Addressing Hastings' Housing Crisis

Small Plots: More Ambitious Targets



By James Prentice

Capture Politics

Acknowlegements & Report notes

Many thanks to Ken Davis, local researchers and local estate agents for giving advice that helped put this report together.

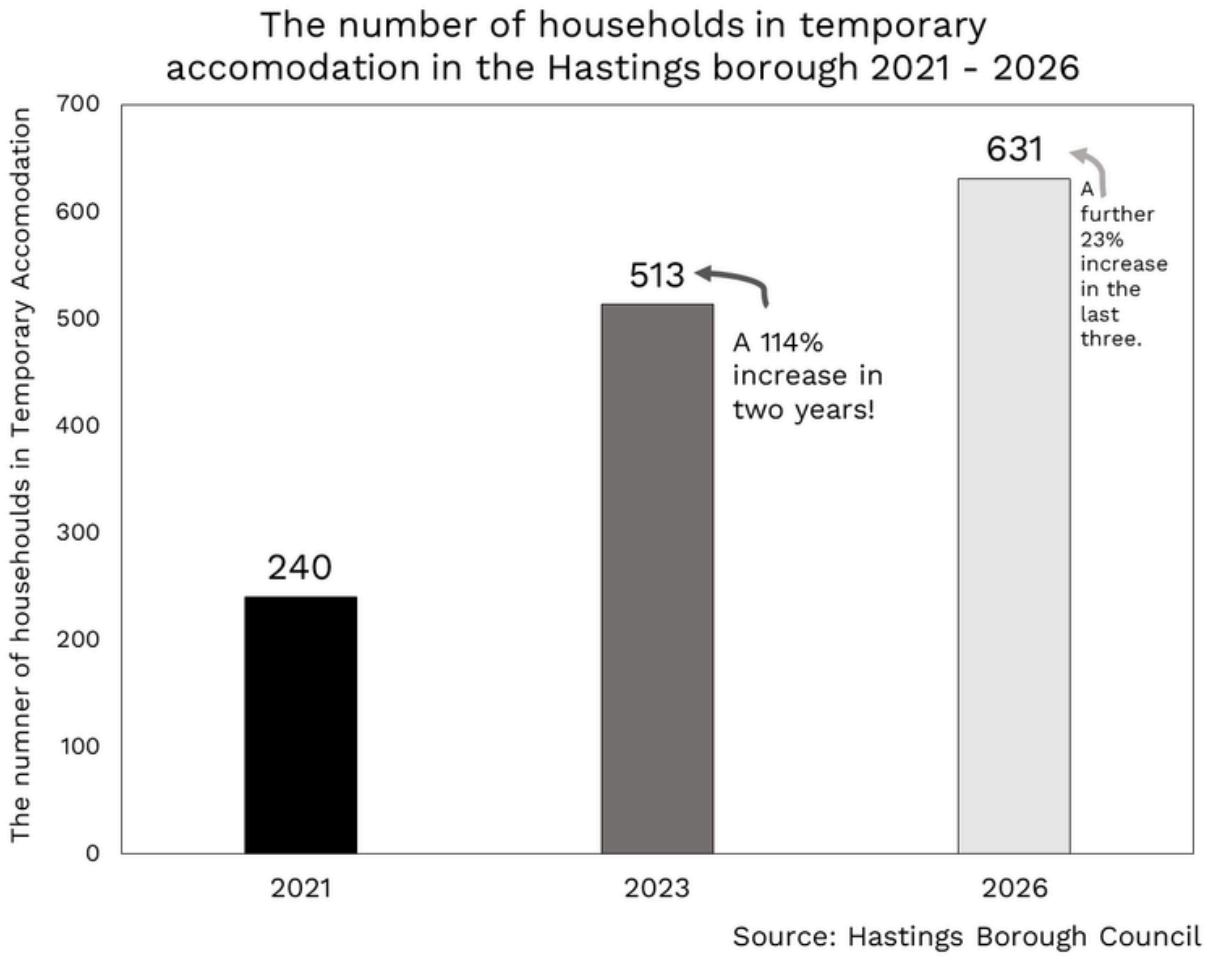
Note on the Report: The report's purpose is not to comment on the plan or on the people who drafted it. The information in this report is designed to complement the Local Plan rather than seek to criticise it. The report is also not seeking to make a political intervention or comment on any political party within Hastings. Its core purpose is to highlight how the town's housing needs can be met without further impacting the natural environment by focusing on small overlooked plots and empty units. The report does this by outlining where these small plots exist within the town. The message of this report is simple: building on smaller plots can generate more ambitious housing targets that better meet the town's housing needs.

