites identified in the draft HELAA 2024. It is recognised that many of the potential additional sites require more detailed consideration of their impacts. This work, together with specific allocation policies will be developed as proposals come forward and after the Regulation 18 consultation of the emerging Rother Local Plan to seek to maximise the potential supply.

³⁵ Reviewed figures following advice from Rother DC

Identified Site Allocation

4.5 Drawing on the conclusions of the latest Site Re-Assessment Document, the allocation of housing development is set out in policy H1 below. These housing provisions, subject to the site-specific comments, are estimated taking into consideration the constraints on development and the achievability of development. The numbers are considered appropriate to meet the needs of the Town.

Policy H1 Housing Allocations: The following sites, as delineated on the Policies Map, have been reviewed and their allocation retained for development subject to the criteria in policies H2-H9 and other relevant development plan policies:

- a. H3 - Former Tilling Green School for 25 dwellings
- b. H4 - Rock Channel Site A for 80 dwellings
- c. H5 - Winchelsea Rd East for 10 dwellings
- d. H6 - Winchelsea Rd West for 59 dwellings
- e. H7 - Freda Gardham School for 50 dwellings
- f. H8 - Lower School Site for 88 dwellings

These allocations, with the identified Windfall sites (20), should provide at least 332 dwellings.

Add to this at least 40 in Rye Harbour (allocated by RDC).

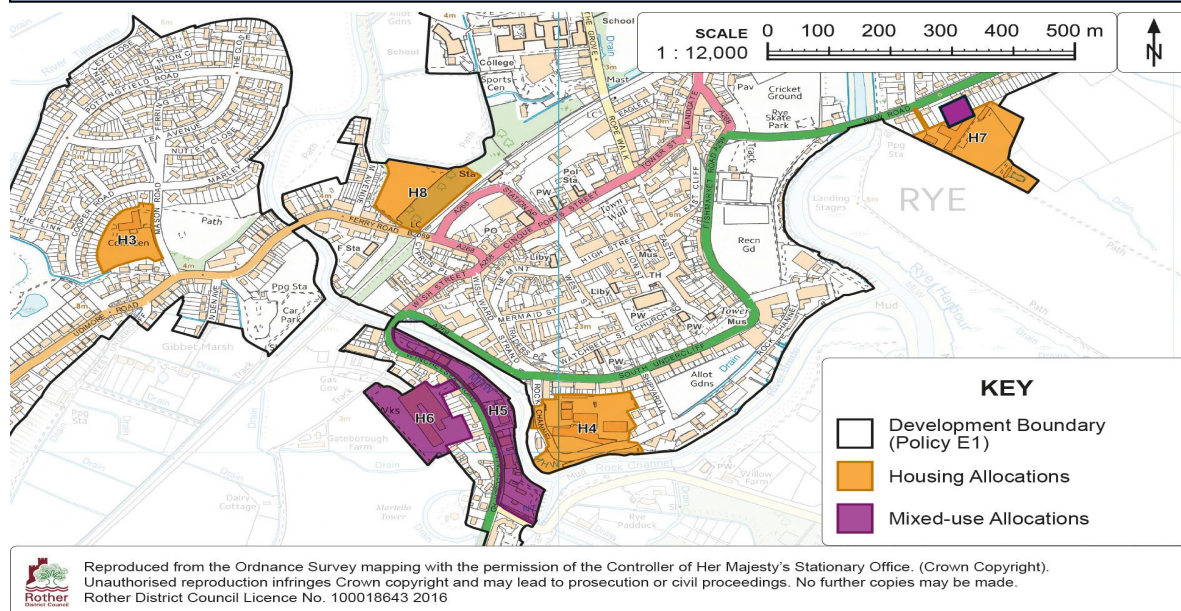


Figure 5: Rye Housing site allocation map (excludes small sites) primary housing sites in orange (See Housing Policies for detail); mixed use as shown in dark red.

Providing an Appropriate Mix of Dwellings

4.6 Rye attracts many “incomers” who like to live in the town, some because of family connections and some because it is an attractive place to live and is within easy travelling distance to London. This has resulted in a buoyant property market.³⁶ In recent years, Rye housing stock has included a rising number of second homes and buy to let property, currently around 400³⁷ of a total stock of around 2,500. In common with other coastal areas, this has resulted in soaring house prices. Residents on minimum wage seeking starter homes have complained that they are priced out of their town. As a result, staff employed in the hospitality, care and education industries tend to live in places away from Rye, less in demand and travel in. There is high demand for “affordable housing”³⁸, resulting in demand outstripping supply.³⁹ This is supported by the housing needs analysis carried out by AiRS for Rye Town Council.⁴⁰ (see also Background Evidence Paper). This evidence also demonstrates a need for the provision of smaller homes, especially for young families, young people and for older people who wish to downsize. Policy DNG1 of the adopted Rother Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) Local Plan requires, in Rye, the provision of 30% on site affordable housing on schemes of 10 or more dwellings (or 0.3 hectares or more) to meet the local needs in Rye. One mechanism for providing affordable housing for local people is to enable them to build their own homes (self-build)⁴¹, or have them custom-built to their own specification, perhaps using the Community Land Trust⁴² model. There has been some interest in this type of development, expressed at open events and through contacts with the Neighbourhood Plan website⁴³.

4.7 Housing mix should be diverse with affordable and more affordable-social homes to keep people in the community. A Rye Community Land Trust initiative is considering initiatives on windfall sites. The mix should include a range of size and price of homes; some open market, some rental, some affordable, with numbers conforming to 30% set by the LPA. Homes should be designed to work for people with a range of incomes, health and age, enabling people to continue living in the area and community they know as they pass through different stages of life.

³⁶ Rother Local Strategic Partnership – Annual Meeting 15 June 2017

³⁷ <https://ryetowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/HNS-Report-Rye-Parish-2023-Final.pdf>

³⁸ Affordable Housing is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as “Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision...”

³⁹ Rother District Council Resident Survey by Opinion Research Services June 2017

⁴⁰ <https://ryetowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/HNS-Report-Rye-Parish-2023-Final.pdf>

⁴¹ <http://www.selfbuildportal.org.uk/>

⁴² Community Land Trust

⁴³ <http://www.ryeneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/>

Policy H2 Housing Mix: The housing developments allocated within this Plan shall include:

- a. Affordable housing (Rother DC and the NPPF sets the percentage) which shall be appropriately integrated into each development so that it is indistinguishable from the equivalent market housing. Affordable housing shall be spread carefully through the development, not isolated in specific blocks.**
- b. Housing of a size, type and mix which shall reflect both current and projected housing needs for Rye, including dwellings suitable for elderly occupants and smaller units (1 and 2 bedrooms) for younger people and those looking to downsize their accommodation.**
- c. Small residential developments (Windfall sites - fewer than 10 units) - on infill and redevelopment sites within the Parish, shall be subject to proposals that are well designed: a sense of place; do not impact adversely on the amenity of adjacent dwellings and meet the relevant requirements set out in other policies in this Plan.**
- d. The Rye Community Land Trust initiative shall be encouraged.**

4.8 Each identified and allocated site will be considered in turn.

The Former Tilling Green School

4.9 The Tilling Green school site comprises the former school building and a former playing field/green space, unused as such since 2004. ESCC advise that after 20 years this part of the land needs no further decommissioning as a playing field. The building is currently used for community purposes. This site is owned by East Sussex County Council (ESCC); but is subject to a long lease by the Rye Partnership. The land has been identified by ESCC for disposal. One proposed scheme of 2015 for up to 32 dwellings and a community centre was withdrawn as it was argued to be non-viable once the flood risk requirements had been incorporated (Proposal [RR/2015/2581/P](#)). A reappraisal of the site has indicated a more realistic allocation of 25 dwellings only to the grassed area with the retention but refurbishment of the existing community centre. The latter provides a key facility particularly for residents in the west of Rye. In 2025, ESCC invited bids for the site (Rye CLT bidded) but after appraisal decided to retain it for the new unitary authority (English Devolution) as a scheme potentially for Homes England. As other allocations in Rye are not providing affordable homes on viability grounds, this site provides an opportunity for 100% provision of affordable/social units.

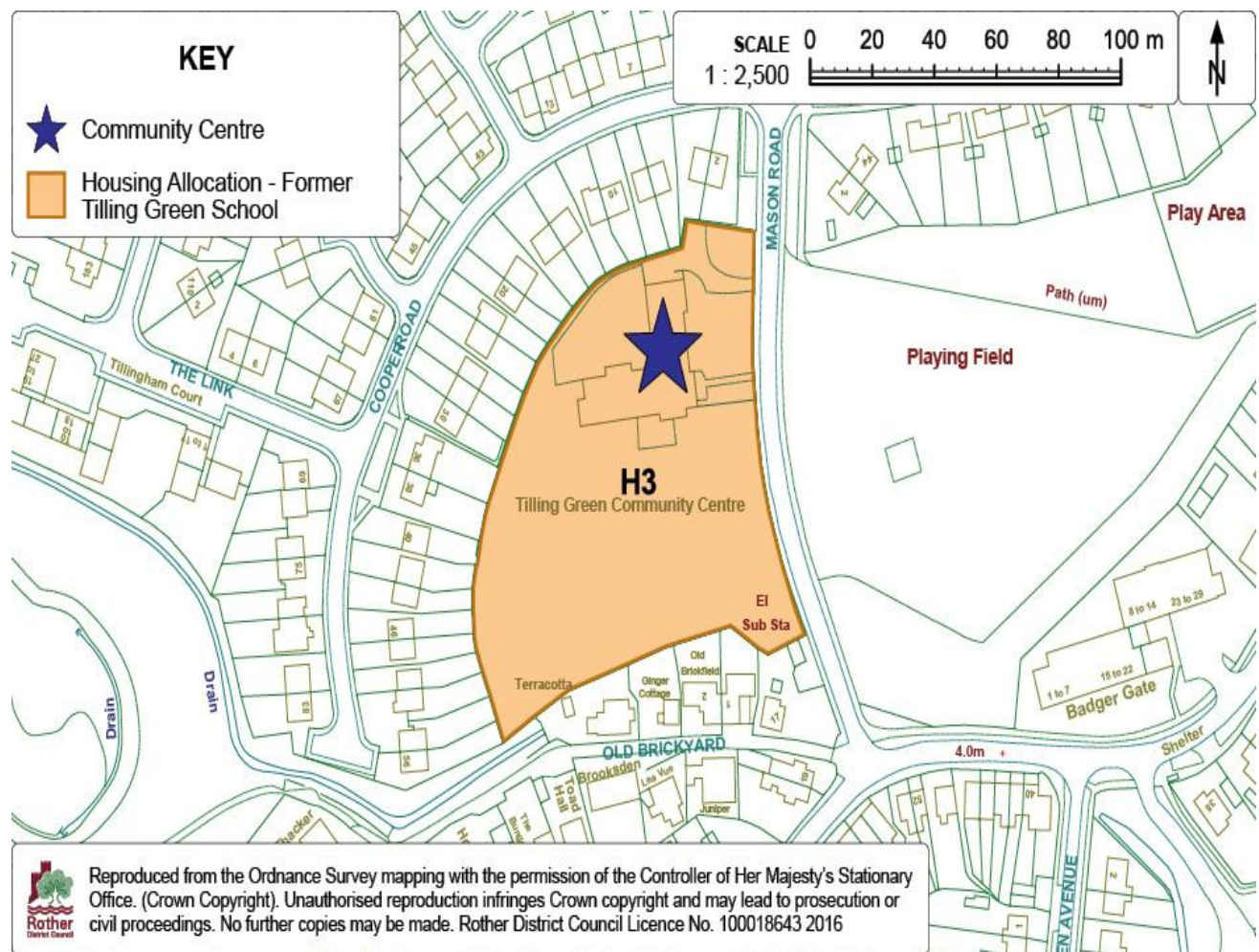


Figure 6: Tilling Green Former Infants' School

Policy H3 Former Tilling Green School is allocated for a development of 25 dwellings with the retention of the community centre (up to 500 sq m); it shall:

- a. Retain or re-provide the community centre before the last dwelling is occupied.**
- b. Take the opportunity to build 100% affordable homes on the site.**
- c. Require the design of any development to be sympathetic to the building form and materials used in surrounding buildings and provide appropriate external amenity areas for the dwellings and the community centre.**
- d. Provide car parking in accordance with appropriate standards with approved road access.**
- e. Demonstrate through a site-specific flood risk assessment that any residential development is safe for the lifetime of the development, taking into account future climate change scenarios and incorporating appropriate flood resilient and resistant measures including safe access and escape routes.**
- f. Require reduced water consumption by incorporating water re-use measures;**
- g. Identify and preserve existing flow routes and drainage features, such as ditches, traditional sewers and drains.**
- h. Incorporate measures to alleviate the historical surface water flooding in Mason Road.**
- i. Phase the occupation of the development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure.**

Rock Channel

- 4.11 This broad location runs east-west from Bridge Point in the west to Rock Channel East in the east. It is bounded by South Undercliff (A259) in the north and the river on the other three sides. Policy RY3 of the 2006 Rother District Local Plan allocated this land for housing, open space and appropriate commercial uses, subject to the preparation of development briefs, which were undertaken between 2005 and 2007.

4.12 The location is divided into four areas shown in Figure 7. The location is seen by many residents to be most important for the public for walking, wheeling, cycling, including access to the King Charles III England Coast Path - KCIIIIECP, and access to the riverside. The allocation in Policy H4 relates to site A, which is divided north – south because of mixed ownership. It is intended that Site B remains as a statutory allotment owned by Rye Town Council; Sites C and D may deliver some windfall development over the Plan period, in particular Site C is where Rye Partnership proposes a small scheme of affordable homes.

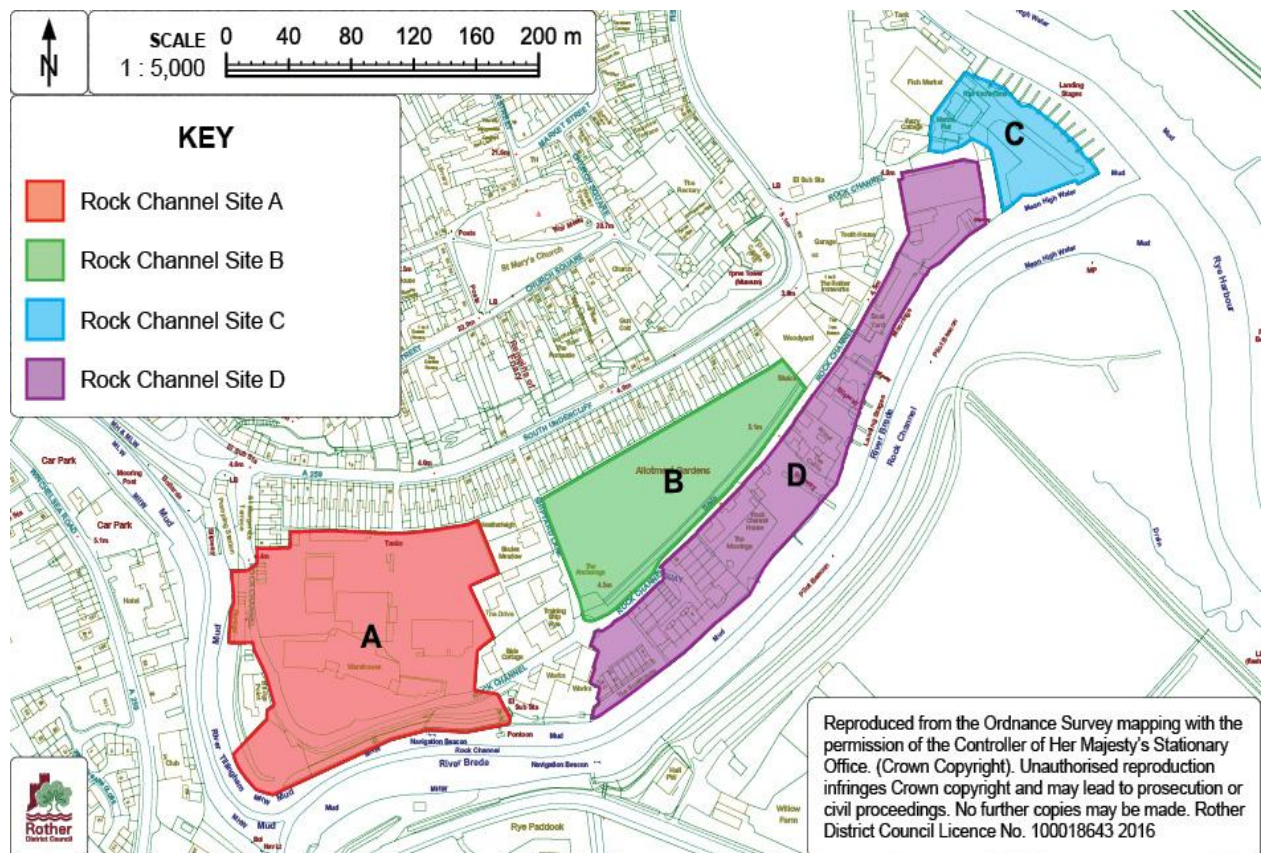


Figure 7: Rock Channel Broad Location

Policy H4: Rock Channel, Site A is allocated for 80 dwellings in this location. The development shall:

- a. Adopt an innovative design, of high architectural quality to enhance the site setting against the Rye Conservation Area and having regard to its riverside location, with green spaces, improved and accessible riverside walks including provision for the King Charles III England Coast path.**
- b. Access the site via the existing track on the west side of the site, upgraded as necessary, with an improved two way access point from St Margaret's Terrace onto the A259, as required by National Highways.**
- c. Demonstrate through a site-specific flood risk assessment that any residential development is safe for the lifetime of the development, taking into account future climate change scenarios and incorporating appropriate flood resilient and resistant measures including safe access and escape routes.**
- d. Incorporate SuDS measures to take appropriate account of local conditions. Adopt measures to include flow attenuation (such as green roofs) and water re-use such as rainwater harvesting, surface water harvesting and/or grey water recycling systems. Identify and preserve existing surface water flow routes and drainage features within the site. eg ditches and drains.**
- e. Design the development so that elements of each phase do not prejudice the redevelopment of adjacent land.**
- f. Phase the development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure.**
- g. Plan the development to ensure future access to existing utility infrastructure for maintenance and upsizing purposes.**

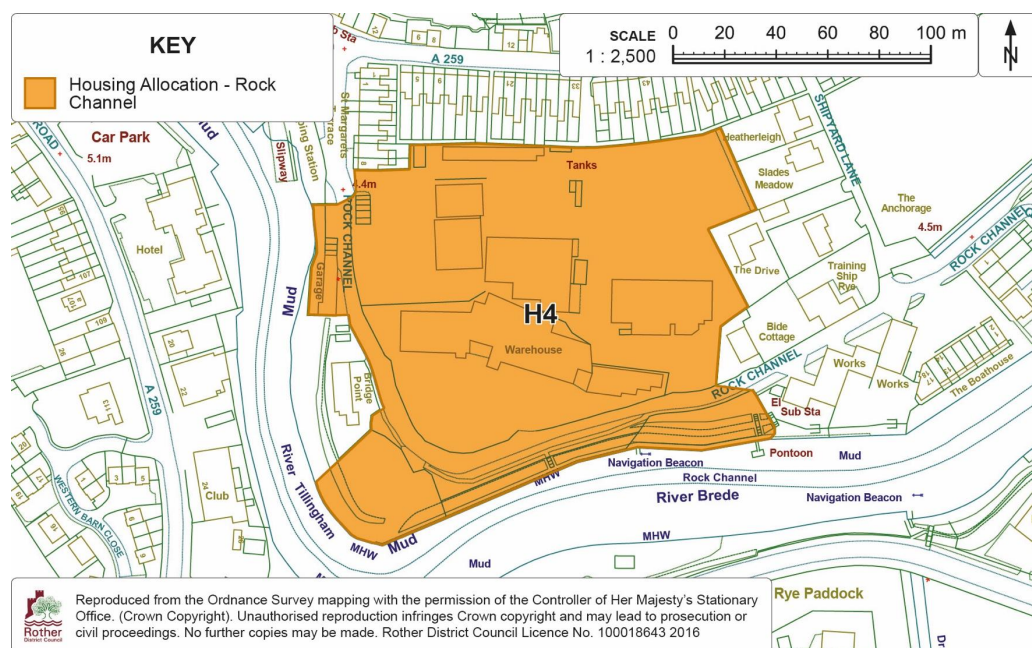


Figure 8: H4 - Rock Channel

Winchelsea Road [East Side]

- 4.13 This broad location (Figure 9) runs from the Harbour Road to the former Total Garage (now a car park) on the east side of the Winchelsea Road. It is considered to be an important potential development area for Rye, as the location is seen as a key gateway to the Town from the south-west. It should maintain attractive views across north-eastwards to the distinctive historic maritime built character of The Strand and to the Citadel beyond. It will also be an important part of the setting of the busiest part of the Strand.
- 4.14 The mixed ownership makes for challenging integrated planning as does the accessing of sites directly off the A259. Up to now individual proposals have been considered on their own merits but a masterplan and design considerations for the whole location has eluded planners because of multi ownership with individual intentions. Any masterplan should focus on building height, scale and the need for visual permeability, along with compatible uses, and the potential for shared access/servicing/parking arrangements. Development faces the challenges of the piecemeal ownerships, a range of existing uses, potential contamination of some land and how the range of land use potentials may be accommodated. Given its position on the main A259 trunk road, there may also be potential for roadside facilities.

Policy H5 Winchelsea Road [East Side] is allocated for a mixed use development with at least 10 dwellings across the broad location, car parking or Use Class E or F2 employment. The development shall:

- a. Be phased so that one element does not prejudice the development of adjacent land.**
- b. Be of high architectural quality, with a strong sense of place, to enhance its setting against the Rye Conservation Area and having regard to its riverside location.**
- c. Conserve riverside green spaces and access for the King Charles III England Coast path.**
- d. Provide visual permeability to the Rye Citadel from the East, with roof heights set not to obstruct longer views from the countryside towards Rye.**
- e. Demonstrate through a site-specific flood risk assessment that any residential development is safe for the lifetime of the development, taking into account future climate change scenarios and incorporating appropriate flood resilient and resistant measures including safe access and escape routes.**
- f. Ensure that development is raised above the design flood level with an allowance for Climate Change, and as flood defences are present the estimated flood level should account for the residual flood risk if they breached or overtopped.**
- g. Incorporate SuDS measures to take appropriate account of local conditions. Adopt measures to include flow attenuation (such as green roofs) and water re-use such as rainwater harvesting, surface water harvesting and/or grey water recycling systems. Identify and preserve existing surface water flow routes and drainage features within the site. eg ditches and drains.**
- h. Ensure future access to existing infrastructure for maintenance and upsizing purposes.**

Winchelsea Rd [West Side]

- 4.15 This broad location sits on the west side of the main gateway to Rye from the South Coast road. The location is lower than the road by some 2 metres and is bounded by the road in the East and the Marsh in the West. To the south of the site is Grade II listed Willow Tree House, which should be preserved and its setting enhanced. As the location is edged by Marsh there is a high flood risk (ground and surface water), which has to be mitigated as part of any development. (RNP Support 4 – The Strategic Environmental Assessment).
- 4.16 During 2014, this site has been subject to a planning proposal for a scheme by Decimus Property, in partnership with award-winning discount food retailer Aldi and Retirement Living specialist McCarthy Stone. The scheme would provide a food store, homes and Retirement Living apartments on Winchelsea Road: replacing the existing warehouse and goods yard known as “Jempsons Trading Estate”.

