

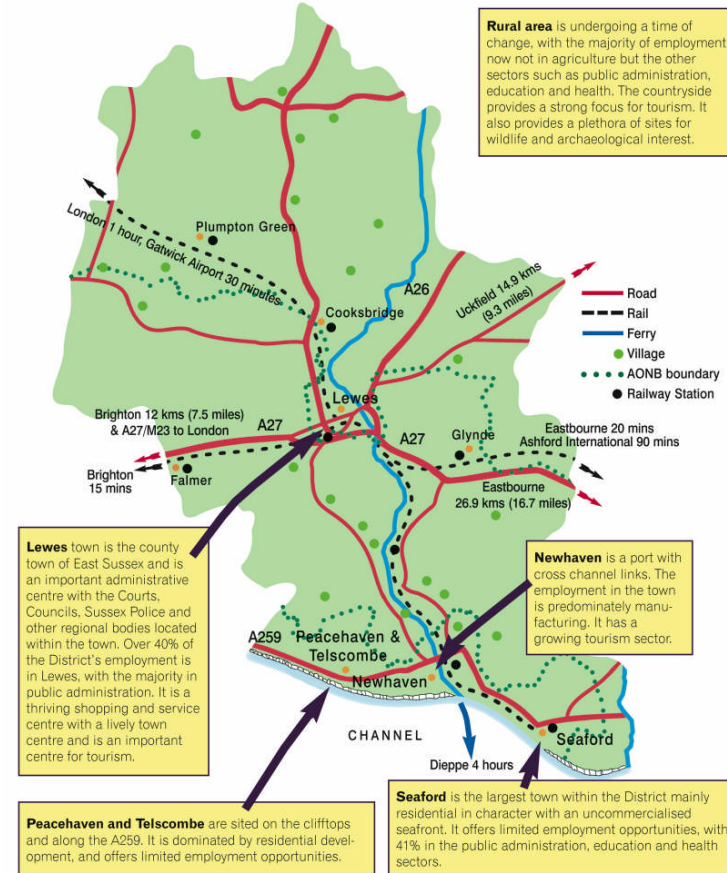
# CHAPTER 6: Lewes District

Lewes District extends inland from the Channel coast over the South Downs and into the Sussex Weald covering 292 square kilometres. Over one third of the area forms part of the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and around half is proposed to be included in the South Downs National Park.

Most of the District's 93,900 population live in the four main urban areas (Seaford, Newhaven, Peacehaven & Telscombe and Lewes). Around 14% live in the many villages, hamlets or isolated settlements. There are just over 42,000 households in the District, 31% are single person households and 24% are households with children. Around 88% of the housing stock is privately owned.

Lewes District is a generally prosperous and affluent area. However pockets of deprivation and social exclusion exist, particularly in parts of the coastal towns and some rural areas. Parts of Newhaven and Peacehaven are amongst the top 10% most deprived areas in the South East. 9.0% of over 60s and 10.7% of children live in families that are income deprived.

The 2001 Census shows a 16.7% increase in population since 1981, wholly due to inward migration. Population is projected to reach 98,636 by 2026. We have an ageing population, above national average in every age band over 50, and below average in all age bands under 40. There are still over 19,000 people in the under 18 age group. Women make up 52.2% of the population and 22.5% of people are above retirement age. Black and minority ethnic groups make up 2.1% of the population. Bengalis and Chinese are the main ethnic groups in the District. Around 13% of the economically active population is disabled.



## The Lewes District Local Strategic Partnership

The Lewes LSP (Local Voices, Local Choices) comprises representatives from the business, community, voluntary and statutory sectors, as well as representatives from 5 Area Partnerships covering the towns of Newhaven, Seaford, Peacehaven and Telscombe, Lewes and the rural parts of the District. More information about the LSP and the work of these Area Partnerships is available at [www.lvlc.info](http://www.lvlc.info)

### Our Vision and Principles

Our long term vision is of vibrant, distinctive, safe and sustainable communities where everyone who lives, works, visits or studies in the District supports one another and takes care of the environment – a community we can all be proud of. The following principles underpin our vision:

- **Sustainability** – understanding the environmental, social economic and ecological impact of our actions both today and in the future and taking account of this in our policies and work programmes.
- **Equality and Diversity** – reducing poverty and social exclusion and closing the deprivation gap in parts of the District. We are particularly concerned with understanding and meeting the needs of young people, older people and those from minority groups.
- **Empowerment and Participation** – listening to local people and communities and encouraging involvement in local decision-making.