The report has been informed by multiple local researchers who span traditional political party boundaries. There are no financial or funding interests to declare. The report only represents the views of the writer and not any other person or organisation.

Core Findings & arguments

- The current density approach stops us from building more units and does not allow the town to meet its housing needs.
- Filling smaller plots, industrial zones, and empty units can provide more housing.
- In total, our approach adds 2,423 units. These units can meet current housing needs.
- Our small search finds overlooked plots that can produce 1,323 additional units.
- The Strategic Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment stops at 0.25 hectares, missing sites with housing potential.
- It is estimated that many of these smaller sites have been overlooked, missing the potential to develop 300 additional units.
- It also estimates there could be 200 more potential units by using employment zones for mixed housing and commercial use.
- Also, potential is being missed in current empty housing and retail units. Addressing this issue could generate another 300 homes.
- Through retrofitting, large empty units could supply an additional 300 units.
- Hastings isn’t as dense as some similar areas.

Introduction: The challenge of building to meet Hastings' housing needs



The housing crisis in Hastings is well-known. Post-Covid, there has been a large increase in the number of households and people in temporary accommodation. The graph to the left shows how, in a short period, the number of households placed in temporary accommodation has more than doubled in five years.

A primary cause of this is the rapid rise in housing costs, coupled with the sudden increase in the cost of living and stagnating wages.

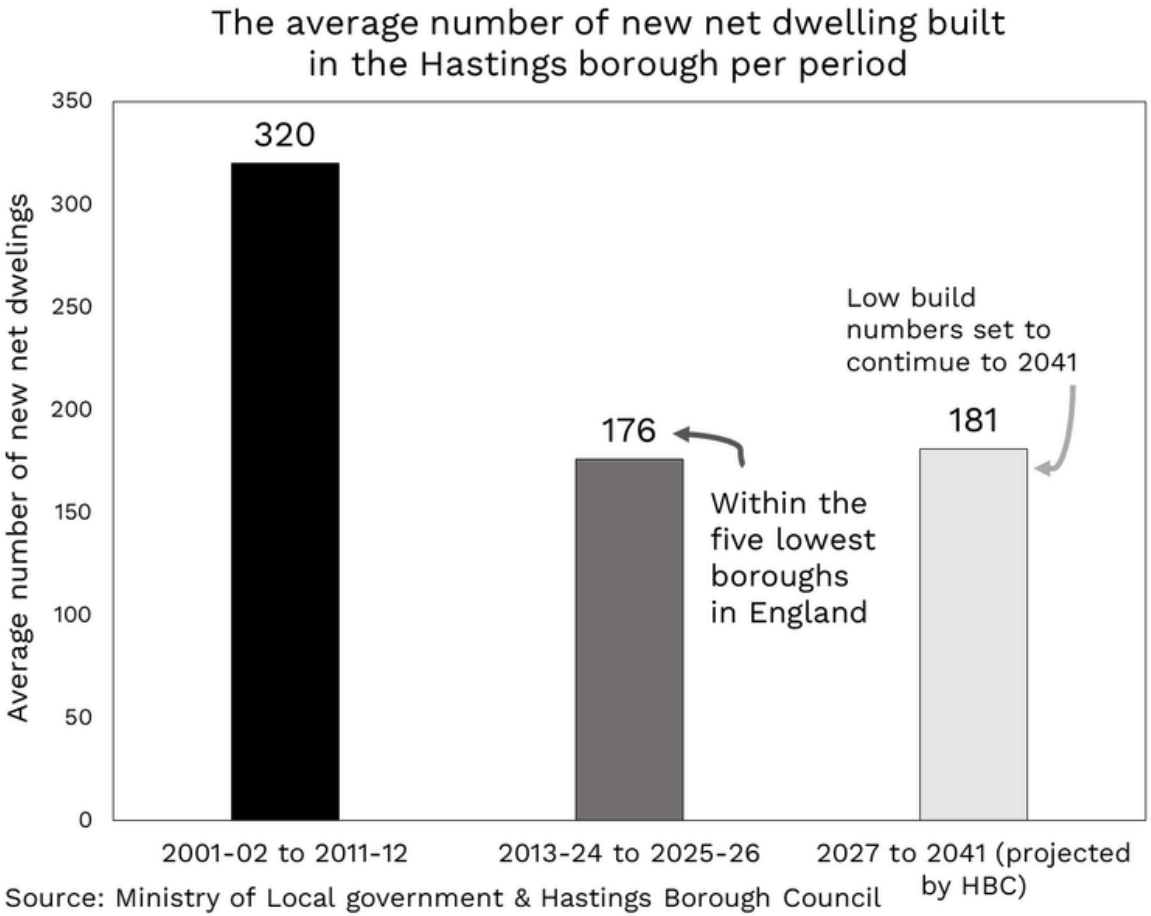
This has left increasing numbers unable to find anywhere they can afford to live, making them effectively homeless. The council is legally required to support these people, something which BBC

