



## **The Friends of Lewes Society response to the Lewes District Council consultation 'Towards a Local Plan spatial strategy and policies directions'.**

Friends of Lewes welcomes the opportunity to comment on the consultation document. Although the town of Lewes falls outside the Lewes District Council development boundary the Society makes comments on matters outside that may impact on the town or its setting within the South Downs National Park.

The Society notes that the new Local Plan only covers a timescale covering four years. It suggests that the plan period should be extended to cover fifteen years, as the short timescale creates uncertainty for the South Downs National Park and the Plan will quickly become out of date.

The Society has considered the Options for Growth and the range of options to deliver the development which is needed within the district. As a guiding principle Friends of Lewes does not support:

- development built on the River Ouse flood plain
- development upstream of Lewes that increases the risk of flooding to the town
- development adjacent to the National Park that adversely affects the landscape setting of Lewes within the National Park

In light of the above Friends of Lewes supports the view that Spatial Option 6: New settlement within the Low Weald is not considered a deliverable option which should be explored.

However, Friends of Lewes does not support the proposed inclusion in the Local Plan of a 1,100 house development at Cooksbridge/Hamsey which is a hugely sensitive proposal on a very large greenfield agricultural site bordering the National Park. It would be quite visible from Lewes Town and the surrounding Downs and adversely affect the landscape setting of Lewes within the National Park.

With respect to Policy IC10: Former Lewes to Uckfield Railway Line, Friends of Lewes does not see a need to protect the route of the former Lewes to Uckfield Railway line. Alternative routes are available to link Lewes to Uckfield, which are more straightforward to deliver in engineering terms and do not rely on the former route.

The Friends of Lewes Society  
c/o The Town Hall  
Lewes

5<sup>th</sup> February 2024