Our Sustainable Community Strategy links to and is supported by a wide range of national, regional and local strategies and plans, many of which have been developed through partnership working and collaboration between a variety of agencies and organisations.

## Our Shared Community Themes and Priorities

**A Valued Environment** – *protecting and enhancing the environment, reducing waste, taking action to manage climate change, making sustainable use of land and developing community environmental projects*

Lewes District has many areas of natural beauty and historic interest. It is clean, safe and tidy. Local people put a high premium on their environment. They recognise it is under pressure - from housing and commercial development, rising levels of traffic and waste and from the effects of climate change, including flooding.

### Priorities for the future

- Taking action to reduce and manage the effects of climate change, including coastal erosion and flood risk.
- Sustainable waste management – reduce, re-use and recycle.
- Reduce environmental crime (litter, graffiti, abandoned cars).
- Protect and conserve the natural and historic environment and encourage high quality and sustainable design and new build.
- Reduce traffic congestion and air pollution and develop safe and sustainable local transport options.

**Decent, Affordable Housing For All** – *everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent, sustainably constructed and affordable home, regardless of tenure*

Lewes District is relatively affluent attracting a high proportion of owner occupiers with less than 12% of the housing stock in the social rented sector. With average house prices at over £236,000, affordable housing is an important priority for local people. Many wards in the District fall within the top 40% most deprived in the country for access to affordable housing and services. The District needs around 4,400 homes by 2011 to meet projected demand, but supply needs to be matched with adequate infrastructure and transport links. 2.5% of household spaces are unoccupied and around 2.3% of all housing in the District is deemed to be unfit.

## Priorities for the future

- Provide new affordable housing in sustainable locations.
- Improve the availability and quality of local housing regardless of tenure.
- Encourage energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty.
- Prevent and reduce homelessness in the District.
- Encourage take-up of housing and other benefits.
- Ensure adequate housing related support which meets the needs of vulnerable, minority and disadvantaged groups.

**Safer, Stronger Communities** – *reducing crime and the fear of crime, dealing with anti-social behaviour and creating and sustaining active and inclusive communities*

Although actual levels of crime are relatively low, crime and anti-social behaviour are important issues for local people. Overall crime in the District has dropped by nearly 5% since 2006/07. Residents have told us that low levels of crime are one of the most important factors in making an area a good place to live. Activities for young people are seen as important in helping to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. The local Crime Reduction Partnership (CRP) works through its Action Groups and 5 Local Action Teams to engage local communities in targeting local problems.

## Priorities for the future

- Vehicle crime – focussing on theft and damage to vehicles
- Vehicle safety – focussing on reducing accidents and dangerous driving.
- Alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour – focussing on young people, domestic violence, licensing enforcement, education and training.
- Community engagement – focussing on obtaining and sharing data, consultation, working with Local Action Teams and tackling perceptions of crime.

**Access to Good Local Facilities** - *improving access to services and facilities that meet local needs, providing sustainable transport options and activities for young people, encouraging participation in sport and physical activity, particularly amongst target groups.*

Local people value their access to good quality local sports, recreational, cultural and play facilities. Of particular importance is the need for more sustainable local transport services. Although there are good inter-urban bus and train networks, most of the rural areas are poorly served by public transport. Traffic congestion is a regular problem in many towns and villages, particularly during peak commuting times. Facilities and activities for young people is an important priority.

## Priorities for the future

- Provide better access to public transport and more sustainable transport options.
- Improve local parks and play areas in consultation with local communities.
- Carry out essential road and pavement repairs.
- Encourage wider access to and participation in play, sport, leisure and cultural activities, particularly amongst young people and minority groups.

**Healthier Communities** – *improving the health and wellbeing of the population and reducing health inequalities; encouraging participation in sport and physical activity, particularly amongst target groups.*

Most of the District's population is active and in good health compared to other parts of East Sussex. There is a higher than average number of older people in the District although life expectancy is above the national average. Healthy eating amongst adults is above average in the District and levels of smoking and binge drinking are relatively low. Rates of heart disease, stroke, suicide and lung cancer are falling. There are significant pockets of ill health in the District, particularly along the coastal strip, in Peacehaven, Seaford and Newhaven. Smoking related illness and obesity is a particular problem in Newhaven.