South East has demonstrated is putting Hastings Borough Council (HBC) under severe financial strain. This has left HBC buying properties at a market rate to increase its stock of temporary accommodation. This has cost taxpayers millions and is not financially sustainable, as without building social units the housing bill will grow and the money to buy houses will run out.

However, the issue goes further than HBC's finances. The recent Indices of Multiple Deprivation released by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government revealed that Hastings had persistent and increasing levels of poverty. It demonstrated that the main cause of this in the last five years had been a persistent lack of access to affordable housing that could meet people's needs.

With housing being the main driver of high and rising poverty levels, the inability to build more affordable homes will not just continue to weaken HBC finances; it will also ensure that relative poverty will remain stubbornly high. With the Local Plan in its final consultation phase, the housing debate in Hastings is very topical. The debate is often framed around the argument that the geography of the town prevents further building, meaning housing demand cannot be met.

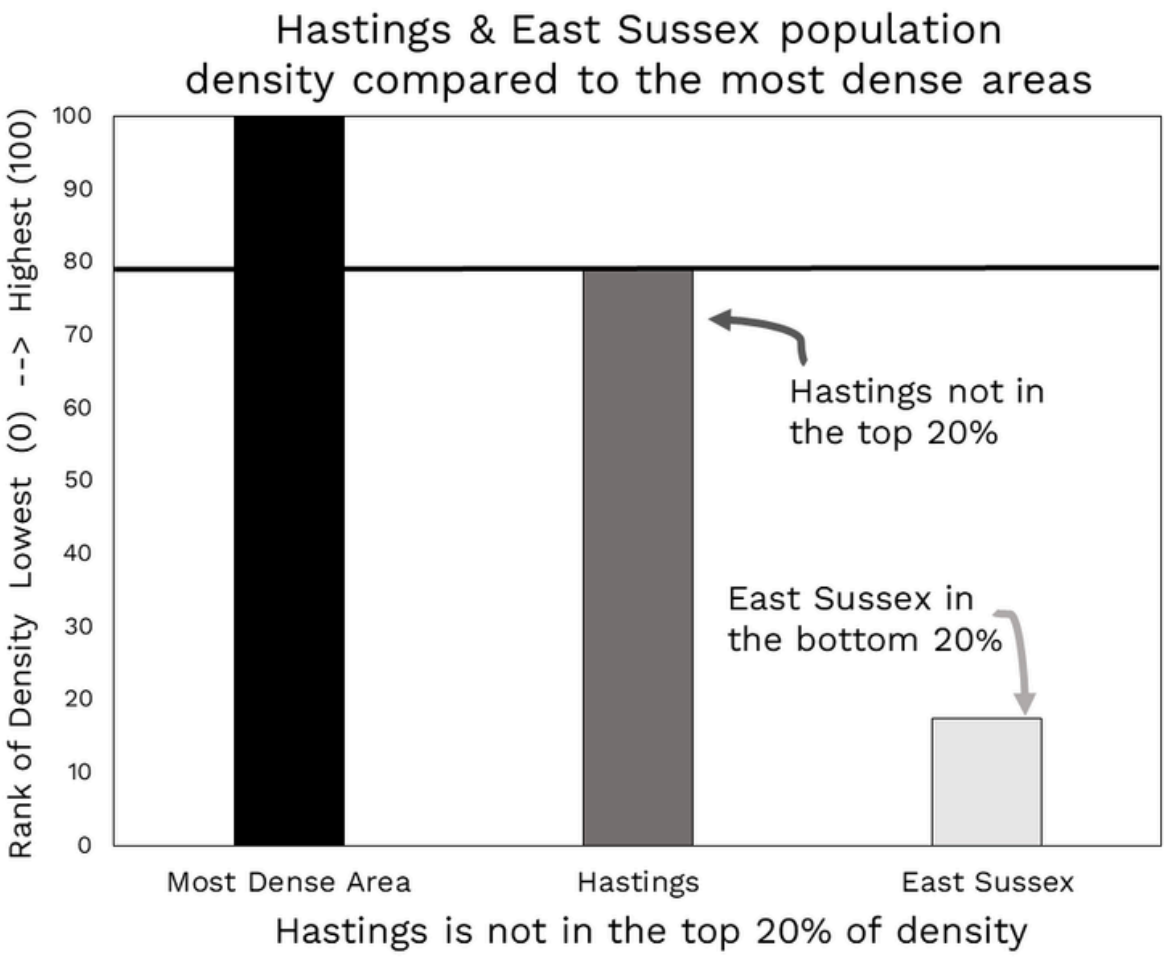
The local plan seems to have followed this logic, where it is asserted that many areas of the town can't be developed due to current density. The council commissioned the London-based consultancy, Allies and Morrison, at £xxxk to survey the town's density in order to examine where new housing can potentially be built.



