

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we asking for 30,000sqm of additional retail space?

This figure is taken from our Retail capacity study, which was first carried out in 2006 and updated in 2010. This is a specific area of research that in arriving at this figure has considered the following important factors:

- expected population growth over the Plan period,
- retail catchment areas
- expenditure growth rates,
- internet shopping,
- changes to existing town centre shopping floorspace
- approved schemes that are yet to be implemented, and
- existing levels of vacant shops in the town centre

How many square feet is 30,000 square metres?

322,920 square feet

Why do we need all the proposed office space?

The suggested need for additional employment floorspace has been determined by our research in the Hastings & Rother Employment Strategy and Land Review. This is based on both regional and local regeneration efforts, which aim to achieve a step change in the local economy. The study is available on our website at www.hastings.gov.uk/ldf/resources.aspx#bak

Why can't you count all the existing empty shops and empty homes as part of future requirements?

Analysis on the future needs of housing and retail space has already taken into account existing shops and houses, including those that are vacant. This means that as well as bringing these back into use, we still need to provide enough land and floorspace to accommodate an additional 4,200 homes up to 2026 (taking into account those that have already been built) and 30,000sqm of retail floorspace.

However, there are various initiatives currently in place to tackle empty homes and vacant shop units in the town. The Retail Vitality Project has been set up to help encourage visitors to the town, and involves giving out small grants to help independent businesses moving into vacant premises. For further information, please see http://www.hastings.gov.uk/area_based_grants/special.aspx#retail, or contact the Economic Development team on 01424 451095, or email regeneration@hastings.gov.uk.

The Council's Empty Homes Strategy sets out a range of initiatives aimed at bringing empty privately owned homes across the town back into use. Please see our website for further information: http://www.hastings.gov.uk/empty_homes/empty_what.aspx, or contact the empty homes officer on 01424 781305, or email emptyhomes@hastings.gov.uk.

Can sites already allocated for housing in the Hastings Local Plan be de-allocated?

Existing Local Plan allocations without planning permission are subject to review as part of the Site Allocations process. We can only consider removing sites from our future housing supply if they:

- are no longer suitable in planning terms, taking account of policy restrictions, physical problems or limitations and environmental impacts
- are not physically capable of being developed
- cannot be developed before 2026

Why can't I comment on all the sites on the Big Map?

We are not inviting comments on sites that have already been granted planning permission for housing development. This is because the decision to develop the site already been established through the planning process.

Can I comment on sites that are the subject of a current planning application?

Yes, but we are only looking for your comments on the principle of developing these sites, not on any specific planning proposals. Comments relating to specific planning applications should not be made through the Big Map consultation process.

Why is there no opportunity to comment on open spaces, allotments or nature conservation areas?

This is a very early, informal, stage in plan preparation. We want to keep things simple and not ask about too many different subjects at once. There will be plenty of opportunities to discuss and comment on other topics such as greenspace conservation, adapting to climate change, and sewerage and surface water drainage later in the process.

What has happened to the comments I made?

We are currently analysing all the comments made through the consultation, including those made online and at the drop-in sessions. These will feed into the next stage of the process, and in the drafting of the Site Allocations development plan document. Updates on progress will be provided through our website at www.hastings.gov.uk/ldf, the Local Development Framework newsletter, as well as through online social networking methods such as Twitter (www.twitter.com/ShapingHastings) and Facebook (search for Shaping Hastings at www.facebook.com).

Your comments will help us identify the things that people feel are special to the character of the areas they live in, and contribute to 'Shaping Hastings' up to 2026.