## Priorities for the future

- Ensure everyone has access to local, good quality health and social care services that meet their needs, especially children, older people and those living in more deprived areas.
- Promoting healthy eating, sport and physical activity and smoking cessation, particularly in the coastal towns.
- Promoting health and safety in the home and workplace.

**A Vibrant and Sustainable Local Economy – sustainable economic growth through inward investment, supporting local businesses and increasing employment opportunities. Raising educational achievement and developing skills and learning opportunities for everyone, whatever their age or background**

The service sector and small businesses dominate the local economy with few large private sector employers. The rural parts of the District support the second highest levels of employment in the District. Newhaven has a significant manufacturing sector. Unemployment is rising in the District with pockets of higher unemployment focussed in the coastal towns. Wages are low compared to the South East in general. 11.1% of people are income deprived and 10.9% of the working age population claim key benefits. An above average number of people on Job Seekers Allowance have been out of work for a year.

There is a mixed picture of educational attainment and adult skills across the District with parts of Lewes, Newhaven and Peacehaven falling in the bottom 20% most deprived areas in the country.

## Priorities for the future

- Raise the economic performance of the District by supporting existing businesses, attracting inward investment and encouraging new businesses start ups.
- Support regeneration projects in deprived areas.
- Promote sustainable tourism.
- Provide access to support, advice and training for those not in employment.
- Safeguard and develop key strategic infrastructure sites.

- Encourage sustainable, local procurement and consumption.
- Improve basic skills and levels of education attainment for all.
- Supporting workforce development to meet the needs of local employers.

## Local Action Through Area Partnerships

Lewes District Local Strategic Partnership actively supports five Area Partnerships which work closely with local communities to identify issues and develop projects and other actions. These Area Partnerships, along with Crime and Disorder Local Action Teams have brought about a number of projects which have benefited local communities and improved local Quality of Life.

## Priorities for Lewes town

- Affordable housing
- Youth and community facilities
- Develop town as a key visitor and retail centre
- Encourage diverse local businesses
- Protect and enhance the character of the town
- Ensure measures are taken to protect the town from flooding.

## Priorities for Newhaven

- Create a learning community
- Improve health and community wellbeing
- Improve community life
- Help businesses grow
- Encourage new business
- Make Newhaven more accessible
- Revitalise Newhaven's port
- Maximise tourism opportunities
- Create a busy town centre
- Promote riverside development and provide appropriate housing with supporting infrastructure
- Maintain an attractive and well used environment.

## Priorities for Peacehaven & Telscombe

- Improve town centre facilities
- Better access to education and skills training
- Develop employment opportunities in the town
- Provide more effective local road and public transport links
- Better community facilities.

## Priorities for the Rural Areas

- Affordable housing
- Maintaining sustainable local communities through adequate infrastructure provision
- Encourage farm diversification, sustainable rural tourism and leisure employment
- Access to facilities and opportunities for young people.

## Priorities for Seaford

- Improvements to the seafront
- Promote tourism and business growth
- Affordable housing
- Maintain a distinctive and vibrant town centre
- Better facilities for young people
- Improvements to Cradle Hill Industrial Estate
- Increase in employment opportunities and provision for start-up businesses
- Improved health facilities
- Protection of meeting places and provision of community centres
- continued development of the 'one stop shop'.

## Turning Words Into Action

Community involvement and partnership working has resulted in some important improvements in the Quality of Life of local people in recent years. But there is still a great deal to do.

Our detailed Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the actions we will take to improve service delivery and make a noticeable difference to people's lives. It is supported by a number of policies and delivery programmes as well as specific strategies for housing, education, health and social care, economic development, transport and the environment. The Strategy will be monitored and reviewed each year and progress reported to the LSP. Our Strategy also supports and contributes to wider improvement programmes and targets, including the East Sussex Local Area Agreement.



For more information about the Lewes LSP or its five Area Partnerships visit our website [www.lvlc.info](http://www.lvlc.info) or contact the LSP Co-ordinator on 01273 484396.

**Tracey Evans**

**Chair of Lewes Local Strategic Partnership**