Policy H6 Winchelsea Road [West Side] is allocated for a mixed use development of 59 dwellings and Use Class E employment. The development shall:

- a. Phase the implementation so that one element does not prejudice the development of adjacent land.**
- b. Create a strong sense of place through careful design.**
- c. Demonstrate through a site-specific flood risk assessment that any residential development is safe for the lifetime of the development, taking account of future climate change scenarios and *incorporating appropriate flood resilient and resistant measures including safe access and escape routes.***
- d. Ensure that all development is raised above the design flood level with an allowance for Climate Change, and flood defences must take account of the estimated flood level and the residual flood risk if defences are breached or overtopped.**
- e. Incorporate SuDS measures to take appropriate account of local conditions. Measures should include flow attenuation (such as green roofs) and water re-use such as rainwater harvesting, surface water harvesting and/or grey water recycling systems.**
- f. Identify and preserve existing surface water flow routes and drainage features within the site eg ditches, drains and seasonally dry watercourses.**
- g. Plan the layout to ensure future access to existing utility infrastructure for maintenance and upsizing purposes.**
- h. Phase the occupation of the development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure.**

The Former Freda Gardham School Site

- 4.17 This former school, owned by ESCC, comprises school buildings, outbuildings, a disused swimming pool and playing field between, all verging onto Romney Marsh. The Rye Creative Centre is located in the former school building. Here there are over 30 individual artists and a separate unit known as “The Studio”. The latter provides art activities for less abled artists. For 10 to 15 years this strong artistic community has added value to the town. Rother DC supported the setting-up of the Creative Centre but latterly the development of the land, which would mean a relocation plan for the art community. In 2025, the prospective owner/developer proposed to rehouse the artistic community in the adjacent parish of Icklesham, in buildings in the Harbour Road.
- 4.18 It should be noted that only the footprint of the former school, grounds and former swimming pool to the South are allocated. The Steering Group has allocated to confine the allocation to the brownfield site (as currently fenced) without encroaching onto the green spaces of the Marsh. The Site Re-Assessment document (RNP Support 2) shows this. This location is one of where the Plan has seen a small realignment of the settlement boundary.

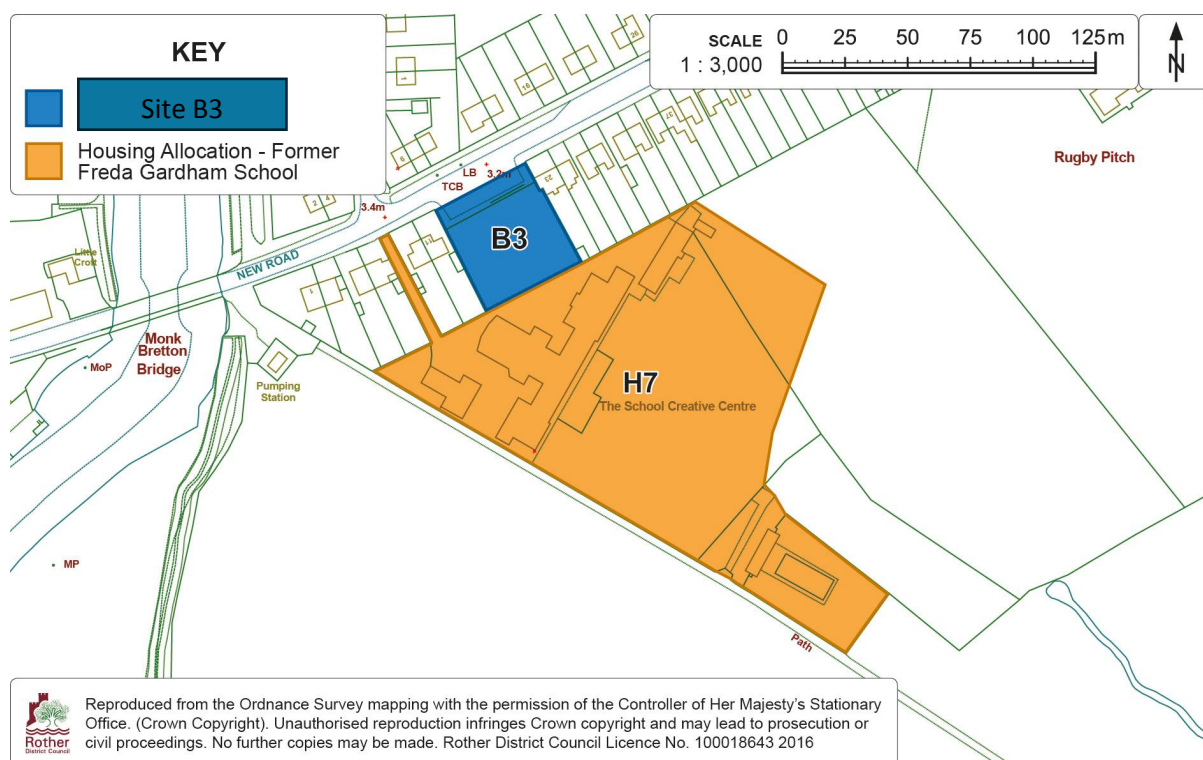


Figure 10: Former Freda Gardham School

Policy H7 Former Freda Gardham School site is allocated for residential development of 50 dwellings. H7 comprises three distinct plots: the former school building; the green space to the South and the disused swimming pool at the southern end of the land. Site B3, formerly allocated for commercial use, could include a mixed use development (Use Class E or Class F2) and some housing. The development shall not commence until the flood mitigation works by the Environment Agency for the eastern bank of the River Rother (Eastern Rother Tidal Walls Scheme) have been implemented in 2026 and then it shall:

- a. Incorporate appropriate treatment to the south and west boundaries to protect the countryside and habitats beyond.**
- b. Demonstrate through a site-specific flood risk assessment that any residential development is safe for the lifetime of the development, taking account of future climate change scenarios, by incorporating appropriate flood resilient and resistant measures including safe access and escape routes.**
- c. Ensure that all development is raised above the design flood level with an allowance for climate change. Site specific flood defences should take account of the estimated flood level and the residual flood risk if the defences are breached or overtopped.**
- d. Incorporate SuDS measures using measures to include flow attenuation (such as green roofs) and water re-use such as rainwater harvesting, surface water harvesting and/or grey water recycling systems. Existing surface water flow routes and drainage features within the site should be identified and preserved eg ditches and seasonally dry watercourses.**
- e. Ensure adequate access to/from the A259 to serve the allocation.**

The former Lower School site

4.19 This former ESCC education site has remained overgrown, fenced and unused since the 1990s. Natural England list the deciduous woodland habitat on part of this site. The site has been subject to a series of planning permissions, one for a supermarket outlet and earlier outline proposals for housing. Two major retail companies, after lengthy planning, rejected the site for a supermarket, because their expansion policies had been revised. There is a current planning application to develop the site entirely for housing and this seems to be a realistic use for the site, but parking, flood risk and proposed density and lack of affordable housing remain issues. The site lies within 400yds of Rye Town Centre. Any proposal must reconcile the Tree Preservation Order (TPO) (Figure 11) on part of the site and main access because of the proximity of the site to the B2089 and the Marsh Link railway crossing.

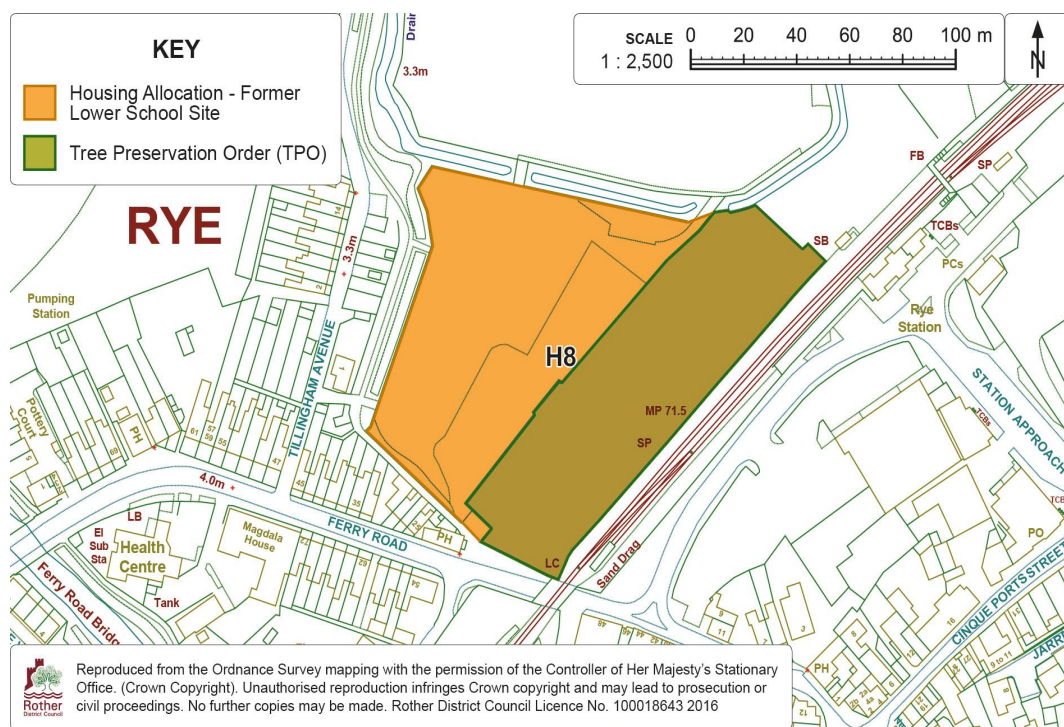


Figure 11: Lower School Site

Policy H8 Former Lower School Site is allocated for 88 dwellings and development shall:

- a. Carry out a site specific flood risk assessment to demonstrate that the residential development is safe for the lifetime of the development incorporating appropriate flood resilient and resistant measures including safe access and escape routes where required;**
- b. Incorporate SuDS measures to take account of local conditions, such as flow attenuation, green roofs and water re-use (rainwater harvesting, surface water harvesting and/or grey water recycling systems).**
- c. Identify and preserve existing surface water flow routes and drainage features within the site eg ditches, traditional sewers, drains and seasonally dry watercourses.**
- d. Plan the layout of the development to ensure future access to existing infrastructure for maintenance and upsizing purposes.**
- e. Design the development to avoid damage to the belt of trees adjacent to the railway which is protected by Tree Preservation Order (TPO).**
- f. Design access to the site to be safe, accessible for pedestrians and cyclists as well as vehicles and avoid conflict with the nearby level crossing of the railway.**
- g. Provide on-site parking provision in accordance with local standards.**
- h. Phase the occupation of the development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure.**

Windfall Sites

- 4.20 The Plan will support proposals for small residential developments on infill and redevelopment sites within the Parish, subject to the proposals being well designed (a sense of place) and meeting the relevant requirements set out in other policies in this Plan. The sites are listed below. In the past, such sites have been problematic in achieving development, but Rye now estimates that at least 20 dwellings could now be achieved on Windfall sites in the plan period.

(1) Tower Street, 17 to 19: TN31 7AT. Brownfield land at rear. Subject to planning permission RR/2017/2217/P for at least 6 dwellings converted from existing commercial buildings.

(2) Dormy House (has been Tower House) Hilders Cliff, TN317LD: Land at rear, subject to planning permission for at least 4 dwellings (2 terraced and 2 flats) with garages and car spaces. RR/2010/2676/P and RR/90/984/P

(3) Holland of Rye workshops. The Undercliff. TN31 7HW. Brownfield for conversion to dwellings proposal RR/2020//995/P at least 3 dwellings with garages and some commercial space.

(4) Rye Yacht Centre (East Rock Channel) access from the Undercliff. TN317HJ. Brownfield mixed subject to planning permission RR/2023/518/P for 3 dwellings plus commercial space. Site is within the flood defences.

(5) Rye Old Brewery, Wish Ward. TN317DH. Brownfield (Former pottery) subject to planning permission for one dwelling and garage under RR/2022/2557/P.

(6) Cyprus Place Depot. TN31 7DR. Former depot and now building hire business, much valued in Rye. Allocated for at least 7 dwellings by RDC (the owner) in its draft and emerging Local Plan.

(7) Former Methodist Church in Church Square. Subject to planning permission for one large dwelling.

- 4.21 The development of such sites is often contentious because of the constraints and the impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties and or the loss of key commercial operations providing key services. The latter is important as one of the key factors affecting sustainability in this part of Eastern Rother is to retain businesses and infrastructure providing key services. It is important that these developments shall:

a. Design to minimise the impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties, including on party walls;

- b. Design to reflect a sense of place appropriate to the zones described in Figure 12 and para 4.26;
- c. As required, be subject to site specific flood risk assessment to demonstrate that the residential development is safe for the lifetime of the development incorporating appropriate flood resilient and resistant measures including safe access and escape routes where required;
- d. As required, incorporate SuDS measures to take account of local conditions, such as flow attenuation, green roofs and water re-use (rainwater harvesting, surface water harvesting and/or grey water recycling systems);
- e. Preserve existing surface water flow routes, drainage and sewerage features within the site by retaining or replacing traditional sewers, drains and watercourses;
- f. Incorporate a scheme and layout to ensure future access to existing infrastructure for maintenance and enhancement purposes;
- g. Incorporate safe access to the site for pedestrians and cyclists as well as vehicles and avoid conflict with neighbouring properties;
- h. Allocate on-site parking provision in accordance with local standards.
- i. Phase the occupation of the development to align with the delivery of key infrastructure, including sewerage and key infrastructure.

High Quality Design and Conservation of the Historic Built Environment

- 4.22 High quality design of development is a key priority for Rye. However, there is already a robust policy framework for this issue in the emerging Draft (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan so it is important that the Neighbourhood Plan adds to this, rather than duplicates it. The emerging Draft (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan sets out specific housing policies (Policies HOU1 to HOU 19). In this context the Steering Group has carried out detailed work to establish the architectural and heritage character of different parts of Rye to inform the design of any new or partial development. This work is summarised below. The historic built environment underpins the unique character of Rye; the pattern, form, and appearance of the ancient settlement and individual buildings, and the materials of their construction are peculiar to both the regional and local location and contribute to the unique sense of place, cultural identity and local distinctiveness of the Town.
- 4.23 The Architects body, the RIBA, says “new developments must be high quality and have access to shops, schools, transport and green space. That’s why

we want to focus on the language of high quality reflecting the emerging National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).” The body also stresses the importance of “engaging with the local community and ensuring their needs were served, such as access to transport and green space.” Importantly the design of developments should maintain and improve social cohesion through good connection with existing communities, where layout and movement avoid physical barriers and severance and encourages opportunities for social interaction. Safe pedestrian access should be for all ages and abilities. Developers should note ‘Active Design’ Guidance principles that create places which enable active and healthier lifestyles in this link: [Sport England Active Design Guidance](#) along with ‘Building for a Healthy Life’ design guidance for both housing and neighbourhood design: [Homes England Building for a Healthy Life](#) .

- 4.24 The objectives of ‘reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions’ and ‘conserving water resources’ should be linked to measurable targets or ‘higher standards’. Rother DC advises the use of LETI ⁴⁴ or BREEAM ⁴⁵ Home Quality Mark resources standards.
- 4.25 Developers should ensure that every opportunity is taken to use sustainable building materials include recycled steel, reclaimed wood and bricks, bamboo, cork, straw bales, rammed earth, and natural insulation materials like sheep's wool or cellulose fibre. Where practicable, green roofs, green walls, and public gardens should be considered to create a greener environment and promote better air quality.
- 4.26 For planning and design purposes, the Rye site assessment identifies three zones (Figure 12), with different character, each with differing sense of place, within the town as follows:
- **Zone Yellow:** the ancient “island site” zone covered by the Rye Conservation Appraisal⁴⁶. This is sub-divided into the area within the Town Walls, known as the Citadel and the lower parts outside the walls. Much of the zone is designated as a Conservation Area ⁴⁷

⁴⁴ <https://www.levittbernstein.co.uk/site/assets/files/3494/leti-climate-emergency-design-guide.pdf>

⁴⁵ <https://breeam.com>

⁴⁶ https://rdcpublish.blob.core.windows.net/website-uploads/2020/01/adopted_RYE_CONSERVATION_AREA_APPRAISAL1_.pdf

⁴⁷ <http://www.rother.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=6181&p=0>

(and Figure 29) which gives it legal protection as all development is required to conserve and enhance its character. Article 4 Directions relating to the Rye Conservation Area have removed permitted development rights and have had a significant impact in maintaining and enhancing the historic core townscape since the 1950's.

- **Zone Blue:** at river level around the base of the Citadel. This area is predominantly Victorian with some individual buildings from earlier periods. It lies between the Conservation Area, and the outer Zone Green (below).
- **Zone Green:** the outer zone is mainly 20th c and covers the linear or ribbon development branching outwards from Zone Blue to the Parish Boundary at: Rye Hill, Military Road beyond the Victorian development, New Road, New Winchelsea Road and Harbour Road, Ferry and Udimore Road leading to Cadborough Cliff, Ashenden Avenue, Tilling Green and Valley Park and back to the Water Tower on Rye Hill.

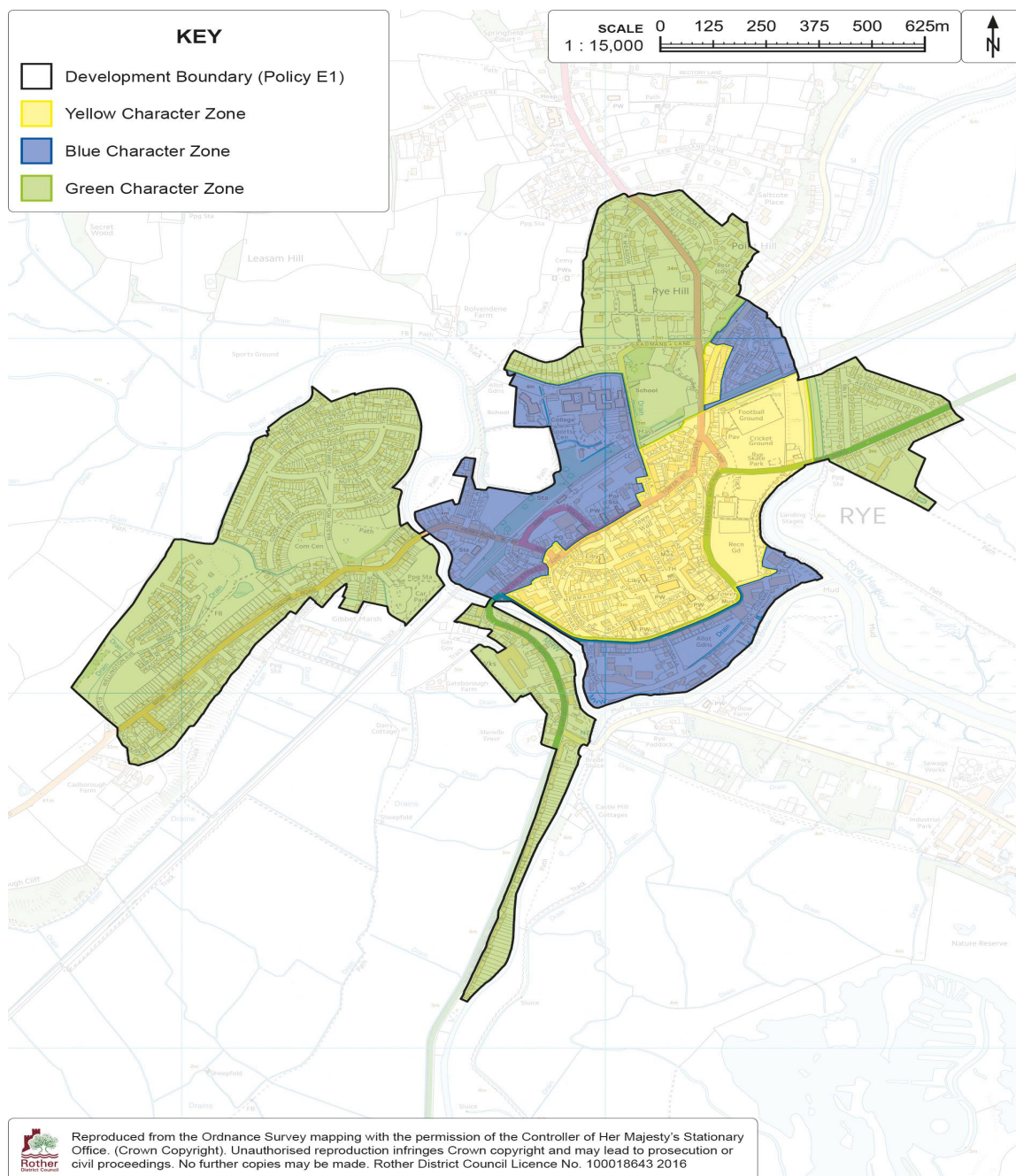


Figure 12: Character Zones

Policy D1 High Quality Design: Development within Rye will be expected to achieve high quality design having regard to the character of the area in which the development is located, which as detailed in the Rye Conservation Appraisal (Footnote 39). Proposals shall demonstrate how the design has had regard to the relevant development plan policies and shall meet requirements to:

- a. Achieve high quality design on a human scale with a clear sense of place; connection to its surroundings and adhering to such principles as *Secure by Design* with a consideration of the health and wellbeing benefits.
- b. Have regard for the distinctive topographical context, including the prominence of roof, townscape, sight lines and street furniture.
- c. Maximise the use of sustainable materials and green infrastructure, with plants to absorb carbon dioxide and other pollutants, thus reducing pollution levels.
- d. Reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions and conserve water resources using LETI or BREEAM standards.
- e. Protect the historic environment recording the archaeology – by desk-based assessments - relating to Rye's long history as a port, trading and agricultural centre as part of all planning applications on the development sites.
- f. Achieve a vibrant mix of land uses such as housing, employment and retail.
- g. Respond to the use of the rural margins and riverfronts to reinforce the connections between the town and its (AONL) landscape setting.
- h. Ensure improved accessibility and connectivity including walking, wheeling and cycling routes linking all areas to each other and back into the centre of Rye, reinforcing Rye as 'a connected community' with pedestrian, wheeling and cycle access to all.
- i. Design dwellings to address site specific flood-risks as detailed in the next section.
- j. Design storage facilities for recyclable materials as holding areas prior to collection, into every development.
- k. In the Conservation Area, conserve the historic shop fronts and frontage detail, using traditional colour schemes.

