

# Hastings Draft Local Plan Preferred Options (Regulation 18) Consultation 2026 – Response form

**Part B:** Complete this part for each comment you make (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

**Which part of the Plan or evidence base are you commenting on** (enter policy number, paragraph or section)?

Strategic Policy 3  
SHELAA 2020 - SIEA4 - Bulverhythe Estate

Do you support or object to the policy, paragraph or section?

Support       Object       Comment

If your response is over 100 words, please enter an optional summary here (up to 100 words)

West St Leonards Neighbourhood Area needs to be helped to develop its economic potential and attention should not be concentrated on the perceived town centre, but where it will support and help local communities.

**Enter your comments here** (provide evidence/ references where possible, and tell us what changes you suggest that would address your concerns)

As set out in the introduction to these responses there is a feeling of neglect which is reinforced by the Strategic Policy SP4 where a hierarchy of town centres is set out:

Town Centre: Hastings Town Centre

District Centres: St Leonards; The Old Town and Silverhill

Local Centres: Bohemia and Tower; Ore Village; Battle Road; Marine Court and Bexhill Road

The assumption is that the centre of Hastings is clearly defined, whereas there are at least two town centres:

- Old Town with the High St and George Street
- New Town round Station Road, Havelock Road, Queens Road

The whole borough of Hastings and St Leonards is not so large and it can all be treated as the town centre. Accordingly any investment and planning for Hastings should be considered for sites across the borough and that needs to include improving public transport so that the different parts are accessible.

### **The Centre of West St Leonards**

West St. Leonards has a centre - just about recognised in the draft Local Plan as 'Bexhill Road' and residents would like to make the most of it and would like their various authorities and service providers to help them to do so.

A major issue is the increasing domination of traffic and the consequence of large areas taken for parking.

Our consultations over the last few years that improvements can be made by the reallocation of road space to allow for a widened pavement with loading bays in front of the shops.



The east end of the OBP, at the west end of the Hastings promenade, should be a playground and garden with pop-up sport and retail outlets around it and possibly a Crowdfund+Sports England Lido and/or a Tidal Pool. WSL already has PureGym and kite surfing - a great start to become the destination it has long been promised.

Visitors can arrive by train, bus, bike or foot - it is the perfect combination for this local centre. This is an opportunity for Hastings BC to work with the local community.

The area covered by the West St. Leonards Neighbourhood Forum provides housing for people working both within the area and outside it, and there is a daily transfer of people going and coming to work. It covers a number of sites housing small businesses, railway repair sheds, waste management, a garden centre and recycling centre. In addition, employment is provided by a holiday park, shops, cafes, take-away food shops, 4 pubs, a large supermarket, a health centre, a care home, 3 schools, and a gym centre.

The HBC draft local plan emphasises that Hastings is unlike other coastal towns in having more industries, and it seeks to support development that:-

- a. Maintains industrial process
- b. Encourages storage and distribution uses.
- c. Develops waste management that is compatible with the locality
- d. Provides vocational training which will not prejudice the industrial character of the economy.

The borough will support development of offices in support of these aims.

This is all welcome and encouraging for West St Leonards Neighbourhood Area

But developments should:-

- a. Not allow parking provision to dominate the site, which may require higher density or multiple storey buildings.
- b. Be of high quality design, with the possibility of flexible use and extension.
- c. Create a safe environment, with office space fronting the buildings.
- d. Be resistant to climate change and flood risk.
- e. Encourage the creation of jobs and training, both for themselves and their suppliers.

We want the Local Plan to recognise better the reality that activities are spread across the Town particularly along the sea front. Future developments should not be encouraged to a nebulous 'town centre' but encouraged to find appropriate premises within the borough as a whole.

Local activities within West St Leonards are well placed to meet the borough's industrial aims to support development that: maintains industrial process; encourages storage and distribution uses; develops locally compatible waste management and provides vocational training not prejudicial to the industrial character of the economy.

In particular Bulverhythe Estate which is located within WSL which was analysed under the SHELAA 2020 process. It identifies three separate sites adjoining Bulverhythe Road:

1. Colemans on the Bexhill Road in the old tram shed, and backing onto Combe Haven, north of Bulverhythe Road
2. A site on Bulverhythe Road, mainly occupied by Skinner's Sheds, but with a small site to the east which is currently derelict and could also be considered for housing
3. A large site at the western end of Bulverhythe Road, with the Biffa depot as well as the Railway workshops and other smaller light industrial activities

Contacts through surveys and meetings with residents show that there is a strong wish to make the most of the commercial centre in Bexhill Road and the various authorities and service providers should help them do it. The planting of trees and shrubs along Bexhill Rd as it is currently would relieve the pressure of the road and traffic and plant beds and sitting areas could be included within extended pavements to provide traffic calming measures.

The council has previously advocated for the Old Bathing Pool site to be a destination site for visitors which residents and the LP gives encouragement to that aim, although actions by the council in the past have made it very difficult to develop. This is dealt with more fully in a separate response specifically about the Bathing Pool Site.

The West St Leonards Neighbourhood Area is potentially a good centre for visitors arriving by train, bus, bike or on foot. However the route from West St Leonards Station needs to be made much easier for pedestrians.

As noted above there should be a reallocation of road space on Bexhill Road to allow for a widened pavement with fewer parking bays in front of shops and extra shoppers' parking round the corner or opposite, in the existing car parks

There were comments that this could result in less trade for shops, the experience of making shopping centres more pedestrian friendly is that trade increases. Within Hastings and St Leonards this has been shown for example with George Street and Kings Road.

As part of detailed planning for this proposal a study of who is parking where along the Parade, for what purpose and for how long should be done in order to design any changes well and to the advantage of the businesses and local residents.

Ideally the car park opposite the shops and adjoining the Bo Peep would be free parking for shoppers rather than asking people to park round the corner in Seaside Road. The car park is owned by HBC and leased to the retail premises company and is under-used.

The east end of the Bathing Pool Site at the west end of the promenade from Hastings, could be a playground and garden with pop-up sport and retail outlets around it and possibly a Crowdfunded+Sports England+ Lottery funding Lido and/or a Tidal Pool. Again see the response specifically on the Bathing Pool Site

With the establishment of PureGym and activities such as kite surfing, canoeing, kayaking, West St Leonards Neighbourhood Area has started its journey to becoming a destination.

In terms of employment opportunities residents suggest West Marina should be developed as a local craft and food enterprise place as we have lots of creatives, and that the beach could be busier with more amenities. In regard to young people a local market and/or start ups could be established: engagement with schools would be helpful to achieve this, providing greater co-ordination of available seasonal work, especially for unskilled workers during the winter season. This could be of benefit to young people particularly students, who need casual work to help finance their studies.

All comments will be taken into account ahead of the next stage, the Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) version of the Plan, due to be published later in 2026.