Reducing Flood Risk

- 4.27 The geographic location of Rye is at the confluence of the three rivers, affected by tidal water from the coast and with high ground water fed partially by natural springs. The current and emerging National Planning Policy Framework sets strict tests to protect people and property from flooding which all local planning authorities are expected to follow. In making this plan, a glance at Figure 13, indicates that to take the sequential approach⁴⁸ to site selection poses something of a dilemma. There are no suitable alternative sites in Rye, without posing adverse impact on the HWNL, therefore allocated development is, as far as reasonably possible, located where the risk of flooding (from all sources) is lowest, taking account of climate change, rising sea level and the vulnerability of future uses to flood risk.
- 4.28 Rye is one of the surface water flood risk "hotspots" in the East Sussex County Council Flood Management Plan⁴⁹. There is periodic "ponding" in roads such as Mason Road, The Grove, The Strand and Military Road. With more frequent events of extreme rainfall resulting in high ground water, high river levels, higher volumes of natural spring outfalls, surface water ponding when combined with high or surge tides and strong winds as seen in December 2013, the flood defence system is fully tested in extreme conditions. Where there are weak spots, localised flooding can occur. ESCC, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, initiated a surface water flood risk assessment of Rye; the results of which are reflected in this plan⁵⁰.
- 4.29 The Southern Region Flood and Coastal Committee⁵¹ seeks a balance between resistance (flood defence) and resilience (community action) for homes, businesses and critical infrastructure on the flood plain but protected by flood defences. It also accepts that development can take place on the flood plain where it is deemed safe to do so after detailed flood risk assessment. It is important to acknowledge the health effects of flooding, including impacts from contaminated flood water and from drowning; the overall effect on individuals such as mental health impacts.
- 4.30 The emerging Draft (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan – Policies ENV 1 to 6 - seeks to work with partners – particularly the Environment Agency for main

⁴⁸ NPPF Para 174

⁴⁹ <https://new.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/flooding/localfloodriskmanagementstrategy/>

⁵⁰ <http://apps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/37837.aspx>

⁵¹ SRFCCC Meeting at ESCC on 23 Oct 2018

rivers and the Romney Marsh Area Internal Drainage Board (RMAIDB) for marsh drainage - to achieve an effective and integrated approach to flood risk management. National policy aims to avoid inappropriate development in areas at current or future risk from flooding, and to direct development away from areas of highest risk. Higher level strategies provide a clear context for the Plan's policies in relation to reducing flood risk. The Rother DC Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)⁵² informs the application of the Sequential and Exception Test as set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)⁵³. Also, by 2024, there are site specific Flood Risk Assessments which have been completed by developers as part of provisional proposals for sites: H3, H5, H6 and H8. The Environment Agency regularly reports in its figures that there are some 1400 existing dwellings categorised by the Environment Agency as "at risk" in Flood Zones 2 and 3.

- 4.31 One of the last projects in the flood mitigation schemes for area Folkestone to Cliff End is the Eastern Rother Tidal Walls Scheme (ERTWS), which is on course for completion in 2026. This, combined with earlier work on flood defences to the remainder of the river system, will mean that the height of the defensive wall will have been lifted to 5.8m AOD. On the map (Figure 13 overleaf), the small unshaded areas are of the lowest flood risk. The blue area indicates the flood risk zone. These zones are defined by the Environment Agency as below.
- **Dark blue** ■ Flood Zone 3, land assessed as having 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river or sea flooding. For planning purposes, it shows the area that could be affected by flooding, either from rivers or the sea, if there were no flood defences. This area could be flooded by tidal waters if the flood defence system failed. The area might also be subject to localised "ponding" of surface water caused by extreme rainfall in conditions of high ground water and also spillage from the Combined Sewer System in the extreme conditions.
 - **Light blue** ■ Flood Zone 2, land assessed as having between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding, or between 1 in 200 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of sea flooding in any year. For planning purposes, it shows the additional extent of an extreme flood from rivers or the sea. The area might also be subject to localised "ponding" of surface water caused by extreme rainfall in conditions of high ground water and also spillage from the Combined Sewer System in the extreme conditions.
 - **No Shading** Flood Zone 1: land assessed as having less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding, but might be subject to localised

⁵² <http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/4900/Strategic-Flood-Risk-Assessment>

⁵³ <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

“ponding” of surface water caused by extreme rainfall in conditions of high ground water. They might also be subject to spillage from the Combined Sewer System in the same conditions.

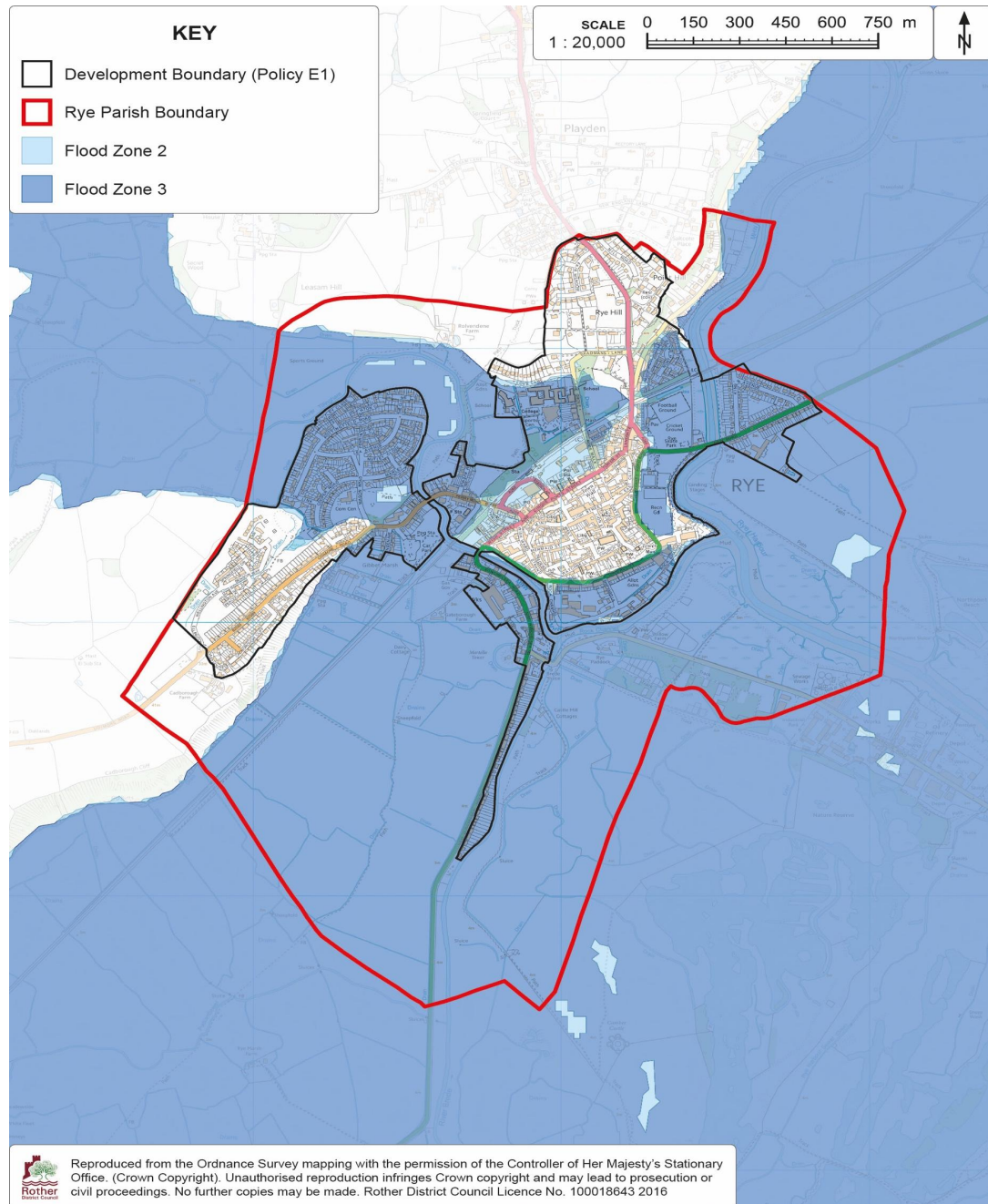


Figure 13: Rye Flood Risk ⁵⁴

⁵⁴ <http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/4900/Strategic-Flood-Risk-Assessment>

- 4.32 Along the South Coast, sewerage systems generally employ Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO), which are designed to protect homes in extreme circumstances. CSOs reduce the risk of “hydraulic overload” in the sewage system by discharging diluted wastewater and soil to water courses and the sea. The Plan supports all measures by the water companies to replace such systems. The Plan encourages the industry to:
- a. encourage partnership working to find solutions to “overload” situations;
 - b. develop its systems to cope with the worst case scenarios;
 - c. ensure that vital infrastructure is protected from flood risk with systems being upgraded as necessary to match occupancy of any new development.
- 4.33 The more sustainable approach for drainage and surface water management involves upstream Natural Flood Management (NFM) and Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS)⁵⁵. SUDS help to manage rainfall where it lands, slow down the water flow rate to pre-existing levels, reduce pollutant loading and where possible reduce the volume of water flowing off paved and other impervious surfaces by applying multiple stages where water is stored, treated and released back to local watercourses or groundwater at a controlled rate. For Rye, we strongly encourage SUDS to be incorporated into all planning proposals, where appropriate, as per national guidance from the Environment Agency.
- 4.34 In some cases, new development can have a substantial cumulative impact on surface water flood risk locally. Often the ‘green areas’ - gardens, lawns and verges - form part of the overall function of the whole site’s drainage plan. As a principle any development should not increase flood risk. Where there is new development, techniques such as permeable paving can be used, as opposed to bituminous construction to allow infiltration to reduce the amount of surface water runoff. The Environment Agency has produced guidance on the permeable surfacing of front gardens which can be found online.

⁵⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems/national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems-suds>

- 4.35 Any new development should consider the appropriate by-law margins for these areas (8 metres for main rivers 16 metres for tidal), as it is likely the Environment Agency would object to anything that encroaches into this margin. Where appropriate, the requirement for a Flood Risk Activity Permit needs to be followed.
- 4.36 From the earliest times, Rye found its water from the numerous springs to the north and west of the Town. In the main, these exist today releasing water from aquifers and into the drainage system. In some places, such as Tilling Green, The Grove and Military Road, in extreme conditions this water aggravates surface water and ponding. It can also be the cause of soil erosion in places such as parts of the Citadel and Military Road.⁵⁶



Figure 14: “Ponding” caused by localised flooding on the Strand, Rye Dec 2015

- 4.37 Many in the community have concerns about flood risk. Some have asked that even with effective flood defences, “Should we be building on the flood plain at all?” This Plan seeks to meet the challenge of balancing the need for new homes and mitigating flood risks on sites where it is safe to do so after detailed Site Specific Flood Risk assessment. The community has underscored that:
- a. New development in flood risk areas in Rye must be designed to mitigate risk;⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Landslip: RDC CBCO Dated 10 Apr 21; Southern Testing MWS\MS/6915 dated 3 May 21;

⁵⁷ <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change/neighbourhood-planning-flood-risk/what-should-be-considered-if-there-is-a-risk-of-flooding-in-the-neighbourhood-plan-area/>

- b. Any development on land unprotected by a flood defence scheme must be avoided.
- c. No development should disrupt the existing watercourses of the existing and complex drainage system.
- d. Southern Water will be encouraged to work with partners to ensure that the sewage system can cope with any new development.
- e. Measures to reduce flood risks can also impact on habitats and wildlife and the Plan should encourage opportunities to support wildlife conservation where possible.
- f. All development should take full account of flood risk, water supply and demand considerations.
- g. The community resilience team (REACT) should be supported and maintained.

4.38

As sites in Flood Zone 3 with development potential have been identified across Rye in this Plan, developers proposing to build in a flood plain should make themselves very familiar with the technical guidance accompanying the current and emerging National Planning Policy Framework.⁵⁸ This explains that “site specific and detailed flood risk assessments will be necessary and any developments will include flood-resilient buildings, designed to reduce the consequences of flooding and facilitate recovery from the effects of flooding sooner than conventional buildings. This may be achieved through the use of water-resistant materials for floors, walls and fixtures and the siting of electrical controls, cables and appliances at a higher than normal level. The lower floors of buildings in areas at medium and high probability of flooding should be reserved for uses consistent with the flood risk. If the lowest floor level is raised above the predicted flood level, consideration must be given to providing access for those with restricted mobility. In considering appropriate resilience measures, it will be necessary to plan for specific circumstances and have a clear understanding of the mechanisms that lead to flooding and the nature of the flood risk by undertaking a flood risk assessment.” As sites in Flood Zone 3 with development potential have been identified across Rye in this Plan, developers proposing to build in a flood plain should make

⁵⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/revised-national-planning-policy-framework>

themselves very familiar with the technical guidance accompanying the current and emerging National Planning Policy Framework.⁵⁹ This explains that “site specific and detailed flood risk assessments will be necessary and any developments will include flood-resilient buildings, designed to reduce the consequences of flooding and facilitate recovery from the effects of flooding sooner than conventional buildings. This may be achieved through the use of water-resistant materials for floors, walls and fixtures and the siting of electrical controls, cables and appliances at a higher than normal level. The lower floors of buildings in areas at medium and high probability of flooding should be reserved for uses consistent with the flood risk. If the lowest floor level is raised above the predicted flood level, consideration must be given to providing access for those with restricted mobility. In considering appropriate resilience measures, it will be necessary to plan for specific circumstances and have a clear understanding of the mechanisms that lead to flooding and the nature of the flood risk by undertaking a flood risk assessment.”

4.39

New development should include sustainable drainage and minimise pollution. SuDS are more sustainable than traditional drainage methods because they manage runoff volumes and flow rates from hard surfaces, reducing the impact of surface flooding; provide opportunities for using runoff water where it falls; protect or enhance water quality (reducing pollution from runoff); protect natural flow regimes in watercourses; provide an attractive habitat for wildlife in urban water courses; provide opportunities for evapotranspiration from vegetation and surface water; encourage natural groundwater/aquifer recharge; create better places to work, live and play. Southern Water has advised that from their modelling many spillages and surface water events are found to have been caused by blockages, which can be avoided using measures described in the link.⁶⁰

4.40

Related directly to flood risk, with more frequent extreme rainfall events, an important adverse impact is landslip. In parts of Rye, during 2023 and 2024, there have been significant falls in places such as: the north side of the Military Road; the boundaries of the Citadel where there was no Town Wall - and Cadborough Cliff. The current Planning Practice Guidance sets out the broad planning and technical issues in respect of development on, or close to, unstable land and states that planning authorities may need to consider identifying areas where particular consideration of such risks is needed,

⁵⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/revised-national-planning-policy-framework>

⁶⁰ <https://www.southernwater.co.uk/help-and-support/how-to-prevent-blockages/>

potentially limiting development in those areas or ensuring that there is appropriate land remediation or mitigation.

4.41

Building Regulations state that "The building shall be constructed so that ground movement caused bylandslip ... in so far as the risk can be reasonably foreseen, will not impair the stability of any part of the building." "Development will only be permitted on unstable or potentially unstable land, including former landfill sites and coastal margins, where the nature of the instability has been properly assessed.

Policy F1 Reducing Flood Risk

Development shall be subject to a Site -Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) to take account of all sources of flooding, noting the following local characteristics:

- a. Any planned improvements to flood defences and the need to access and maintain those that exist.**
- b. Although land drainage and surface water management responsibilities rest with multiple organisations, there should be contact with the Utility Providers, to address the need for adequate local sewerage and drainage systems, to avoid, in extreme conditions, hydraulic overload and the subsequent discharge of diluted but untreated wastewater into water courses and the sea.**
- c. Incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and measures such as permeable driveways, water harvesting systems and/or green roofs; all to manage effectively the drainage of surface water to reduce existing flooding problems either on the site or elsewhere, taking account of the springs to the north and west of Rye which aggravate surface water and ponding.**
- d. Consider the causes of soil erosion and landslip in areas such as Military Road, the Brede River and parts of the Citadel. In such places, there is a record of events of slope instability, aggravated by extreme rainfall. Where identified, development shall not proceed until the treatment has been designed and any remedial works are completed.**
- e. Avoid any loss of, or have adverse impact on, any open watercourse, existing culverts, traditional sewers and drainage ditches.**
- f. Consider the impact of any flood mitigation measures on the local habitats and wildlife on land protected by national and international designations.**
- g. Incorporate the need to minimise all forms of water pollution.**
- h. Encourage community resilience by its voluntary team (REACT) and require emergency evacuation notification and plans for high risk developments.**

Enterprise and Employment

- 4.42 Rother District has one of the weakest economies in the South East, with a low level of economic productivity (Gross Value Added only 68% of the regional average).⁶¹ The global trading situation has had an adverse impact, particularly as the area started from a relatively weak base. An issue raised by many in the community is the need for effective business development for jobs, inward investment and enterprise.
- 4.43 The levels of earnings in Rye are below the national average, adversely impacting on prosperity, standard of living and wellbeing including mental health. A poor economy contributes to health inequalities for the local population. The economy has limited capacity to support a wide range of job opportunities, especially for younger people.⁶² Those with skills and education must travel outside to find suitable employment and those with low skill levels find themselves competing in a crowded and uncertain commercial market.
- 4.44 With its attractive topography and distinctive heritage, Rye has a unique identity and widespread reputation with tourists. However, it must encourage businesses - particularly hospitality and care - appropriate to its character and exploit the advantages of its transport hub to allow people from its cluster of villages to access employment opportunities. It should also maximise its role as a tourist destination town, with numerous “reasons to travel”. Further information about the economic and tourism profile of Rye is contained in the Evidence Background Paper.



Figure 15: Rye Heritage Centre

⁶¹ <http://www.rother.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=14875&p=0> Rye and Rye Harbour Study

⁶² <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2011/nov/24/wages-britain-ashe-mapped>

- 4.45 The Citadel provides the focus for retail and other services for the town, an attraction for tourists and a place of residence for many. However, there is also a need to increase the number of micro businesses, less dependent on footfall, in the surrounding areas of the town centre, the working port and industrial areas of Rye Harbour.
- 4.46 The High Street needs specific attention with future development providing real “reasons to visit”. High rents and business rates remain an issue. In common with many town centres there have been business closures and relocations. The Plan looks to national studies⁶³ ⁶⁴to support its policies.
- 4.47 The Port of Rye and Rye Harbour Road Industrial Estate provide main centres of employment unrelated with tourism for the town and the surrounding settlements (up to 1000 jobs including the fishing fleet).⁶⁵ With the Environment Agency holding significant plots of riverside and land alongside “gateways”, its policy of short-term leasing, (for necessary income to the Port), rather than disposals deters long term substantial business investment. The result is short term use for car lots, car washes, parking and storage.



Figure 16: Historic ship Balmoral at Rye

- 4.48 Discussions with local small businesses suggest that there is a requirement for a small office/enterprise centre (Incubator/SME cluster site) close to the town centre. One site which provides this facility is the Rope Walk Centre. Other community feedback suggests that the Plan should:

⁶³ <http://thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/pdf/GBHS-British-High-Streets-Crisis-to-Recovery.pdf>

⁶⁴ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/transport-institute/pdfs/future-high-street>

⁶⁵ <http://rother.devplan.org.uk/document.aspx?document=19&display=chapter&id=167>

- a. Encourage festivals and major town events;
 - b. Take every opportunity to create employment and training opportunities;
 - c. Encourage maritime related enterprise;
 - d. Support the fishing fleet;
 - e. Support the High Street and encourage “reasons to visit”;
 - f. Support a second supermarket or convenience store;
 - g. Support faster broadband.
- 4.49 The emerging Draft (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan sets policy (ECO 2) for change of use from enterprise to dwelling. Land and floorspace currently in employment use, must be retained in such use unless it is demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of its continued use for employment purposes, or it would cause serious harm to local amenities.
- 4.50 Where the continued employment use of a site/premises is demonstrated not to be viable, complementary enabling development as part of an overall scheme to make most effective use of the property for employment purposes can be proposed. The approach to demonstrating if there is a reasonable prospect of continued commercial use is set out in the Emerging Draft (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan Policy DEV4. If a mixed-use scheme is not viable, alternative uses will be considered in accordance with a sequential approach in the following order: community uses; 100% affordable housing (in accordance with Policy HOU3); and then Housing (in accordance with Policies HOU1 and HOU2). The intensification, conversion, redevelopment and/or extension of existing sites and premises, as well as access and environmental improvements, will be permitted where they accord with Emerging Draft (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan Policy ECO1 as well as other policies of the Plan.

Policy B1 Employment and Business Development:

1. To support the economic vitality of Rye by development proposals to meet the target of 3000 sq m floorspace, for the following shall be permitted subject to other relevant development plan policies:

- a. New employment premises especially that, which regenerates or enhances the fishing and maritime and port related industries;**
- b. Development of small scale office and business premises around the Citadel in Zone Blue (Figure 12);**
- c. Proposals for new business development including a convenience store in Policy H6, small scale flexible office units, affordable workshops and high quality office space;**
- d. Maximise the opportunities provided by the Transport Hub to encourage people from the cluster of villages to access employment and business opportunities;**
- e. Development which facilitates improved broadband access for businesses and home workers.**

2. To design carefully where business proposals occur in residential areas, to minimise entertainment noise and exhaust fumes from kitchens;

3. To retain existing employment and business floor space unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the premises are no longer suitable for employment and evidence has been submitted that demonstrates that the property has been actively marketed for at least 18 months on realistic market terms; further it is shown that there is no prospect of new employment and business occupiers being found or to more modern facilities within the locality including at Rye Harbour.

To adopt strategies set out in the: “Get Sussex Working Plan” (GSWP 2025 to 3035) which sets out a vision for future employment in Sussex and Sussex Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP 2026 to 2029).

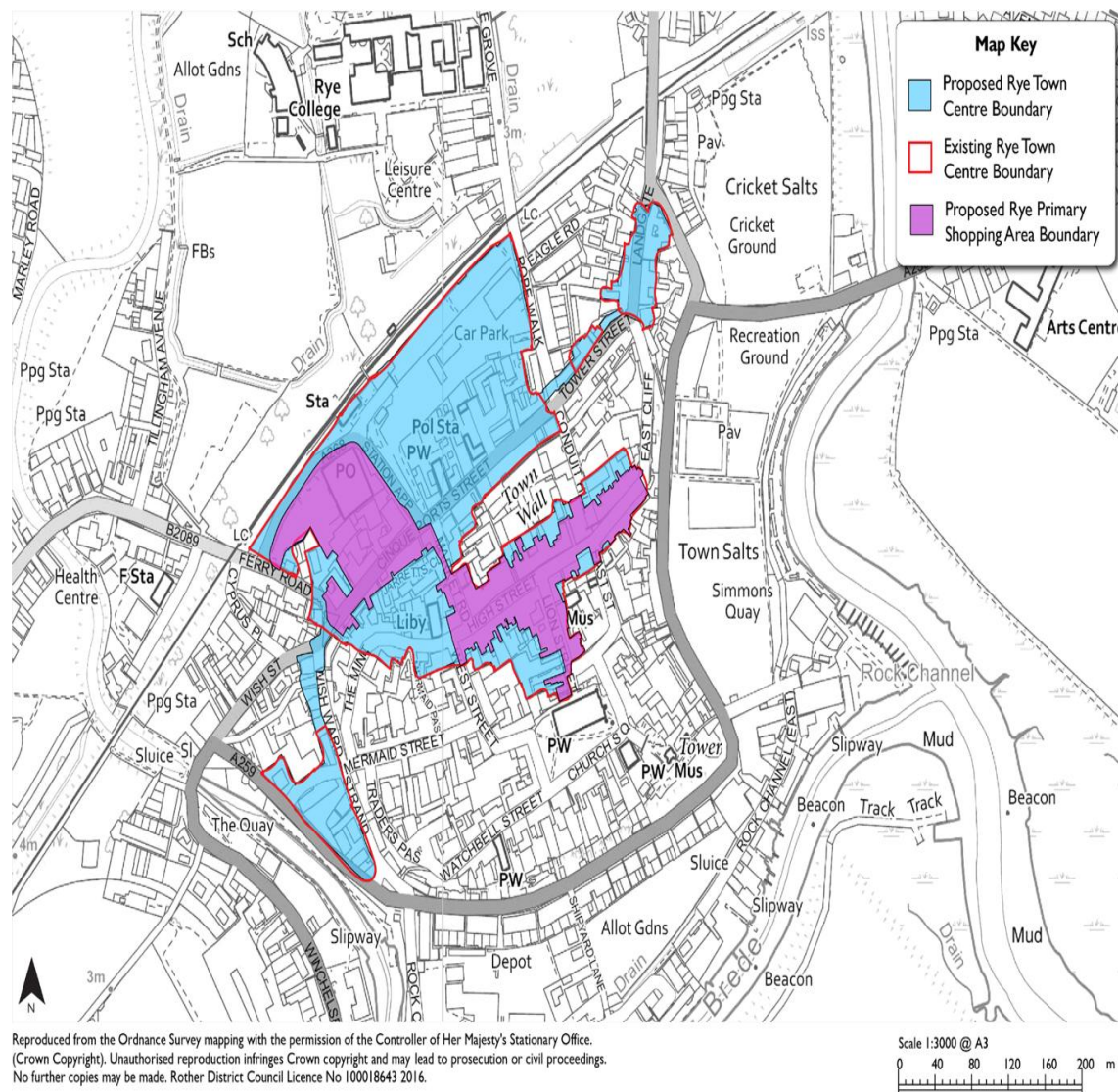


Figure 17: Core Town Centre



Figure 18: Rye from the East showing the Fishing Quay

Policy B2 Supporting Rye as a Visitor Destination

To support the attractiveness of Rye as a place to visit, development proposals for the following shall be permitted subject to other relevant development plan policies:

- a. Development that enhances the Town Centre Area (Figure 17) and the area around (Zones Yellow and Blue in Figure 12) to improve visitor attraction and “reasons to visit”, such as that related to art, culture; festival, entertainment and facilities such as public toilets.**
- b. Proposals that support the retention of the former cattle market as a site for a traditional weekly market and daily parking.**
- c. Proposals that support the provision of visitor accommodation and hospitality services.**
- d. Enterprises which promote “green tourism” by encouraging the use of public transport linking via the Transport Hub for activities such as walking, wheeling and cycling, including ebiking and appreciation of the area’s natural assets. By maximising the use of public transport it would help viability of the services.**

Retail

- 4.51 Following the considerable debate in the community about the need for a second supermarket and/or petrol station to provide competition and choice, there is currently a proposal for an Aldi outlet on allocated site H6. The Rother

Local Plan includes a requirement for 1650 sqm net additional floorspace within or adjacent to the town centre of Rye. Because of space restrictions, in Rye, the majority of this requirement could be met by the Aldi proposal and proposals for development in Rye Harbour. However there are opportunities for minor developments providing employment

- 4.52 One site considered suitable for commercial use was assessed as B3 adjacent to H7. This could also be considered as a mixed development on B3 for Planning Use Class E or F2.

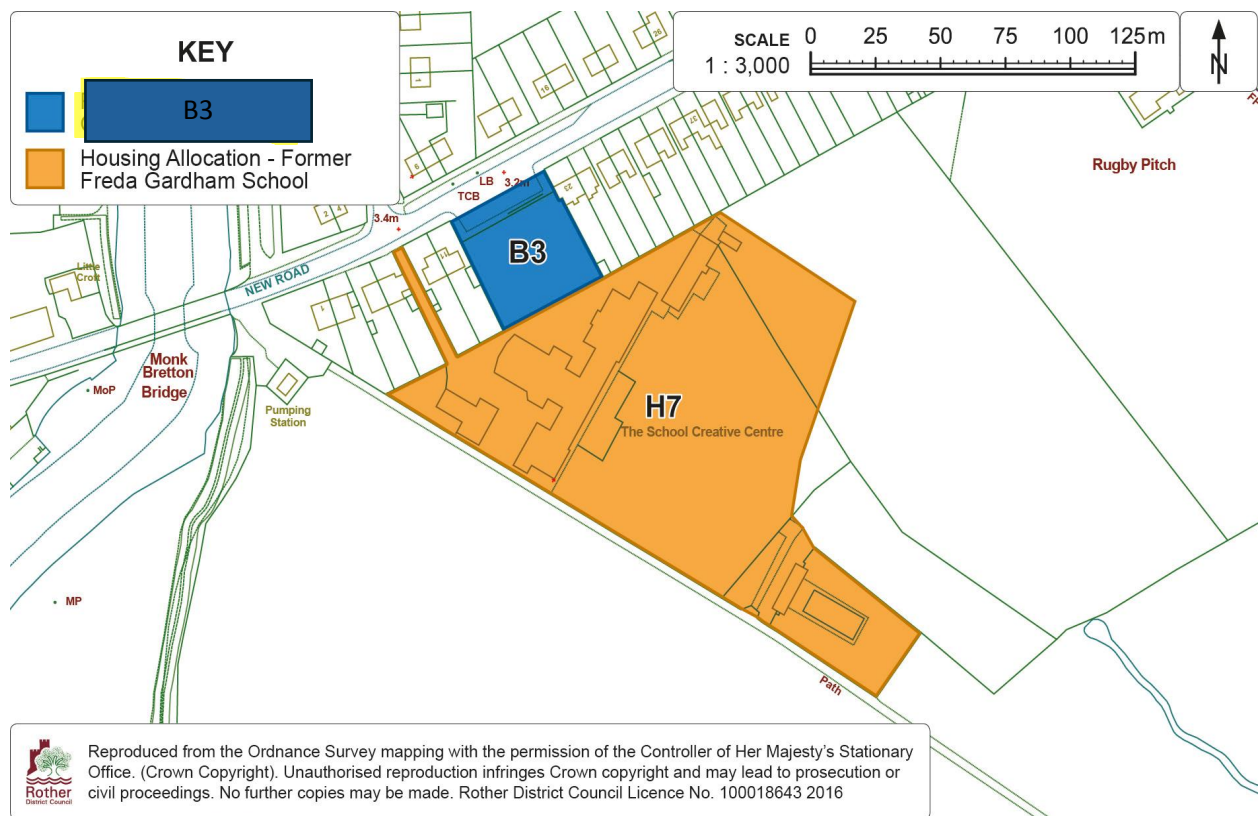


Figure 19: B3 in relation to H7 for mixed use

Policy B3 – Mixed use Allocation

B3 is allocated for mixed (housing and commercial) use, including planning use Class E or F2, subject to other relevant development plan policies.

The site is linked to and shall be considered alongside the allocation in H7, using the following criteria:

- a. The development shall be of a form, scale and height appropriate to its setting and retain or replace existing trees.**
- b. The development shall retain and enhance pedestrian links into the town centre to encourage walking, wheeling and cycling.**
- c. The development shall be designed with appropriate access arrangements for both vehicles and pedestrians to and from the A259.**

Traffic, Access and Getting Around

- 4.53 Rye's unique geographic and physical situation creates a challenging framework around and within which transport has to work: the original hill top with its small grid system of streets still houses much of the key business and commercial operations of the town (currently including all the town's dentists, dispensing chemists, library, building society and 3 churches), while the A259 trunk road coming in from the west skirts the base of the hill (with narrow carriageway for a trunk road) before going out across the marsh to the east. Developments, particularly in the last century, have created residential, educational and industrial areas around and away from the base.
- 4.54 The A268 road takes much traffic north up Rye Hill through neighbouring villages to reach the A21, whilst the B2089 provides a link to the area to the west and the northern parts of Hastings and St Leonards. There are concerns about the speed of traffic coming into the town on these two major routes as well as on the A259, residents of New Road, New Winchelsea Road and Udimore Road in particular are looking for action to control the problem. There are issues for the safety of road users and traffic flow resulting from building developments within the town - that in Deadmans Lane continues to cause problems and the access for other sites in the town is a key concern and may impinge on their viability.

- 4.55 Changes in traffic volumes underline fundamental shifts in living and working patterns. Further information about these characteristics, trends and earlier work on a possible bypass, which was dropped in the 1990s along with community feedback are in the Evidence Background Paper.
- 4.56 Rye benefits from a centrally located station with rail links to Ashford in the east and Eastbourne to the west. The station forecourt provides a “hub” for bus stops, access to car parking, cycle storage, taxi rank and public WC. This chimes with the policy of the East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 ((LTP4), its modal strategies for rail and bus and the emerging Local Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LWWCIP). As yet there are no Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) because partners argue that there is insufficient supply. However this is being considered within an EVCP strategy for Rye, which examines EVCP demand in the centre, around centre and outer zones. There are proposals for a High-Speed (HS1) service ⁶⁶between Ashford and Eastbourne which may stop at Rye, but as this is currently uncertain, it is dealt with in the Community Aspirations section in Chapter 5. Reconciling all the different demands - the needs of residents and of commercial and business operations, the protection of structures that are in places fragile and historic, the demands of tourism and leisure activities. The Plan acknowledges that Rye is a compact community and therefore it is possible to walk, wheel or cycle relatively easily between places. More work will be necessary to achieve safe walking, wheeling and cycle routes.
- 4.57 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ease traffic congestion, support vulnerable road users - pedestrians, children, those with mobility difficulties - while recognising the needs of residents, visitors and those of the business and commercial operations. Bus services - Stagecoach, Community Transport and Flexibus - are generally inadequate in the Rye cluster, because of infrequency and availability out of working hours. This means that to encourage the greater usage of bus transport a key ambition.
- 4.58 Given the broad sweep of the Plan, it has not been possible to carry out a detailed consideration of all traffic issues but in the identified issues several detailed matters have been considered strategically. Emerging Draft (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan Policies LWL 3 and 4 in addition to lessons from other neighbourhood plans indicate that we should be innovative to encourage active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling) and sustainable community transport in street environments that significantly reduce the impact of traffic on the town's community life. The policies in this section focus on aspects, which the Rye Neighbourhood Plan can deliver through the planning system by influencing the design of new developments, including parking provision and connectivity for those who walk, wheel or cycle. Other transport issues, where partnership action is required, are addressed in Section 5: Community Aspirations.

⁶⁶ Cross cutting priority CP03.

- 4.59 This draft also takes account of the emerging Draft (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan. The Plan's "Living Well Locally" provides a policy Framework for Rye and Rye Harbour in terms of proposals to:
- a. Promote efficiencies and improvements to the strategic transport network to improve connectivity between Rye and other major urban centres; and:
 - b. Support traffic management on the local road network, promote sustainable alternatives to the car and implement the objectives stated in the ESCC Local Transport Plan 4⁶⁷ and the East Sussex Local Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LWWCIP).
 - c. Encourages walking, wheeling and cycling as opportunities to improve health and wellbeing benefits.

Connectivity and Sustainable Transport

- 4.60 In all development there must be a detailed consideration of access and connectivity for employment, business, education and leisure, via existing and proposed routes leading from new development to the Town Centre and its services. Such connectivity encourages residents and users to walk, wheel and cycle more and use the private car less, which is important in a town such as Rye where the roads are narrow and parking facilities are restricted. One of the key factors in the selection of the development sites in the housing section was accessibility to the Town Centre.
- 4.61 Transport hierarchy⁶⁸ should be managed to provide accessible walking, wheeling and cycling and public transport, to discourage private car use. Developments must be well integrated into foot and cycle paths and green spaces. The Station Approach hub is the Rye focus for all transport already provides connectivity for:
- a. group walking parties and any "school walking trains".
 - b. bus stops directly linking to local transport interchanges and other local community hubs;
 - c. taxi rank;
 - d. electric car and bike charging points, with secure storage;
 - e. vehicle parking;

⁶⁷ ESCC LTP 4 2024 TO 2050; ESx Modal Strategies (Local Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Infrastructure Plan)

⁶⁸ ESCC LTP4

- f. signed access to the many footpaths such as the 'The King Charles III England Coast Path National Trail (KCIIIECP), which will be a continuous, easy to follow, well-maintained walking route, allowing people to walk around the whole English coast. The KCIIIECP is a national asset that will bring health and wellbeing benefits to local people and visitors. The trail will improve existing coastal paths and create new access where there was none before, enabling people to experience, recognise and value the benefits of our environment.'

4.62 The Rye Bay and Romney Marsh area also has huge potential for **Walking, Wheeling, and Cycling** tourism. The Plan takes account of the East Sussex emerging Local Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LWWCIP)⁶⁹, which sees Rye as a natural hub for expansion and facilities in the extreme East of the County. As such, within Rye, there is scope for improved connectivity, with better cycle routes and secure cycle parking to encourage cycling – as well as making it easier to Walk/Wheel, and Cycle within Rye. There is an initiative to provide secure “bike bins” in various hospitality locations but more cycle parking provision is also needed to encourage this mode of transport and to meet existing demands.

⁶⁹ East Sussex emerging Local Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Infrastructure Plan

Policy T1 Connectivity and Sustainable Transport

Development proposals within Rye shall be permitted subject to other relevant development plan policies and the following criteria:

- a. Encourage and enable more people to walk, wheel and cycle (active travel) and to use public transport**
- b. Enhance the Station Approach as a multi facility transport “hub” for users arriving in Rye by rail and bus transport and link to taxis, Community Transport and Flexibus services, all to better improve active travel.**
- c. Encourage partners to improve bus services and bus stop infrastructure.**
- d. Maximise opportunities to improve walking, wheeling and cycling facilities in and around Rye, including linking between the strategic routes such as the National Cycle Network, KCIIICP and proposals to implement all or parts of the Greenway initiative, as shown on the Policies Map.**
- e. Adopt planning policies to protect and enhance the public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, such as improving links between and to rights of way networks and National Trails.**
- f. Encourage the adoption of the East Sussex Cycle Standards to enhance facilities for parking and cycle parking to encourage access by foot or bicycle.**
- g. Encourage Walking, Wheeling, and Cycling along the proposed route alongside the Royal Military Canal and the King Charles III England Coast Path (KCIIIIECP), enhancing the route including the riverside walk on the north side of the Rock Channel.**
- h. Encourage partners to improve existing routes where the surfaces are poor or liable to be waterlogged after heavy rain.**

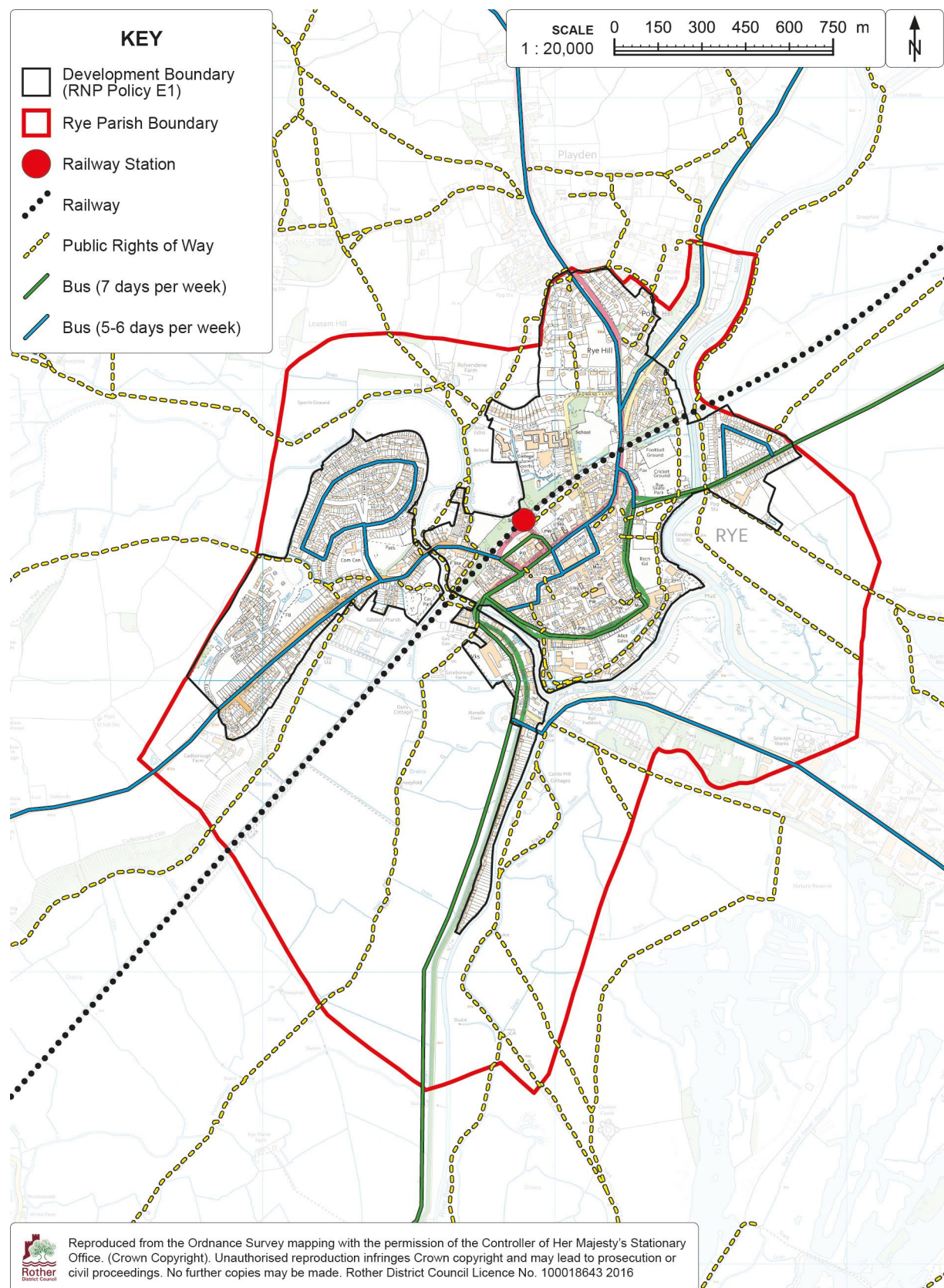


Figure 20: Accessibility

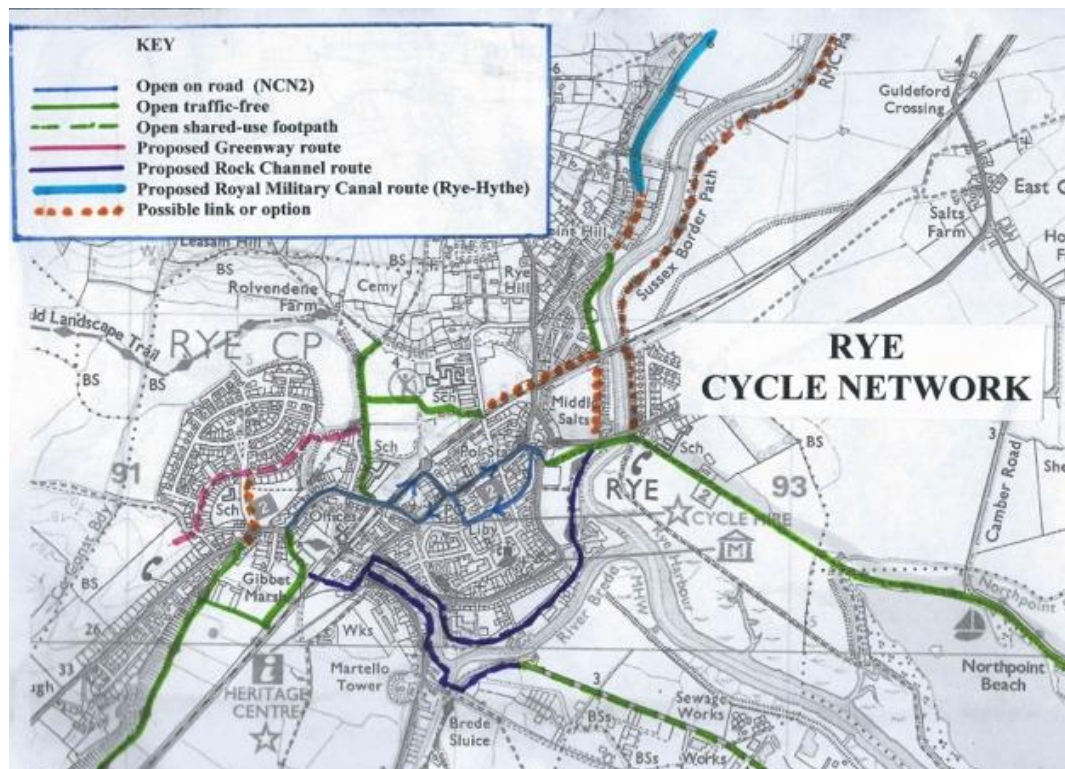


Figure 21: Cycleways (Includes the new the King Charles III England Coast Path)

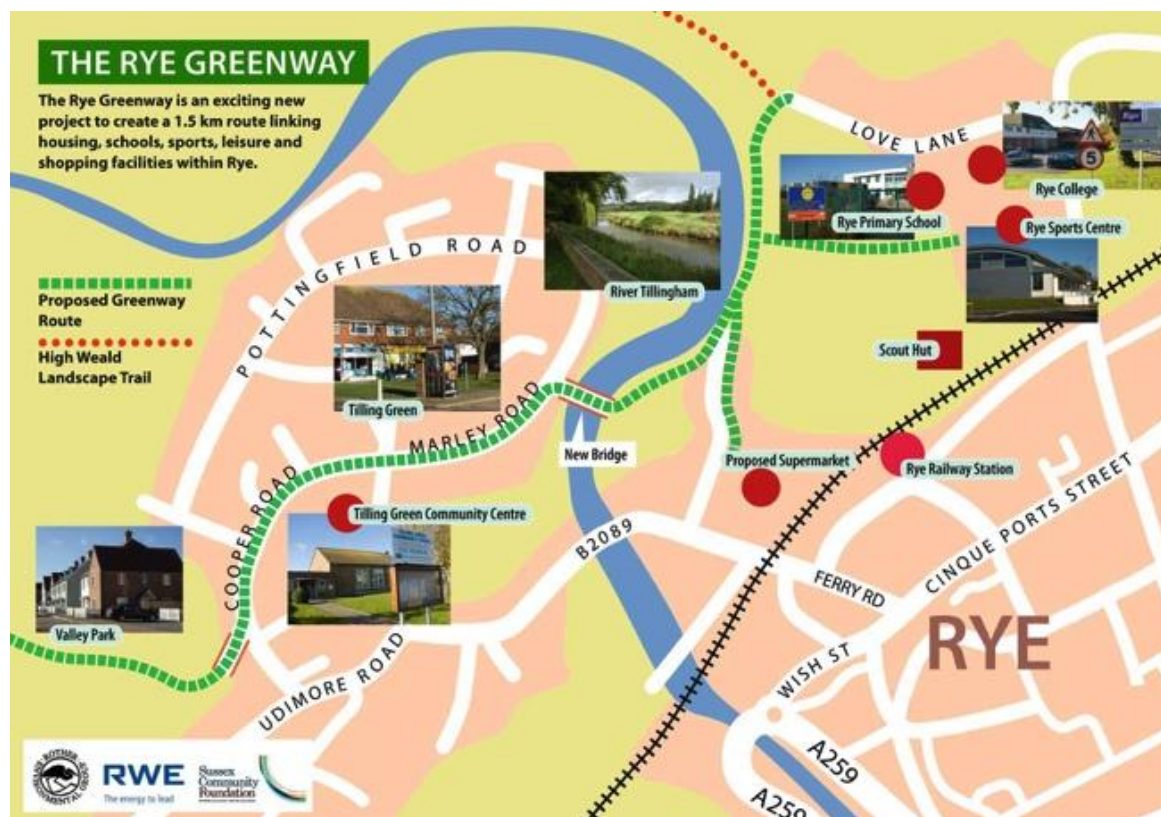


Figure 22: The Greenway Cycle and Footpath Proposal

Parking

- 4.63 Car ownership levels in Rye Parish are up to the national average but parking is limited across the Parish. On-street parking is so restricted that the building of additional parking facilities would be strongly supported by the community. There are also significant community concerns with regard to car-parking provision for new residential development in the light of recent experience locally where inadequate car-parking provision has caused serious highway and amenity problems, including displacement of vehicles from the restricted centre to the unrestricted areas. High levels of on-street parking create a poor urban environment and increase pollution to the detriment of local character and visual amenity, which the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to avoid. Because of the continual problems of parking⁷⁰ in and around Rye, at the time of the Plan Review, work⁷¹ continues on establishing measures to better handle traffic and parking. This work is expected to provide further evidence to enable the future setting of policy for parking while drawing on the ESCC guidance on parking at New Developments (Mar 2024).⁷² Although at this time no policy is included, there is a provisional strategy at Community Aspiration 8.

Infrastructure and Community Facilities

- 4.64 This Plan considers all aspects of infrastructure required to support development. Rother District is recognised for its high quality of life and emphasis on community life. With Rye at the extreme end of the District, the Plan supports a vibrant, safe, balanced and inclusive community with a range of facilities for all from birth to death. With an ageing population, the delivery of services and activities in accessible locations is particularly significant. The Plan seeks to reflect the strong relationship between health, recreation, leisure, sport, culture, heritage and the environment. The existing range of facilities and their role in the community is explored in the Evidence Background Paper.
- 4.65 National Planning Practice Guidance covers the infrastructure required to be provided by utilities such as gas, electricity, water supply, water quality and waste water treatment. Developers will need to work closely with relevant providers to ensure adequate capacity to serve their development. Some site-specific requirements for larger sites may involve the provision of new electric substations, water pumping stations, supply pipe work etc., depending on

⁷⁰ ESCC Transport Development Planning

⁷¹ Car parking survey completed by ESCC in 2021

⁷² https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/media/1759/parking_guidance_residential.pdf

their scale, location and nature. Developers should liaise with utility providers at an early stage (pre-application) to identify any capacity issues and how to overcome these. Any necessary improvements to wastewater treatment infrastructure Southern Water manages over the medium to long-term by monitoring a range of factors, undertaking Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan studies, and making related investment proposals to Ofwat (the water industry regulator) through the 5-year business planning process for the industry.

- 4.66 For any recreational and on-site art, a maintenance schedule and management plan for 15 years should be submitted with any conditions specified. The maintenance and management must address safety inspections including weekly visual inspections and periodic inspections. The management shall include arrangements for litter picking, dog waste clearance, dog waste and general waste collection.
- 4.67 In the west of Rye, the green space of the former Tilling Green School is allocated being for housing. The existing school building has been used for several years as a community facility, which houses a range of facilities including local access to Housing Associations, Credit Union, Early Years Foundation Services (EYFS), dementia activities and recreational clubs. During Covid, it was used as the Rye Vaccination Centre. Future needs for this have been justified and therefore the requirement to refurbish or replace the facility has been included within policy H3 which allocates this site for development.
- 4.68 The policy of East Sussex County Council was to close the Tilling Green Infants and Freda Gardham Primary schools to build the Rye Community Primary School in 2008, co-located with the then secondary school. This concentrated educational assets and facilities within The Grove-Love Lane “education quarter”. A Studio School was built, established but then closed in 2018. The Schools have since moved to academy status. There has been much community debate about capacity of the various educational stages, with particular concern about Early Years, (pre-school) child and nursery care.
- 4.69 There is wide support for more facilities for younger people and in 2024 a group has initiated “Youth Zones” in the former Boys’ School in Mermaid Street and in the Rye Leisure Centre. Consultations with younger residents and students continue.
- 4.70 There is now a record of successful amenities Community Interest Companies (CICs) and Community Incorporated Organisations (CIOs) operating facilities such as the Kino site and Rye Heritage Centre. These are successful business models which should be encouraged. Registering key community facilities with Rother District Council as ‘Assets of Community Value’ will also

be considered because this provides them with a degree of protection from disposal. One such site is the former Methodist Church in Church Square, which is under consideration for community use.



Figure 23 and 24: Play spaces on Valley Park and the Salts

- 4.71 The emerging Draft (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan (Living Well Locally policies) and the NPPF provide a clear framework for the promotion, retention and development of local services and community facilities, with a particular regard for health, wellbeing and mental health impacts.
- 4.72 Rye, now appropriately described in the emerging Draft (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan as “Rye and its Eastern Cluster of Villages”, serves as a centre for much of the eastern part of Rother District. As a result, its facilities are of equal value to residents living well outside the parish boundaries. By safeguarding local community facilities and services - and providing new services - the Plan aims to strengthen Rye’s role as a key settlement serving a disparate rural community. Therefore, the Plan encourages the enhancement of community hubs where the population is centred to include some, or all, of the following:
- a. Facilities for use by outreach social services, including Sussex Outreach Support;
 - b. Ready access to convenience shops for food and everyday items;
 - c. Public accessible toilets;
 - d. Rye youth club (RYZONE);
 - e. Parcel pick-up and drop-off using smart lockers;
 - f. Children’s play area;
 - g. Sports pitches and facilities;
 - h. Green spaces with sitting areas and tree cover;

- i. FAIR community facilities;
- j. Carbon zero co-working spaces for people who do not want to work at home;
- k. Community information and meeting points designed to promote social cohesion;

Policy I1 Infrastructure and Community Facilities

To meet the future needs for essential infrastructure for the Community, improved utility infrastructure shall be encouraged, including the retention of sites valued by the community such as: Community Centres (Conduit Hill, Marley Road and New Road); the *Pugwash* Nursery, the Rye Children's Centre, Ferry Road Nursery, Rye Leisure Centre (including the pool) and youth facilities and the vacant Methodist Church.

Development proposals that result in the loss of sites or premises currently or last used for community purposes shall be refused unless:

- a. Alternative provision of the equivalent or better quality is available in the local area or will be provided and made available prior to the commencement or redevelopment of the proposed scheme; or**
- b. It can be demonstrated there is no reasonable prospect of retention for the current use and that no other community use of the site is suitable or viable.**

To cater for the increased population arising from development in this Plan, every proposal requires negotiation with partners to seek increase provision of key services such as medical (NHS), education (ESCC) and social services (outreach) (RDC).

The Environment, Blue and Green Infrastructure and Energy

- 4.73 The emerging Draft (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan sets a priority on Being "Green to the Core". This means considering the impact of all planning decisions on the climate emergency, the biodiversity crisis and the protected biodiversity which surrounds Rye. We have noted that this means: contributing to the radical

reduction in carbon emissions required by national planning policy through planning for sustainable transport, net zero housing and renewable energy; playing a key role in the UK's nature recovery and carbon sequestration through enhancing our landscape and environmental assets; contributing to health and wellbeing, by providing ready access to green spaces and biodiversity.

4.74 The checklist below describes climate-appropriate measures for medium to large new housing developments, but many of the details are equally applicable to smaller new developments. Below are key issues, reflecting lists used by other districts, which are designed to enable developers and builders to state how their development schemes:

- a. Reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions.
- b. Encourage less dependence on cars and greater use of walking, wheeling and cycling.
- c. Maximise the use of sustainable materials.
- d. Minimise waste and increase recycling and composting.
- e. Conserve water resources.
- f. Incorporate sustainable infrastructure, including Blue and Green infrastructure.
- g. Include sustainable drainage and minimise pollution.
- h. Demonstrate how transport issues are addressed to reduce climate change impacts.
- i. Demonstrate biodiversity net gain.
- j. Encourage all measures to reduce air pollution.

4.75 Every possible measure should be encouraged to reduce waste and handle it efficiently, such as:

- a. to use a reusable bottles/cups for food and drink "on-the-go". Avoid single use plastic;
- b. to use only reusable bags for all purchases, not just for groceries;
- c. to purchase wisely; recycle and repair; buy second hand and donate used goods to charities;
- d. to compost;
- e. to establish public collection points for waste, recycling and glass.

4.76 Water must be used efficiently, with unnecessary flows and leakage reduced. Rainwater collection and water saving features should be incorporated into all buildings. Rainwater should be separated from sewerage. Grey water systems should be considered, with tanks built into groundworks to reduce installation costs.

4.77 Sustainable community infrastructure and greenery should be encouraged as part of the larger developments. Comprehensive facilities should be planned to:

- a. Enhance green (natural and semi-natural areas designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystems to enhance biodiversity) and blue (ponds, streams, rivers and storm water retention) infrastructure to help mitigate climate change, including space specifically for women and girls;⁷³
- b. Take every opportunity to plant suitable trees and shrubs to enhance existing biodiversity; to provide shade in open areas and to contribute to Natural Flood Management;
- c. Provide local opportunities, such as in the Community Garden, to grow and market food in both private and public spaces, in particular via the Country Markets, community gardens, green spaces and allotments; all can provide increased food security;
- d. Minimise hard areas and enhance natural ground and permeable surfaces to facilitate biodiversity and reduce surface flooding;



Figure 25: Rye from the East

4.78 Rye is blessed with a wide range of green and open spaces: The Salts, Mason's Field, marshland, allotments, the Railway Corridor, former Freda Gardham playing fields and informal areas of grassland/woodland. All these link to the rural and surrounding rural countryside beyond which, in turn, links to the nearby coast. This is a vital feature of the Town. There is a wide community view that green areas beyond the Parish boundary, in particular

⁷³ Safer Parks for Women and Girls Guidance

the 'strategic gap' (Note 51) between Rye and Rye Harbour, should be maintained as green spaces.

- 4.79 Much of the area around Rye is designated for the importance of its landscape and/or its habitats for wildlife (Para 1.18). This includes European designations as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar sites, national designations as Sites of Special Scientific Interest ⁷⁴ and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). There is also the conservation designated High Weald National Landscape (NL). The location of these areas is shown on Maps 26A and 26B. Rother District Council has confirmed that the potential impact of development in Rye as at 2019 on the protected biodiversity designations has already been assessed through the Habitats Regulations Assessment. This will need to be developed further as the Draft (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan progresses.

⁷⁴ Natural England recommends the use of SSSI (SSSI IRZs) impact zones when considering the impact of development on protected biodiversity.

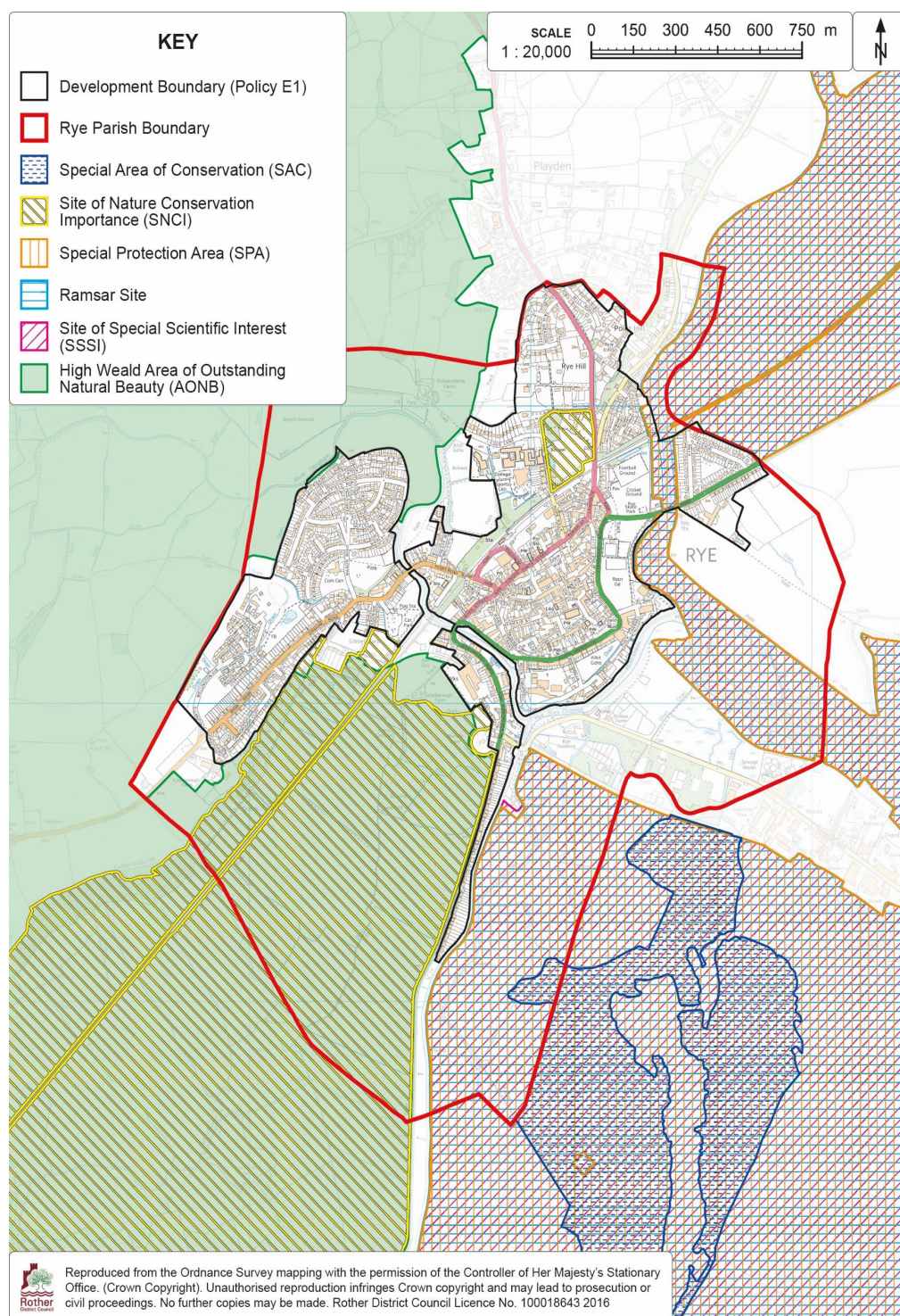


Figure 26A: Designated and Protected Areas (AONB is now HWNL)

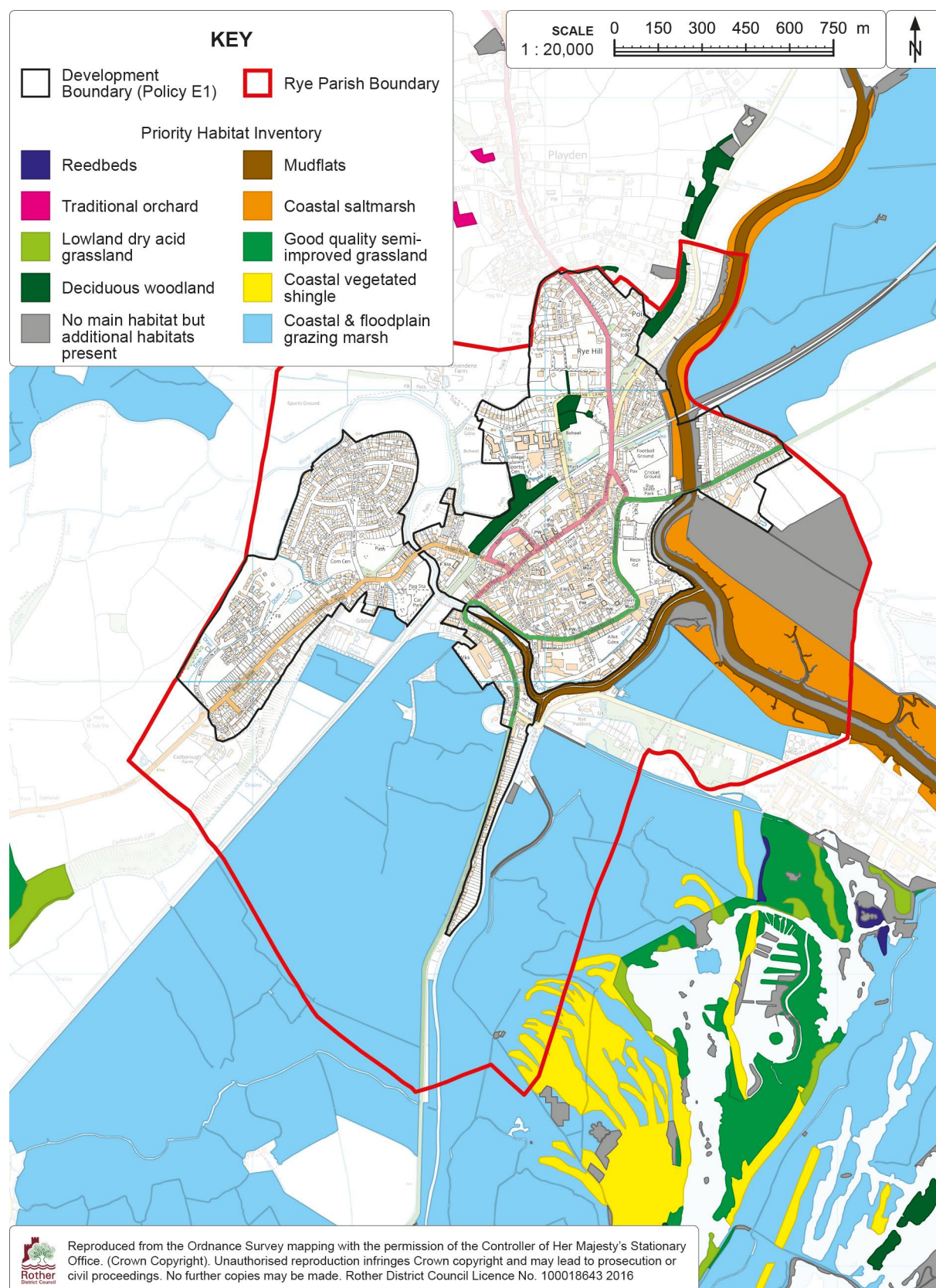


Figure 26B: Rye Habitats

4.80 The characteristics of the environment of Rye and the community's aspirations for protecting it are explored in detail in the Evidence Background Paper. These aspirations include:

- a. Seeking more areas of green space to boost blue and green infrastructure around the town to enhance wildlife habitat, residents' quality of life and contribute towards the provision of a bio-diverse natural environment;
- b. Protecting existing open space, including gardens, allotments, recreational space, open fields, woodlands and pathways;
- c. Existing groups, Transition Rye and Rother Environmental Group are considering future energy use and intend to establish a community energy company (RX) to encourage local generation and measures to reduce energy usage.
- d. For many, light pollution is an issue. The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) claims that only around one 10th of the country enjoys a truly dark night sky;⁷⁵
- e. There are no local facilities for disposing of bulk items of domestic waste. Items have to be collected by private contractors, or Rother District Council's Bulky Waste Service, at cost, or carried to the Household Waste Recycling Site at Mountfield (East Sussex).

The Development Boundary and Strategic Gaps

4.81 Development boundaries around settlements are a well-established planning policy tool in East Sussex. The current Rother Local Plan and DaSA state that the open Gap between Rye citadel and Harbour Road industrial area/Rye Harbour village provides an important function in retaining their distinct identities. The area is high flood risk, fragile and vulnerable to encroaching development, as well as incremental changes in landscape management. The retention and protection of this Gap is important to the conservation and enhancement of local landscape character and views, notably with regard to the setting of the Citadel. The Gap also incorporates the sensitive riverside margin adjacent to the River Brede and River Rother. All new development shall be focused within defined settlement development boundaries, principally on already committed and allocated sites, together with other sites where proposals accord with relevant policies. In the countryside (that is, outside of defined settlement development boundaries), development shall be

⁷⁵ <http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/dark-skies>

normally limited to that which accords with specific policies or that for which a countryside location is demonstrated to be necessary.

4.82 In order to meet the targets set by the Rother Local Plan and to include historical development, there are four locations where change to the Development Boundary has been agreed. These amendments are shown on the Policies Map (Appendix B) that accompanies this Plan: the former Freda Gardham Site (H7); Winchelsea Road West (H6); Rye Primary School is now included in the development boundary; Gibbet Marsh, which is part car park (on tarmac) and part green space (including the overflow parking).

4.83 The emerging Rother Local Plan designates one strategic gap (Policy RY1 iix)⁷⁶ where development is to be strongly resisted: the gap between Rye's Rock Channel and the industrial estate at Rye Harbour Road.⁷⁷ This was extended in the Development and Site Allocation (Note 51) 2019 document and remains to protect the unique character and setting of Rye from further development and the coalescence of settlements. The Strategic Gap comprises water meadows/salt marsh, with protected biodiversity and high flood risk. The land could be used to provide important Biodiversity Net Gain.

4.84 In addition, to further protect the profile of Rye, it is important to retain green areas as gaps between Rye and adjacent Parishes, particularly Icklesham, Udimore, East Guldeford, Playden and Rye Foreign. For these reasons, the policy below sets criteria that should be applied to the countryside, within the Parish of Rye and outside the Rye NP Development Boundary, which surrounds and adjoins the town in order to preserve the unique setting and special character of historic Rye. This policy when applied in conjunction with Core Strategy Policy OSS2 – Use of Development Boundaries, will assist in safeguarding the open countryside⁷⁸ and marsh and preserve the unique setting and special character of historic Rye.

⁷⁶ <http://www.rother.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=22426&p=0>

⁷⁷ Rye Strategic Gap: Core Strategy; Proposed to be extended in the DaSA
<http://www.rother.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=30793&p=0> Page 77

⁷⁸ Coalescence of settlements and urban sprawl have been acknowledged as problems in England since the 1950s. Strategic gaps and their policies are meant to be only concerned with the strategic pattern of settlements and settlement identity. Open countryside is defined as undeveloped land beyond the settlement boundary

Policy E1 Development Boundary, Strategic Gap and the Setting of Rye

New development in Rye shall be focused within the Town's Development Boundary as defined on the Policies Map.

Outside the Development Boundary, development shall be restricted to that for which a countryside location is necessary or which accords with other specific Development Plan Policies, or in those circumstances, such as for essential utilities infrastructure, where no reasonable alternative sites are available.

To preserve Rye's unique setting, particular control over development shall be applied to conserve and enhance the open landscape on the edges of the Town in particular the Strategic Gap between Rock Channel and Rye Harbour as shown below. This gap is high flood risk, biodiversity diverse with protected land, outside the development boundary, and prevents "urban creep" between settlements.

All development shall demonstrate biodiversity net gain.

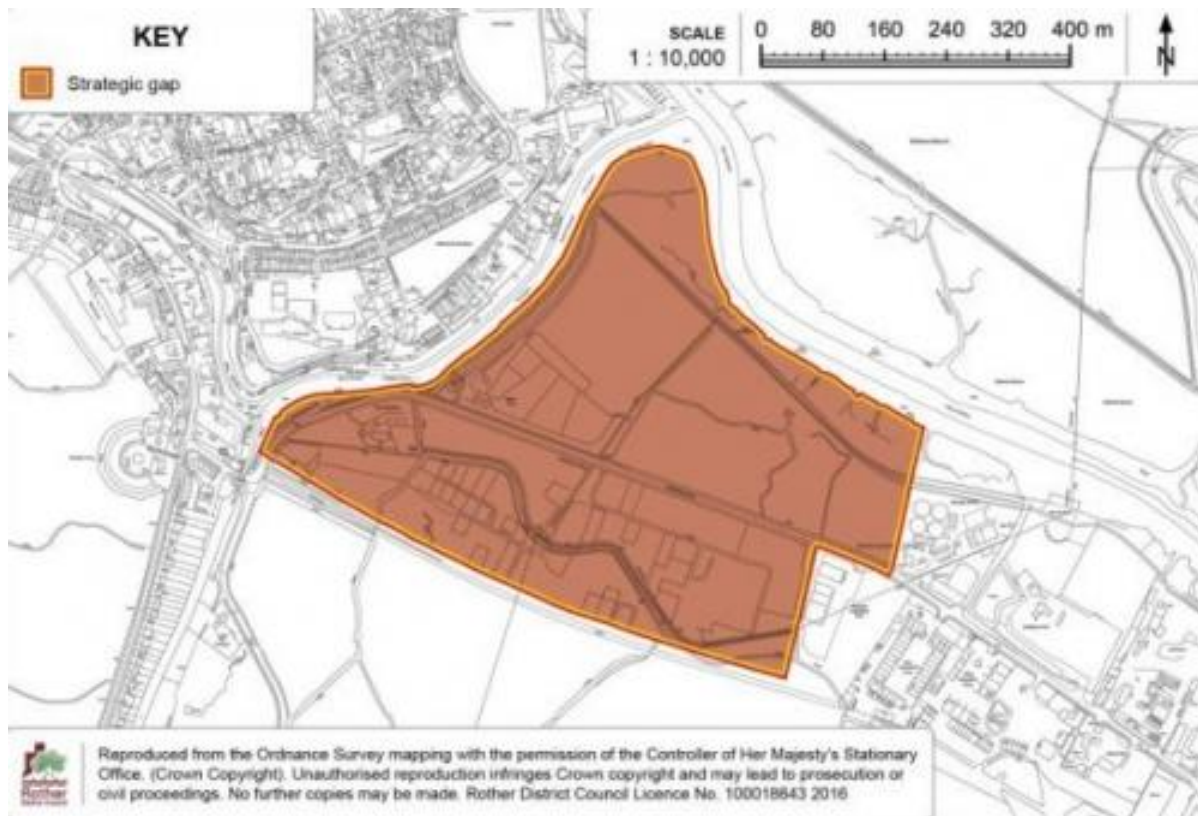


Figure 26C – Rye Strategic Gap



Figure 26D – Rye's Strategic Gap in winter 2022

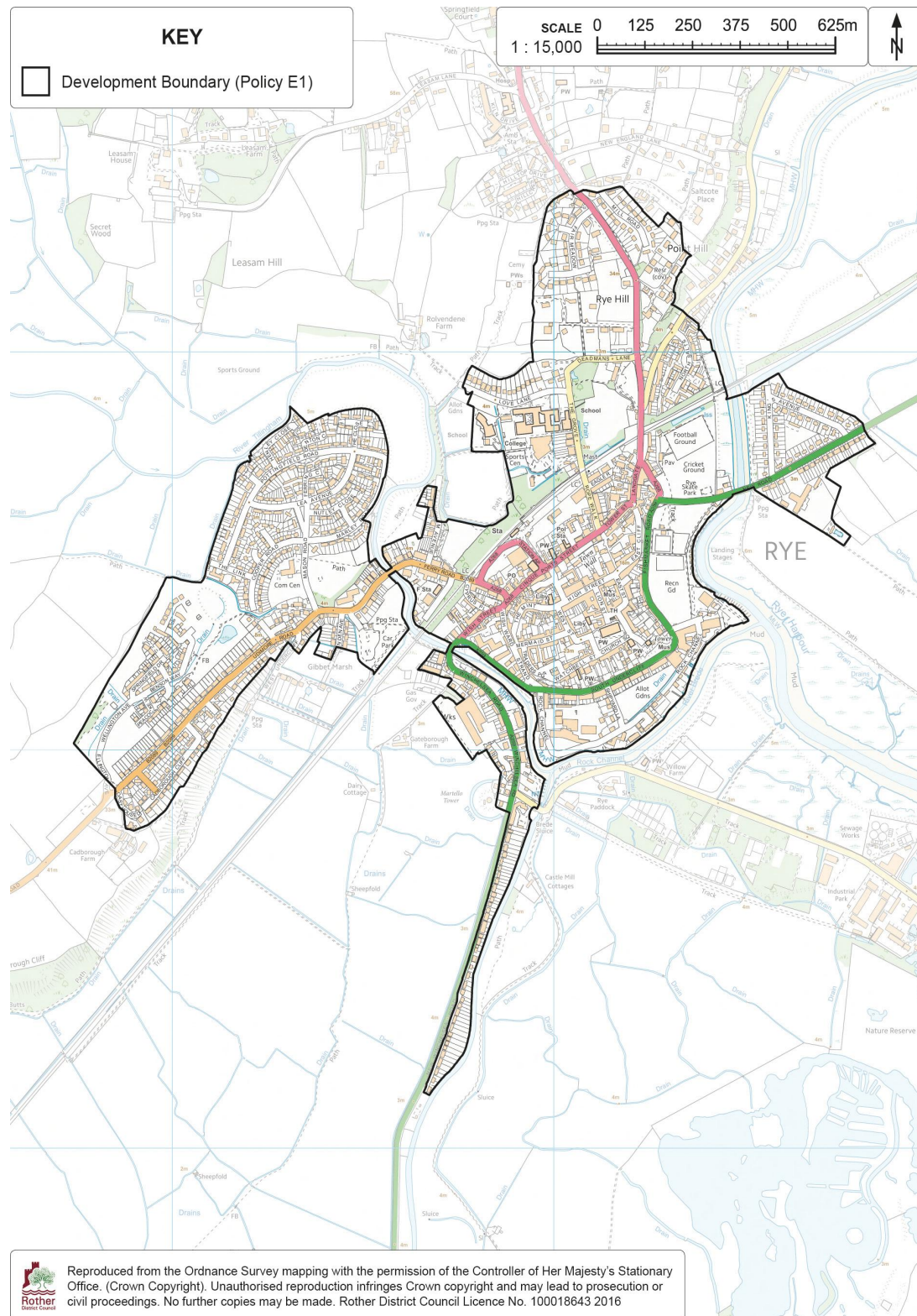


Figure 27: Development Boundary

Blue and Green Infrastructure

4.85 Effective management of habitats may be seen within a wider approach to enhanced ‘blue and green infrastructure’. The emerging Rother Local Plan has a new blue and green infrastructure policy. Rye is fortunate to have a wide network of multi-functional green spaces, many adjacent to the three river system, which supports a wide range of purposes:

- a. The creation and enhancement of a sense of place;
- b. Provision of recreation opportunities;
- c. Preservation and enhancement of biodiversity;
- d. Transport routes, including for walking, wheeling and cycling;
- e. Improved water resources and flood management;
- f. Contribution to climate change adaption and mitigation.

4.86 The NPPF defines Green Infrastructure as a “A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities” Rother DC sets out policies for local green spaces and amenities.⁷⁹ Natural England’s Green Infrastructure Framework⁸⁰ sets new standards standard for accessible green space. East Sussex County Council also sets policy for green spaces.

⁸¹ Given the specific environmental context of Rye, with its high quality historic built environment and public realm, the distinctive character of its landscape setting, its proximity to internationally protected habitats and its exposure to potential flooding, the consideration of and compliance with these policies will be of paramount importance.

4.87 The Plan will support development which:

- a. Integrates new multi-functional open space within it.

⁷⁹ <http://www.rother.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=6405&p=0>

⁸⁰ Standards = naturalengland.org.uk

⁸¹ <http://sussexlnp.org.uk/documents/EastSussexGIStrategyFinal.pdf>

- b. Actively seeks to improve the connectivity of blue and green infrastructure and enhance biodiversity (and not supporting development which further fragments green infrastructure and impacts negatively on biodiversity).
 - c. Increases the number of street trees and planting in a locality.
 - d. Designates green infrastructure including spaces to protect them from development, while encouraging gardens and permeable surfaces.
 - e. Integrates biodiversity improvements within any renewable energy installations.⁸²
- 4.88 Although surrounded by blue and green infrastructure, within Rye there is green infrastructure, important for its environmental character, the local recreational facilities which it provides and as a source for biodiversity. Green infrastructure comprises parks and gardens, accessible natural and semi natural green space, green links, watercourses and canals, accessible countryside, and designated nature conservation sites. The community places importance on the preservation and protection of these areas. In addition to green spaces there are two historical and statutory allotments⁸³ identified in Figure 28 and protected under statutes that were passed in the period from 1819 to 1950.⁸⁴ In 2024, the freehold of these passed to Rye Town Council.
- 4.89 During 2024 and 2025 there are several planting projects under way to add around 100 trees to the Town's green infrastructure. More projects are planned. The locations, which have been approved by Rother DC include: Tilling Green, Mill Salts and the Rye Salts.

⁸² Research by the Building Research Establishment shows that where a Biodiversity Management Plan is developed, field based solar farms can deliver habitat enhancements

⁸³ <http://www.rother.gov.uk/allotments>

⁸⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/14/31>

Policy E2 Blue and Green Infrastructure

To protect and encourage the retention and new provision of multi-functional green infrastructure, the green spaces listed below and identified in Figure 28, shall be safeguarded from loss or alternative uses by the provisions of Policy CO3 of the Rother District Local Plan (or equivalent policy).

A and B: Valley Park common areas

C: Masons Field

D: Tilling Green Triangle

E: Pottingfield Greens 1, 2 and 3

F: Gibbet Marsh – Green Space (overflow car park)

G: The Strand

H: Rye College Sports Field

I: The Church Yard

J and K: North Salts; Middle Salts and Town Salts

L: Rye Rugby Club Field

M: Two allotments: Love Lane and South Undercliff

Blue and Green Infrastructure: Development proposals shall include improvements (including planting) to local green infrastructure - particularly along routes to improve connectivity for people and habitats - and to mitigate against the increasing risk of flood brought by climate change.

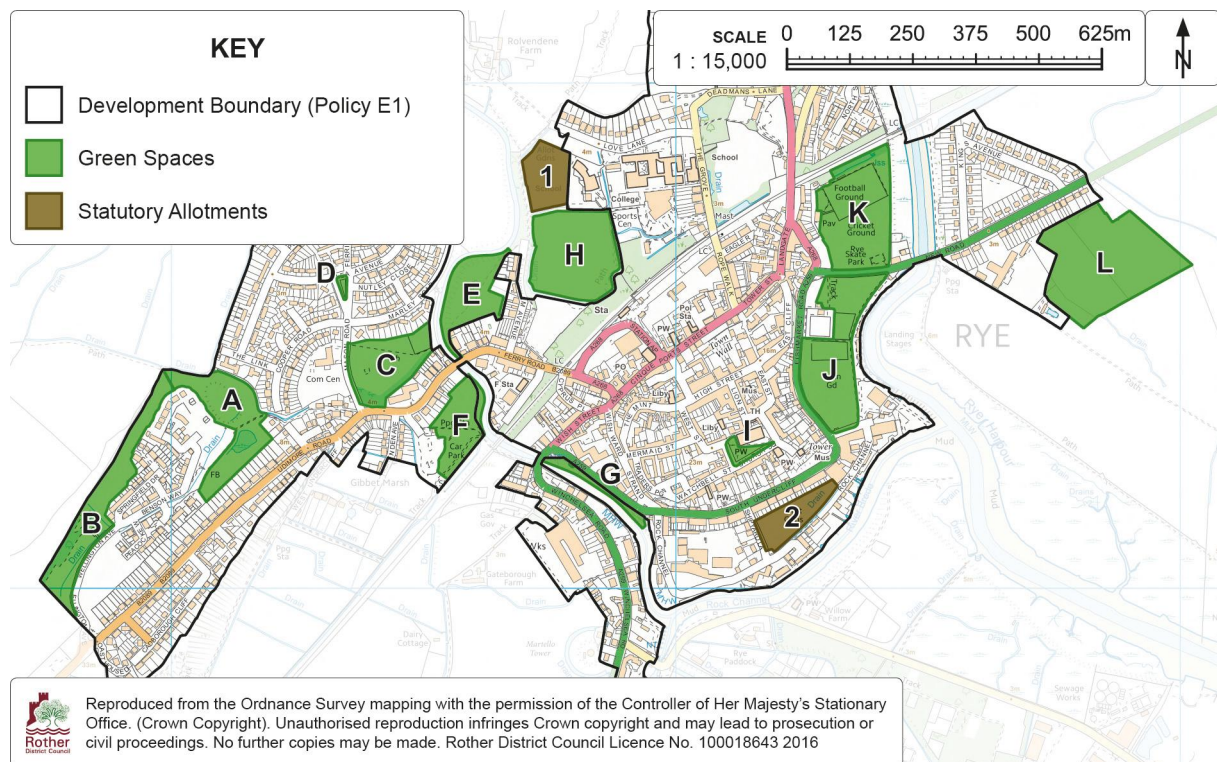


Figure 28: Rye Green Infrastructure

Conservation of the historic environment

4.90 Rye is a historic town, with records going back to Saxon times when the region along the south coast, including Rye, was under the rule of the Abbey of Fecamp in France. At its heart is St Mary's Church dating from the early Norman period. In the 14th century Rye underwent regeneration and fortification. This was begun with the building of the town wall and four gates; Landgate, Strandgate, Baddings Gate and Postern Gate. Modernisation of defence was implemented in the 15th and 16th centuries but today only one of the gates remains: the Landgate. The remains of these medieval defensive structures, including the Landgate and Ypres Tower, form the core of the heritage buildings and streets today.



Figure 29: Ypres Tower

- 4.91 The rich diversity of architectural styles and periods make Rye an architectural and heritage gem partly set in cobbled streets with heritage street furniture, making the town such an important tourist destination. In all there are some 290 listed and varied structures in Rye including:
- a. 14c The Monastery⁸⁵, Landgate⁸⁶ and Ypres Tower⁸⁷
 - b. The St Mary's Church Rye Turret Clock (could be 14th century)
 - c. 1735: The Water System in Church Square (Pump Street) is Grade II* listed and a Scheduled Ancient Monument;
 - d. the 18th century Water Cistern in Wish Ward is Grade II listed;
 - e. Early 19th century: Martello Tower number 30
 - f. 1923: the WW1 memorial⁸⁸ designed and built under the supervision of Sir Reginald Blomfield who had property in the Town;
 - g. 1927: the St Anthony of Padua Roman Catholic church in Watchbell Street is unique to the UK as the only building in this country in the

⁸⁵<http://www.ryemuseum.co.uk/the-monastery/>

⁸⁶ <http://www.ryemuseum.co.uk/landgate-walls-and-strandgate/>

⁸⁷ <http://www.ryemuseum.co.uk/home/ypres-tower/>

⁸⁸ <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/106976/>

Spanish Romanesque style popularised in Spain's former South American colonies;⁸⁹

- h. Later additions include the lookouts at the East and West ends of the Citadel (Hilders Cliff)⁹⁰

- 4.92 Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas are protected by law under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 126-141) and the Planning Practice Guidance require that decision-making aims to sustain and enhance the significance of all heritage assets, including non-designated assets. Archaeological sites, historic buildings and other heritage assets are recorded on the County Historic Environment Record (HER)⁹¹.
- 4.93 There are significant archaeological remains across the Parish. With Rye's long history as a port, trading and agricultural centre and the shifting nature of past river channels, beaches and marshes, there is high potential of the survival of evidence of historic human activity, including industrial, ship-building, fishing, and as a rural centre. Development will take account of this potential through appropriate assessment, evaluation and mitigation in order that significant archaeological remains are protected in situ, enhanced and conserved or where this is not possible adequately recorded in advance of their loss. Provision will be made for all discoveries and findings to be reported to appropriate professional standards and the archive deposited with Rye Museum.
- 4.94 There is already a strong policy framework protecting heritage assets in the current and emerging NPPF and the emerging Draft (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan. In particular the latter includes the following policies on heritage: HER1 to HER3.
- 4.95 In the ancient centre of Rye, the Conservation Area Appraisals⁹² have particular relevance for any development or change, no matter how minor. The Conservation Area Appraisal for Rye was adopted by Rother District Council in 2006 and informs the policy. This applies primarily to proposals

⁸⁹ http://www.catholicdirectory.org/Catholic_Information.asp?ID=33760

⁹⁰ <http://www.ryesussex.co.uk/directory/127/ef-benson-society/>

⁹¹ <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/archaeology/her>

⁹² <http://www.rother.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=6181&p=0>

within the Conservation Area but may also be relevant to proposals affecting historic areas outside the designated area or affecting the setting of the Conservation Area. Many non-designated heritage assets go unrecognised and therefore may fail to be taken into account during decision-making.

Policy E3 Heritage and Urban Design: The health and wellbeing benefits should be recognised from protecting historical environments.

All development impacting on the historic built environment of the Rye Conservation Area shall be designed with regard to the characteristics set out in the Rye Conservation Area Appraisal (Footnote 39). These include:

- a. The archaeological interest of the buildings themselves.**
- b. The medieval pattern of narrow streets with most of the buildings lining the footways; the occasional recess by way of court or garden providing an interesting contrast and giving variety to the streetscene.**
- c. Partially revealed 'glimpse' views created by the curve or slope of many of the streets or by passageways.**
- d. Buildings largely of two and half storeys with pitched roofs in which there are often dormer windows.**
- e. The high number of timber-framed buildings, with the more formal work of the medieval period being represented in the few buildings of stone.**
- f. The restricted palette of materials, prevalent ones being brick, handmade clay tile (for roof or tile hanging), weather boarding, painted render and slate.**
- g. The historic streetscapes – with historic furniture - including several streets that are paved with cobbles.**
- h. The highly visible and important roofscape of jumbled historic clay-tiled roofs, its impact heightened by the topography of the town.**
- i. The distinctive and high quality, historic shop fronts and advertisements.**

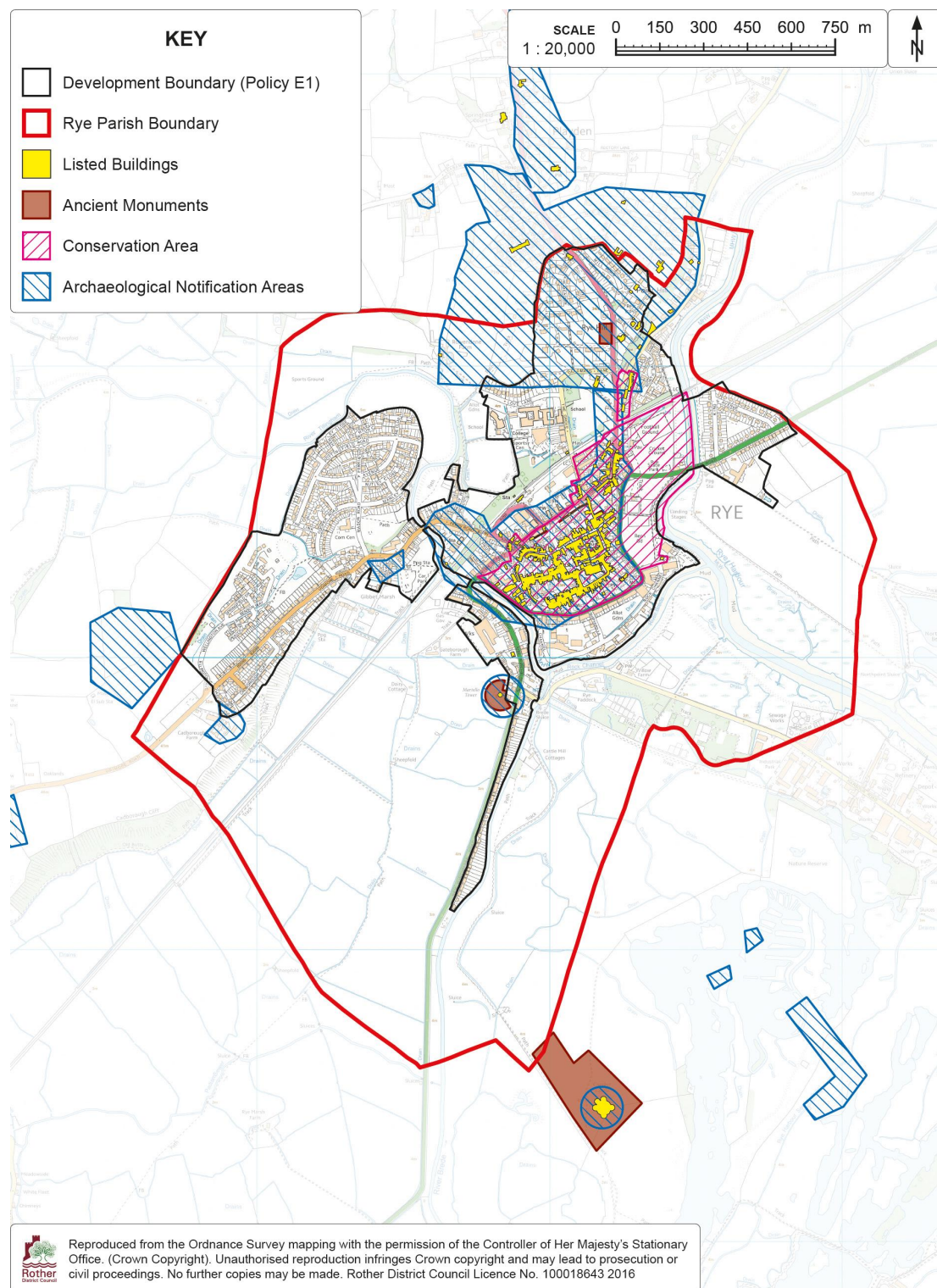


Figure 30: Rye Conservation Area and Other Heritage Designations

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

- 4.96 This plan promotes energy from renewable and low carbon sources, where heritage and conservation rules allow. Design should be carbon neutral, with as much local renewable community energy generation with local involvement as possible. This could include district heat pumps and individual heat pumps. There should be increased local renewable energy generation as usage increases to power electric vehicles (EVs) and heat pumps as fossil fuels are phased out. There should be solar thermal for hot water and solar photovoltaics for electricity – oriented to maximise heat and generation. In addition, there should be high levels of insulation to minimise heating and cooling energy requirements. All developments with integral parking spaces should have EVCP facilities. The emerging Draft (Regulation 18) Rother Local Plan uses LETI⁹³ and BREEAM⁹⁴ standards to guide development and to align with current industry standards.

⁹³ <https://www.levittbernstein.co.uk/site/assets/files/3494/leti-climate-emergency-design-guide.pdf>

⁹⁴ https://syntegragroup.com/m-and-e2/services/breeam-assessment/?gad_source=1&gbraid=0AAAAAD66CIT2vUw_hFT8Qihtryhz3_Bgv&gclid=Cj0KCQiAr7C6BhDRARIsAOUKifhynsgrfA-UuKBGJyeigqiTnKod5V13D2gsSusjd8Cyo5AN7cfHpCoaAit_EALw_wcB

Policy E4 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy The health and wellbeing benefits should be recognised from measures to tackle climate change.

All development proposals shall include measures to use renewable and low carbon energy and demonstrate power-saving features, using LETI and BREEAM standards, including to:

- a. Propose renewable and low carbon energy generation schemes, particularly those utilising solar, biomass and wind energy technologies but these should: not have a significant adverse impact on local amenities, ecological and heritage assets or landscape character, and not have an adverse impact on the National Landscape and land immediately adjacent to it, nor other sensitive and protected biodiversity or landscapes.**
- b. Consider small scale industrial and community energy generation systems including solar photovoltaic panels, biomass anaerobic digestion and communal combined heat and power (CHP) units and ground and air source heat pumps.**
- c. Maximise opportunities to install Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) in accordance with policy in the draft Emerging Rother Local Plan.**

Section 5 – Community Aspirations

- 5.1 The process of preparing and reviewing the RNP has resulted in the community raising a significant number of issues and suggested actions that cannot be addressed through the planning system. These are considered no less important; indeed, many would help to address the problems that have been created by development in the past. They might also mitigate the impacts of future development in the Neighbourhood Plan. The list has been reviewed and remains extant.
- 5.2 What follows represents the aspirations of the community which can be acted on through community projects. Each will need to be considered by separate project teams, studies completed and if agreed then funding sought from a mix of sources: from partners, from community grants, from S106/CIL developers' contributions, or from private sources. These fall into the following themes:

- a. Heritage
- b. Enterprise and Employment
- c. Town Promotion and Tourism
- d. Green Tourism
- e. Traffic and Parking⁹⁵
- f. Rail connectivity
- g. Strand Water Project
- h. Community Infrastructure and Services
- i. Education and
- j. Health

Heritage

- 5.3 The heritage assets of Rye are an integral part of its value to residents and as a visitor attraction. The community can help to protect these assets by raising awareness about heritage features that are not formally designated but are, nonetheless, important reminders of Rye's past. They can also work with partners to raise funds to restore heritage structures and items such as the Rother barge 'Primrose' which has been offered to Rye by Hastings Museum to relocate for display on the Strand. This barge is the only surviving Rother Barge and used to lay in the mud on the River Rother.

Community Aspiration 1 – Heritage

- a. To work with Historic England and Rother District Council to compile a local list of non-designated heritage assets in Rye.**
- b. To protect, through work with partners, Rye's public heritage structures: including the Landgate Tower, remains of the Town Walls to the North of the Centre, the Town War Memorial and the lookouts in the west and east of the Citadel.**
- c. To encourage the movement of the Rother Barge "Primrose" from Hastings to Rye to a location to be decided on the Strand.**
- d. To encourage the work of Rye Museum in recording and archiving local archaeology.**

⁹⁵ LTP 4 2024 to 2050



Figure 31: Rother Barge “Primrose”

Enterprise and Employment Training for Specific Skills and Enterprise

- 5.4 The Town Council will work in partnership with the local authorities, businesses and training providers including Skills East Sussex and the Local Skills Improvement Partnership, to enable training and skills development. Local apprenticeship schemes will be strongly encouraged.

Community Aspiration 2 – Training

To encourage training opportunities for:

- a. the hospitality trade;**
- b. maritime related businesses in the Port of Rye; and**
- c. the fishing industry.**

Town Promotion and Tourism

- 5.5 Promotion of the Town as a visitor destination needs to happen in a more coherent and coordinated way, drawing together the several organisations involved. All organisations involved in marketing must work together and take a more joined up approach. Each website should provide links to the others where appropriate and should be updated regularly providing information about events, accommodation, transport and any other information needed by visitors.

Community Aspiration 3 – Town Promotion and Tourism

To better coordinate the marketing of the Town as a visitor destination.

Green Tourism

- 5.6 Green Tourism encourages organisations and businesses involved in tourism to improve their sustainability and there is a certification scheme to recognise their efforts⁹⁶. Rye is in an excellent position to promote green tourism due to the extensive environmental assets within and around the town. The Town Council encourages visitors⁹⁷ to Rye to use public transport where possible and provides details of local cycling routes, cycle hire, farmers' markets, and wildlife factsheets, as well as details of local Green Tourism Business Scheme members.
- 5.7 An important environmental asset within easy reach of the town is the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, adjacent to Rye Parish, where there are opportunities to be explored. There is wildlife, habitat, landscape and walks beside the sea, whatever the season. The Nature Reserve lies within a large triangle of land extending south from Rye, along the River Rother, past Rye Harbour to the sea, westward to Winchelsea Beach and northwards along the River Brede. This triangle of land is largely designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) because of the many unusual plants and animals that live here as well as the way the land has been built up by the sea over the last 500 years.
- 5.8 Shingle wildlife is specialised because of the harsh conditions that prevail, so there are many rare and endangered plants and animals to be found here. Large gravel pits were created by shingle extraction and these have become a valuable habitat for wetland wildlife. Most of the area also has the European wildlife designations of Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). In 2006 the SSSI was included in the new 9,000+ ha. site called the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI.
- 5.9 The King Charles III England Coast Path National Trail (KCIIECP) will be a continuous, easy to follow, well-maintained walking route, allowing people to walk around the whole English coast. The KCIIECP is a national asset that will bring health and wellbeing benefits to local people and visitors. The trail

⁹⁶ <http://www.green-tourism.com/>

⁹⁷ Via Rye websites and social media

Figures 32 A and B: Rye traffic management concepts

- 5.11 In 1987/8 the Ferry Road/Crownfields/Station Approach/Cinque Ports Street one-way system was introduced when a supermarket was built on the site of the former bus depot. The system does not properly address the needs of pedestrians, bus/train passengers and road users.
- 5.12 During the last five years, there has been:
- a. An extension of parking restrictions in South Undercliff to 7 days a week;
 - b. The introduction of a one-way system in Deadmans Lane; and
 - c. The creation of a single central High Street loading bay, which has had some positive effects on traffic problems in the centre of town, but without traffic enforcement is often used for unauthorised car parking.
- 5.13 A wide range of issues and possible solutions were raised by the Community and considered by the Steering Group. These are set out in detail in the Evidence Background Paper. These have resulted in the aspirations below.

Through Routes

- 5.14 Improvements to through routes are the responsibility of National Highways England in conjunction with East Sussex County Council. The former has explained that Rye is not a high priority for major road improvements, but has asked to be consulted further about aspirations which have arisen during the consultations.

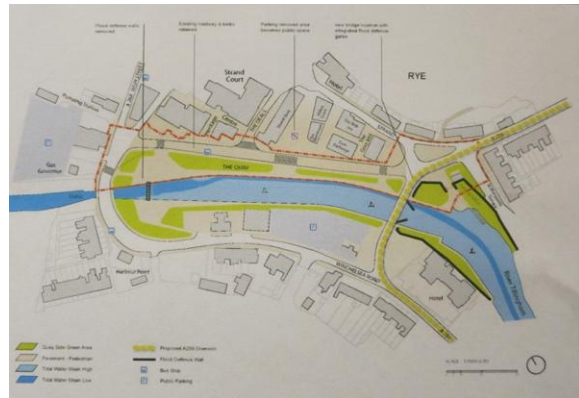
Community Aspiration 5 – Through Routes

To consider some innovative improvements, including road widening of parts of the A259 from New Winchelsea Road to the Monkbretton Bridge, where land allows; improvements to the Harbour Road junction and a possible re-routing to bypass much of the Strand Quayside, as recommended by the Marks Barfield Study (Figures 34 and 50).

Reviewed Referendum version of 10 May 2019. Modified to reflect consultations to 21 Jul 25 and discussions with RDC to May 26. Post Reg 14 at Jul 26



Now



Proposed by MarksBarfield

Figure 33 and 34: The Strand – examples of earlier schematic proposals

The Town Gateways

5.15 The Rye Initiative (1993) made recommendations about these, which are generally considered to hold good today. Of the identified inner Town “gateways” two should be considered for improvement.

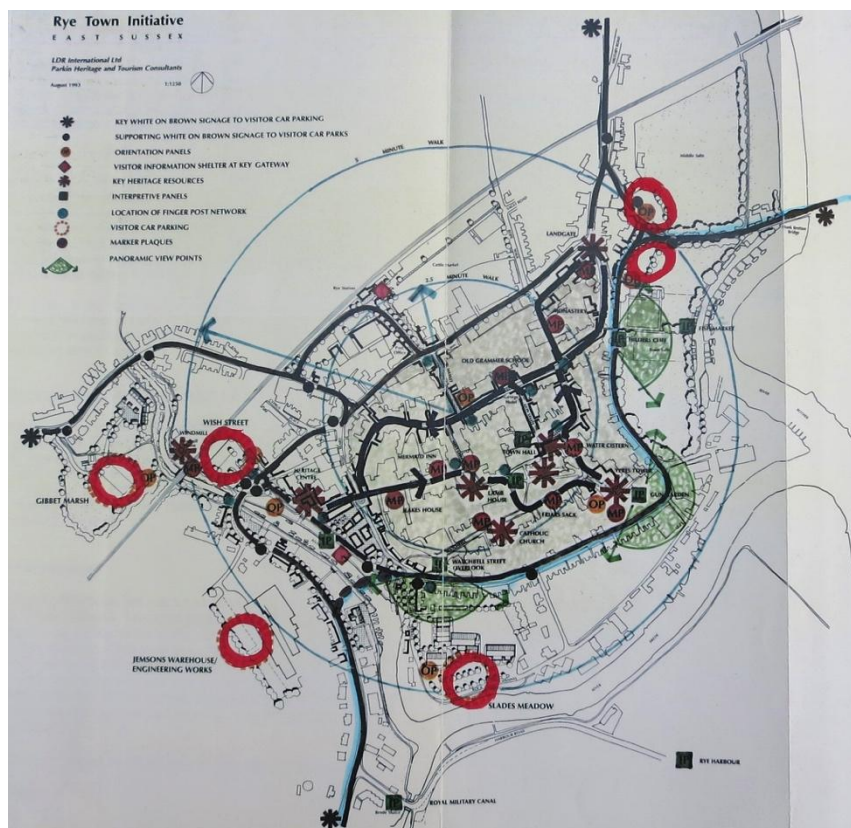


Figure 35: Town “Gateways” showing linkage with through and internal routes

- 5.16 Winchelsea Road to the Strand is part of the gateway to Rye from the West, a visitor attraction and therefore should be subject to further study. With its heritage buildings, cafes and antique shops, it is a major tourist attraction, but cars and people are mixed to the extent that safety is compromised. Many desire the location to be more pedestrian- and visitor-friendly.

Community Aspiration 6 – Town Gateways

To consider innovative approaches to the town gateways, including a form of ‘shared space’ street environment at the junction of Mermaid Street, Wish Ward and the Strand.

Ferry Road/Station Approach

- 5.17 The Station Approach is Rye's multi-transport hub (railway station, bus stops, taxi rank, coach and car parking). It has related vehicle parking (Network Rail and former Cattle Market), for cars and coaches, which is vital for those working in and visiting the Town.
- 5.18 At peak times of travel and on Market Days this hub sees pedestrians crossing in all directions, competing with vehicles travelling through Rye and manoeuvring to park. Safety of the location could be enhanced by considering innovative solutions such as “shared space” or multiple crossings. Clearer information displays and signage should also be provided, rather than the current confusing system.

Community Aspiration 7 – Ferry Road/Station Approach

To consider innovative improvements to Station Approach to make it more pedestrian friendly, accessible to cyclists and enhancing its appearance. Any approach might include improved pedestrian crossings perhaps combined with system of “shared space”.



Figure 36: Station Approach:

Parking

- 5.19 This is one of the most contentious issues for the community during the Plan making period. One of the events was an inconclusive 2016 Public Meeting with the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner to address the issues. The issues raised by residents, together with the other evidence considered by the Steering Group, are set out in the Evidence Background paper (RNP Support 1).
- 5.20 A strategic and holistic review was carried out by Rye Town Council to coincide with the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) to those streets in the centre of Rye which have been restricted. CPE will be subject to future regular reviews by ESCC. An outline strategy is suggested in the following community aspiration.



Figure 37 Vehicles parking on the pavements in the High Street.

Community Aspiration 8 – Parking Strategy to:

- a. Encourage people who drive to the town to park in the “interceptor car parks” (Car parks shown in RED on Figure 35). These have the potential to capture vehicles before they enter the Town Centre. This will require increased signage and consultation with partners setting parking fees at a level to make the option attractive.**
- b. Provide an improved Town Centre allocation of short term on-street car parking in the Town Centre with better clarity for users, more blue badge spaces and signage to underused parking areas. The on-street car parking zones need to be better allocated (loading, short stay, blue badge) and marked. Clear signage, designation and delineation of car parking bay areas without yellow lining is required to assist users.**
- c. Provide more capacity closer to the Town Centre, considering the feasibility of multilevel parking sites close to the Station subject to design/built form implications.**
- d. Consider more effective motorcycle parking provision at the Strand to meet existing peak demands and to create separation between bikes and pedestrians.**
- e. Consider park and Ride at peak tourist times, using existing parking, such as at Gibbet Marsh.**
- f. Consider the creation of residents’ parking zones in certain areas of the town centre and station. This will prevent commuters and town centre employees from occupying residents’ parking areas.**
- g. Ensure that all new developments have adequate off-road parking.**
- h. Work with Rother DC, Network Rail and ESCC to provide preferential parking rates – for residents and town centre workers.**
- i. Monitor and report to East Sussex County Council and other partners with a view to improving the parking management introduced in 2020 as Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE).**

Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs)

- 5.21 Electric cars are becoming more common and this trend is likely to increase with the Government's announcement that petrol and diesel cars will be phased out by 2035. However, with exception of the EVCP site at Salts Farm adjacent to the Camber turnoff, there are few facilities in the area to recharge electric vehicles. Adequate power supplies are limited in Rye, preventing the installation of wider public fast charging facilities. This needs to be addressed.



Figure 38: Example of electric car charging power point

Community Aspiration 9 – Electric Car Facilities

To encourage the establishment of adequate power sources and electric car parking facilities across Rye.

Out of Town Bulk Delivery Handling

- 5.22 With increasing use of internet suppliers and “just in time” supplies for business there has been a rise in the number and frequency of LGV, HGV and vans entering the Town. Currently some companies such as Hermes Logistics use large supply vehicles to drop off at out of town storage (3 miles away in Rye Harbour where there are facilities for storage and handling). Smaller vehicles then supply goods to the Town Centre. By wider adoption of this process larger vehicles (up to 7.5T) could be restricted or removed from the High Street.

Community Aspiration 10 – Out of Town Bulk Delivery Facilities

To consider edge-of-town storage facilities to remove large deliveries from the Town Centre.

Improved Road Signage

- 5.23 To provide greater clarity of directions to car parking within the town and in response to comments and concerns of misunderstanding, clearer signage and better road markings are required. There are many examples of outdated and misleading signs, such as in Tower Street. Car parking control zone signs should be located at key entrances to the town particularly into the Town Centre. Well designed signs should also be placed to divert incoming traffic to those car parks acting as “interceptor parks” at Rye’s “gateways” (Figure 35).

Community Aspiration 11 – Improved Road Signage

To encourage a holistic review of all road and pedestrian signage with a view to redesigning to better guide visitors to “interceptor car parks” and to aid through traffic.

High Street

- 5.24 Comments from both the community and visitors indicate the need to create a more pedestrian-friendly and more ‘active’ Town Centre. The speed of traffic needs to be reduced and the control/management of on-street car parking improved. Pedestrianisation is impracticable because of the lack of side access for delivery vehicles and community transport. In order to move on from established practice, other innovative options, including limited “shared space”¹⁰⁰ sections, will require political will and determination, careful thought and observation, and the courage to explore and refine new solutions.

¹⁰⁰ A term for an emerging approach to urban design both to reduce the adverse impacts of traffic in town centres and increase the safety of pedestrians. Although there is steep learning curve initially, it is seen that the public quickly see the benefits.



Figure 39: Example of Shared Space and the detail of the Strand Junction

Community Aspiration 12 - High Street

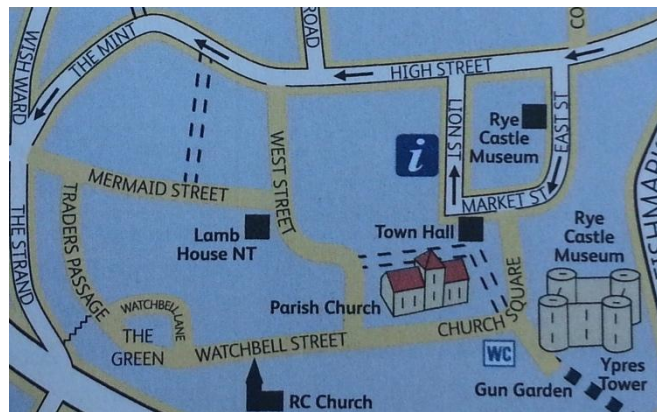
To consider innovative solutions to improve the roadscape of the broad location of the High Street from Hilders Cliff to the Mint and at the junction of the Mint, Mermaid Street and Wish Ward.

Inner Citadel

- 5.25 Timber framed medieval houses, cobbled surfaces, fragile narrow and often uneven pavements are all adversely affected by too much heavy and speeding traffic on the inner Citadel roads. Pavements are routinely mounted by vehicles in attempts to pass on narrow roads, endangering pedestrians, property and street furniture. Most of the cobbled area is now classified as “Pedestrian Zone” but more innovative measures should be considered for the future.

Community Aspiration 13 - Inner Citadel

To consider all measures to regulate traffic within the Inner Citadel to protect pedestrians, street furniture and property



Figures 40 and 41: Citadel congestion

Speeding

- 5.26 Traffic calming and speed reduction measures have been considered for the main through roads. This Plan has considered several proposals to improve road safety and reduce the hazards caused by speeding vehicles (particularly those coming into the town) by the main access routes.

Community Aspiration 14 – Speeding.

To support proposals for:

- a. A 20mph speed limit for the Citadel pedestrian zone, Cinque Ports Street, Wish Ward, Ferry Road (as far as the level crossing), Station Approach, Tower Street and Landgate; and
- b. The installation at the town boundary on all 5 entry roads distinctive markings to remind all road users to comply with the 30mph limit and to proceed with care in the town.



Figures: 42 and 43: Examples of traffic speed regulation signs

Rail Connectivity

- 5.27 In its relatively isolated location at the eastern end of East Sussex, Rye needs improved infrastructure (road and rail) to increase connectivity to and from the town. Many, but not all, aspire to seeing the Fast Javelin Service (also known as HS1 extension) extended from Ashford to Bexhill with a stopping service at Rye. Should fast Javelin rail services arrive to serve Rye, more parking will need to be provided for those coming into Rye from surrounding areas to catch trains. The proposal is being led by Network Rail along with East Sussex, Kent, Hastings and Rother Councils. Depending on the emerging outcomes of this work further consideration will be given to the implications, including parking. Strategic rail improvements will be supported:

Community Aspiration 15 – Rail Connectivity.

To support:

- a. **The Fast Javelin Train (HS1) extension from Ashford to Bexhill, stopping at Rye and Hastings; and**
- b. **Improvements to the existing rail service to provide better connection with mainline routes (later train times; more rolling stock) and other public transport using the Rye hub of Station Approach.**
- c. **The enhancement of the Rye transport hub facility at the Railway Station which provides many alternatives to car travel including walking, wheeling and cycling, taxi and bus services.**
- d. **Consideration of related overflow station parking using Gibbet Marsh**



Figures 44 and 45: Rail transport

5.28 In 1895 the Rye and Camber Tramway was opened to connect Rye with a new golf course at Camber. The Rye & Camber Tramways Co. Ltd was liquidated in February 1949. Originally designed to cater for the transportation needs of golfers and their caddies to Rye Golf Club from Rye, the steam railway also took fishermen from Rye to their fishing boats moored opposite Rye Harbour village, where a river ferry could be hailed. During WW2 the line served military purposes between Rye and Rye Harbour (East Side). When built it was entirely on private land. Sections of the track and some infrastructure remain today.



Figures 46 and 47: The Rye Harbour Halt and sections of rail at Rye Golf Club.

5.29 A renewal project ¹⁰¹would provide an important “green” tourism attraction and would chime with trends in other parts of the country where old rail lines have been reinstated. Any project would have to be coordinated with the work to develop the King Charles III England Coast Path (Eastbourne to Camber) by Natural England.

¹⁰¹ Not included in the LTP 4 Investment Plan

Community Aspiration 16 - Rye and Camber Railway

To encourage a project to reinstate all or some of the Rye & Camber Railway.

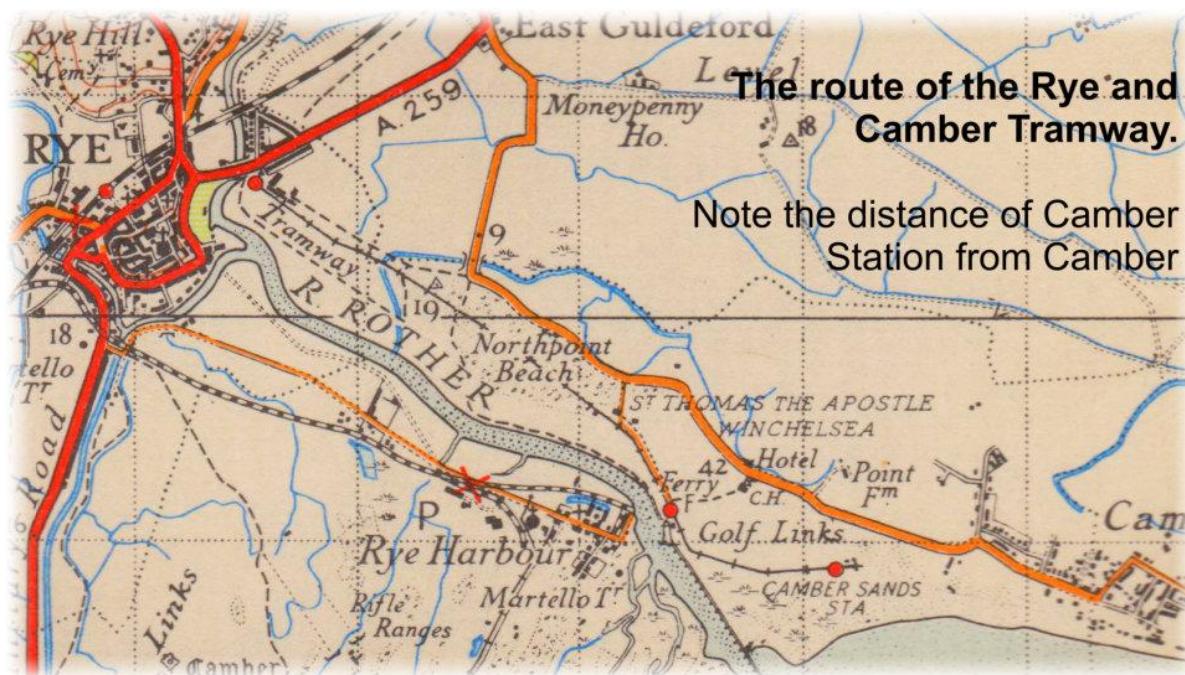


Figure 48 The Route of the Rye & Camber Railway East of the River Rother.

The Strand Water Project

- 5.30 Marks Barfield Architects¹⁰² carried out a study for Rother District Council and the Environment Agency to look at ways of relieving traffic on the A259 around the Strand Quayside and improving the location to make it more attractive for visitors. The highway improvements are covered by Community Aspiration 5 and the following aspiration supports the proposals for maintaining the water level at Strand Quay.

Community Aspiration 17 – Strand Water Project

To encourage an innovative project to maintain the water level at the Strand Quay to a depth of 1.5m and to provide ways over the River Rother to enhance the visitor experience.

¹⁰² <http://>

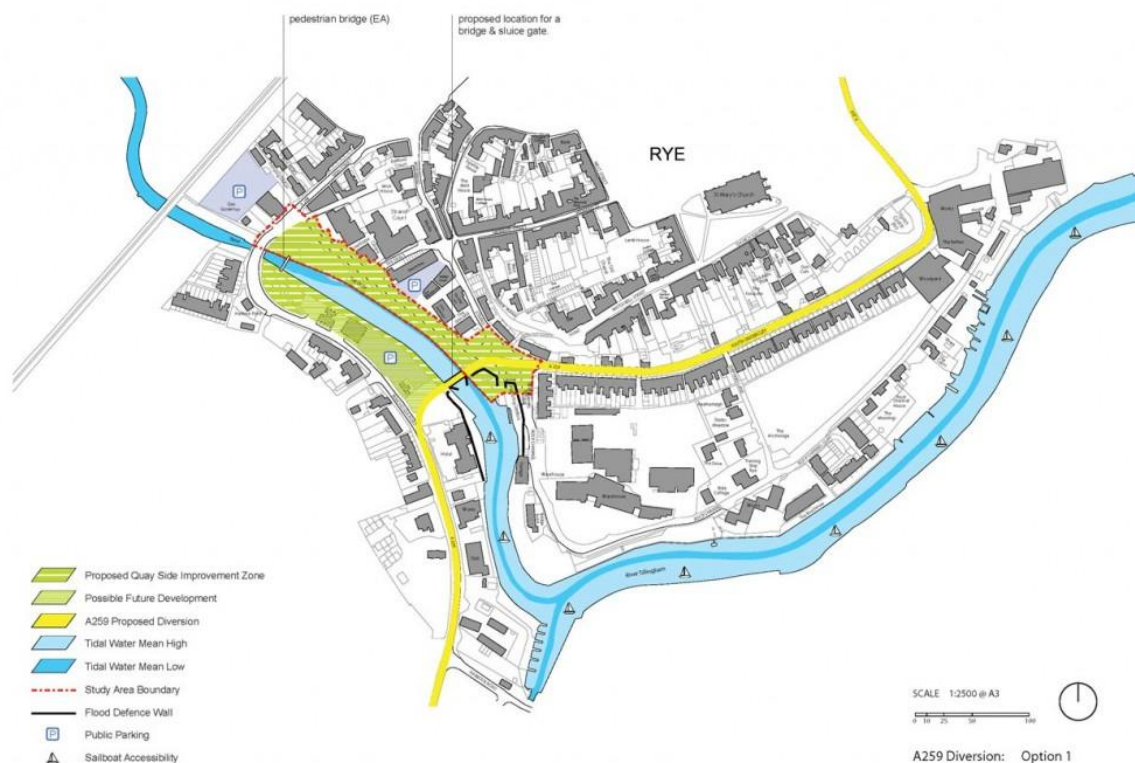


Figure 49: The Marks Barfield Project to improve the Rye Quayside

Community Infrastructure and Services

5.31 There is a wide variety of community infrastructure need in Rye Parish. These have been considered by a sub working group which recommended the following aspiration be included.

Community Aspiration 18 – Community Infrastructure and Services.

To encourage and support existing community activities and facilities, including social enterprises, by:

- a. Enhancing cultural and heritage activities, including at St Mary's Church (and tower), Rye Castle Museum, Kino, the Rye Heritage Centre, Rye Art Gallery and the Conduit Hill Community Centre.**
- b. Supporting local organisations that enhance activities for young people**
- c. Supporting the local "Recycle Swap Shop"**
- d. Encouraging the sale of Fairtrade goods**
- e. Retaining and enhancing the two existing allotment areas (Love Lane and South Undercliff) and community garden as part of the green infrastructure and community facilities.**
- f. Encouraging a local domestic bulk waste facility for recycling perhaps sited at Rye Harbour.**
- g. Encouraging high speed broadband communication with improved services across the Parish for both domestic and business use.**
- h. Supporting existing community facilities, including the publicly-accessible leisure centre and swimming pool to meet local needs.**

Education

5.32 The schools (covering age 2 to 16 years) in Rye are now governed by The Aquinas Trust, including Rye College¹⁰³ and Rye Community Primary School.

¹⁰³ <https://www.ryecollege.co.uk/>

https://ryeacademytrust.org/files/documents/Annual_Report_and_Financial_Statements_for_the_Year_Ended_31_August_2016.pdf

The last includes the Pugwash Nursery. In 2016 there was a review of facilities with a view to enhancement and development.¹⁰⁴

- 5.33 Early years' provision is made independently (privately) at the Ferry Road Centre and also at the Grove Lane facility (co-located with Rye Community Primary School).

Community Aspiration 19 – Education

To encourage and support the expansion and enhancement of education facilities in Rye, noting that East Sussex County Council has a statutory lead for school places.

Health

- 5.34 The Community is able to choose to access medical services in one of two places locally: the Ferry Road Surgery and the Kiln Road Medical Centre co-located with the Rye Memorial Hospital. The latter is in the Parish of Rye Foreign. Capacity and services should expand to cater for the increased population resulting from the implementation of this Plan.

Community Aspiration 20 – Health Infrastructure

To encourage increased local medical services to support the rising population, thereby reducing the need to travel.

¹⁰⁴

https://ryeacademytrust.org/files/documents/Annual_Report_and_Financial_Statements_for_the_Year_Ended_31_August_2016.pdf

Section 6 – Delivery and Monitoring

Introduction

- 6.1 The Rye Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented through a combination of Rother District Council's consideration and determination of planning applications for development in the Parish and through steering public and private investment into a series of infrastructure projects contained in the Plan. The community aspirations set out in Chapter 5 will inform projects to be led by Rye Town Council working in partnership with other relevant bodies, subject to funding being available.

Development Management

- 6.2 Most of the planning policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan will be delivered by landowners and developers responding to its proposals for encouraging and managing development. In preparing the Plan, care has been taken to ensure, as far as possible, that these proposals are achievable.
- 6.3 Rother District Council will be responsible for determining planning applications for development within Rye Parish, in line with the Core Strategy, the Development and Site Allocations document and the Rye Neighbourhood Plan. The Town Council will use the Rye Neighbourhood Plan to frame its representations on submitted planning applications. It will also work with the authorities to monitor the progress of sites coming forward for development.

Infrastructure Projects

- 6.4 The Community Infrastructure Levy was implemented by Rother District Council in April 2016 and has largely replaced the pooling of S106 agreement financial contributions. It is charged on qualifying residential and retail development; further details are available at <http://www.rother.gov.uk/CIL>
- 6.5 At least 25% of the Levy collected by Rother District Council from development in the Parish of Rye will be transferred to the Town Council once it has made the Neighbourhood Plan. The projects set out in Section 5 will be put forward for inclusion in Rother District Council's infrastructure list - the Regulation 123 List - and will guide Rye Town Council's own expenditure of its proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Monitoring and Review of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 6.6 Changes in the local planning context, such as an increase in the housing requirement, a delay in allocated sites being delivered or a deficiency in Rother District's housing land supply targets, could result in the Neighbourhood Plan needing to be reviewed. Rye Town Council will review the Plan annually, soon after the election of the Mayor in May. The work will

be handled by the Rye Planning and Townscape Committee which will report against the policies and aspirations to full Council.

Rye Neighbourhood Plan – Some Final Thoughts

“Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development” (NPPF)

Neighbourhood-made plans were a flagship of the Localism Act of 2011. The introduction of the initiative to have locally developed and endorsed plans as an integral part of the statutory planning system was a landmark government decision. From the earliest days (2012) neighbourhood plans have been subjected to developer challenges, counter development proposals and legislation changes. As we found in Rye, these factors can turn a two/three year project into one that lasts 6 years!

Effort Required

The time and effort needed to develop a neighbourhood plan places a huge burden, tantamount to part-time employment, on a small core group of individuals. From the early stages, the Local Planning Authority had “the responsibility to support communities who wish to engage in the neighbourhood planning process”, but resources were slim as government “austerity” resulted in budgets and staff reductions. When Rye joined the 75% of all plan makers who happen to fall in the South of England, it did not bargain on a six year project! The mobilisation of volunteers to contribute and influence its content represents the equivalent of hundreds of thousands of pounds using any equivalence calculation. The Rye coordinator alone committed around 1500 hours per year for 6 years (in some weeks up to 20 hours) to steering group meetings, council meetings (including annual Town Meetings), other sessions with the Local Planning Authority; time with consultants and Locality, drafting, reporting and processing bids for support. There has been a website to build and maintain; Facebook and Twitter sites to run. Town and public events had to be planned and prepared. All in all some 70 GB of data has been accumulated with iterations of the Plan running to eleven versions, finally comprising 300 pages and 300,000 words. The effort has occupied the periods of office of four elected mayors and six separate councils. In all, it is estimated that some 100 members of the community from some 25 voluntary groups have actively contributed. Fortunately, Rye is blessed with significant social capital, including many with a long knowledge of the Town and others, many retired professionals, without which, the time consuming and technical issues could not have been tackled.

Complexity

Neighbourhood Planning is not simple! Any plan must conform to national planning policy; the Local Planning Authority's Local Plan and its supplementary policy; any obligations, such as the habitats directive which apply to most of the area surrounding Rye. With all forms of flood risk affecting Rye, it required considerable work to mitigate it. It conforms to targets set and agreed by the Local Planning Authority for housing and business premises development, taking full account of all the constraints on available land. Professional expertise, in the form of town planning experts, has been necessary at key milestones to shape the text and balance the issues within the plan. Throughout, volunteers have had to comprehend the Act and the regulations. They have to make sense of jargon, rules and guidelines. By exploiting existing voluntary local interest groups, ideas and initiatives can be collected, but while policy looks cut and dried on paper, it is anything but when talking with residents about potential development and design. It becomes personal; there is NIMBYism, and even hostile reactions from otherwise reasonable people. To avoid any accusation of vested interest, all the work must be completely transparent and every key decision processed through the democratic framework.

In Rye it was realised that to embark on a neighbourhood plan would be a significant commitment for a small town council. A group in the community pressed to get a plan made. In response, the Town Council formed a steering group. The challenge throughout was to write a plan that was simultaneously intelligible to the citizen; robust and precise enough to withstand legal challenge; and of practical use by planners. Importantly it had to exclude any policy which might cause the plan to fail or be so non-specific as to be worthless.

Understanding the End Result and the Referendum

Towards the end and once the Regulation 16 consultation process had been completed, there was some relief that light appeared in the tunnel. An External Examiner was appointed and posed a series of questions which had to be addressed and then answers provided once cleared through the democratic framework. Once his changes had been reflected, the draft plan was approved for Referendum. At this stage a strong case for the plan – community influence; financial rewards; coherent strategic planning - had to be made to the community through the Press and by a summary handout to every house and business holder. After six years, it was accepted that few in the community had followed the twists and turns from the start and therefore it was necessary to remind those who may have heard a little or just some aspects about the plan precisely what was at stake. This was made all the

more difficult because the rules for Referendums meant that Councillors could not canvass within a set period of “purdah” before the Referendum. This was almost 6 weeks. In this time the final push fell to citizens of the group. How much easier and effective it would have been if the very Councillors who has agreed the policy and the drafts and actually owned the plan were allowed to take part?

After a successful Referendum and plan adoption in 2019, the Rye example bears out the fact that neighbourhood planning can be undertaken by a community if it has the political will and volunteers with significant time to commit to the project. It also needs to be effectively supported by the Local Planning Authority. Whatever comes in terms of future planning policy change, the Rye Neighbourhood Plan will be arguably the first ever strategic plan for the Parish and will allow all future planning work to build upon it.

ATBK
For RNPSG

Report July 2019

Acknowledgements

This Neighbourhood Plan represents an initial 5 years' work, followed by a further two year's work to handle the review, mostly by volunteer councillors and a group of citizens of Rye. These people held the conviction that without a plan, Rye would remain a hostage to fortune to developers and others, who would then decide Rye's future development. For all those who contributed the time and effort there are sincere thanks. We trust that the generations who follow will appreciate the work and build on it for the long-term future.



Anthony Kimber MBE
Vice Chair
RNP Coordinator

Mayor of Rye
Chair

Rye Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group May 26

Appendices

- A Acknowledgements - Those who prepared and Reviewed the Rye Neighbourhood Plan
- B Plan Policies Map

Supporting Documents:

- *RNP Support 1: Evidence Background Paper*
- *RNP Support 2: Site Assessment Document*
- *RNP Support 3: Consultation Statement*
- *RNP Support 4: Strategic Environmental Assessment and supporting sequential and exception assessments*

Appendix A

List of those who directly participated in preparing and reviewing the Rye Neighbourhood Plan:

September 2013

Cllr Shaun Rogers (SR) (Chair) Colonel Anthony Kimber (AK) (Vice Chair), Neale East (Sec), Cllr Heidi Foster (HF), Prof Burton Rosner (BR), Mandy Turner (MT), Cllr Nigel Jennings (NJ), Canon Richard Orchard (RO), Cllr Sonia Holmes, Cllr Berni Fiddimore (BF), Cllr Mike Eve (ME), Andy Stuart (AS), Julian Luckett (JL), Town Clerk Richard Farhall (RF)

May 2014

Cllr Berni Fiddimore (BF) (Mayor and Chair), Colonel Anthony Kimber (AK) (Vice Chair and Secretary), Cllr Mike Eve (ME), Prof Burton Rosner (BR), Canon Richard Orchard (RO), Cllr Nigel Jennings (NJ), Cllr Shaun Rogers (SR), Andy Stuart (AS), Mandy Turner (MT), Cllr John Breeds (JB), Cllr Heidi Foster (HF). Richard Farhall (RF) (Town Clerk).

May 2015

Berni Fiddimore (BF) (Mayor and Chair); Colonel Anthony Kimber (AK) (Vice Chair and Secretary), Cllr Cllr Shaun Rogers (SR), Cllr Ray Prewer (RP), Cllr Cheryl Creaser (CC), Cllr Andy Stuart (AS), Mike Eve (ME), Heidi Foster (HF), Cllr Pat Hughes (PH), Dan Lake (DL), Prof Burton Rosner (BR), Frank Palmer (FP), Cllr John Breeds (JB), Canon Richard Orchard (RO), Richard Farhall (RF) (Town Clerk),

May 2016

Cllr Jonathan Breeds (JB) (Mayor and Chair); Colonel Anthony Kimber (AK) (Vice Chair and Secretary), Cllr Shaun Rogers (SR), Cllr Ray Prewer (RP), Cllr Cheryl Creaser (CC), Cllr Pat Hughes (PH), Prof Burton Rosner (BR), Frank Palmer (FP), Heidi Foster (HF), Cllr Berni Fiddimore (BF), Cllr Andy Stuart (AS), Mike Eve (ME), Dan Lake (DL), Canon Richard Orchard (RO), Richard Farhall (RF) (Town Clerk)

May 2017

Cllr Jonathan Breeds (JB) (Mayor and Chair), Colonel Anthony Kimber (AK) (Vice Chair and Secretary), Cllr Cheryl Creaser (CC), Cllr Berni Fiddimore (BF), Cllr Shaun Rogers (SR), Mike Eve (ME), Cllr Ray Prewer (RP), Cllr Andy Stuart (AS), Dan Lake (DL), Cllr Pat Hughes (PH), Frank Palmer (FP), Prof Burton Rosner (BR), Canon Richard Orchard (RO), Heidi Foster (HF). Richard Farhall (RF) (Town Clerk),

Mid 2023 to May 2024

The review involved: Cllr Andi Rivett (AR) (Mayor and Chair), Colonel Anthony Kimber (AK) (Vice Chair and Secretary), Dominic Manning (DM), Cllr Berni Fiddimore (BF), Cllr Andy Stuart (AS), Cllr Vagn Hansen (VH), Cllr Shaun Rogers (SR), Cllr Michael Boyd (MB), Richard Farhall (RF) (Town Clerk Rye TC)

May 2024 onwards

Cllr Andy Stuart (AS) (Mayor and Chair), Colonel Anthony Kimber (AK) (Vice Chair and Secretary), Dominic Manning (DM), Cllr Berni Fiddimore (BF), Cllr Vagn Hansen (VH), Cllr Shaun Rogers (SR), Cllr Michael Boyd (MB), Richard Farhall (RF) (Town Clerk Rye TC)

Key Functions – Plan Making to Mid 2019 : Leads

Vision and Objectives (Previous Mayors Cllr Berni Fiddimore, Cllr Shaun Rogers, Cllr Jonathan Breeds, Cllr Michael Boyd and Vice Chair, Col Anthony Kimber)

Housing (Handled by the Steering Group: Vice Chair Steering Group, Col Anthony Kimber, Cllr Berni Fiddimore, Cllr John Breeds, Cllr Shaun Rogers and Cllr Ray Prewer and Cllr Cheryl Creaser).

Community infrastructure: (Former Cllr) Heidi Foster, Chris Coverdale, Jack Ash

Transport/traffic: John Howlett, Kenneth Bird,

Business and Enterprise: (Former Cllr) Mike Eve.

Environment: Mike Slavin.

Advice and Drawings: Dominic Manning.

Evidence: Col Anthony Kimber; Prof Burton Rosner, Canon Richard Orchard.

Budget, Project Management and Workplan: Vice Chair Col Anthony Kimber in conjunction with Richard Farhall, (Town Clerk) including links with Locality, RTPI, Planning Aid and Action in Rural Sussex (AIRS).

Communication and Engagement Strategy: Col Anthony Kimber and Town Clerk. Both attend the fortnightly Rye Town Planning meeting to update, raise issues and seek approvals for key steps. In addition the coordination of input to annual Town Meetings, special RNP open events and attendance at planning seminars.

Website, Facebook and Twitter: Colonel Anthony Kimber

Community Asset Register: Cllr Andy Stuart
Rye Town Council linkage and advice: Richard Farhall (Town Clerk)

Consultees and Contributors

Aroncorps
Phillips and Stubbs Estate Agents
Rush Witt and Wilson Estate Agents

Reeds Rains Estate Agents
Waves Estates Estate Agents
Plutus Estates
McCarthy and Stone
Amicus Horizon (now Optivo)
Orbit Homes
Eric Bourne
Jonathan Jempson
Jonathan Dunn Architects
RXA Architects
Martello Developments
Jempsons Transport
The Harbour Master of Rye
Rye Tennis Club
Rye Leisure Centre
Rye Academy Trust and Rye College
Rastrum Ltd Rye Harbour
Aquinas Trust (Rye Academy Trust)
Rye Medical Centre
The Rye and District Memorial Hospital
Early Years Rye
The Harbour of Rye Advisory Committee
The Riverhaven Hotel
Tourism Southeast
Freedom Leisure
Rye Allotments CIC
Tilling Green Residents Association
Traffic Groups A259 and Military Road
Rye Churches Together
Rye Farmers

Statutory Consultees

Rother District Council
The Environment Agency
ESCC
Natural England
Historic England
Highways England
AONB – now AONL Unit
SGN
National Grid
Southern Water
Rye Partnership

Appendix B – Policies Map