It argues that, to keep the character of the town, the only areas where a good quantity of new housing can be built are in already densely populated areas. It argues that building in less dense areas would result in a loss of environment and character. Therefore, building more units in less dense areas is unlikely to occur.

This analysis has resulted in the draft seeking to meet 27% of the town's housing needs.

It asserts that only 181 homes can be built per year up to 2041. This continues the Borough's trend of being in the top 5 worst performers among all English authorities for building new homes. Yet, is the density report right? Can the local plan not go further? Is it not possible to build housing to meet the town's needs without harming the environment? If it can't, then the town is conceding that local government finances will continue to be poor and relative poverty rates will remain high.



Information from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows that Hastings is not in the top fifth of population density; see the image to the left. Hastings is less densely populated than similar coastal towns, such as Worthing, Southend & Blackpool, which all build more than Hastings.

Further, page 93 of the Hastings Local Plan shows that there are areas of very low density in the town. The density plan also misses that even within highly dense areas, the town still has small areas that can be developed to provide more housing. To explore land density and new potential sites, the consultancy used a SHELIA (Strategic Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment), but it did not explore sites smaller than 0.25 hectares. This broad approach misses small plots with great housing potential. Therefore, by developing smaller plots, the town could better meet its housing needs whilst facing less objection.

Our Method, Purpose, and Findings:

To prevent overlooking these potentially useful small sites, local researchers have instead taken the approach of identifying small plots of land to generate more ambitious house-building targets. The approach of this report is to explore small sites within already built-up areas that are not being efficiently used, hold little environmental value or are not being used by the wider public. The purpose of this approach is to avoid building on the most controversial greenfield sites whilst also providing more homes to meet housing need. The report's purpose is also to identify a range of additional sites not included in the Local Plan, thus adding to the current work gone into the Local Plan.

The theory behind this approach is simple: building on these small plots can generate enough new units to make a significant contribution to Hastings' future housing needs. Therefore, by developing these small plots, the town can reach more ambitious housing targets. A brief analysis of the town by local researchers indicates that using these smaller sites could provide 1,323 more additional homes beyond what the local plan identifies. Additionally, it is estimated that by filling in very small sites (less than 0.25 hectares), the town could produce another 300 sites.

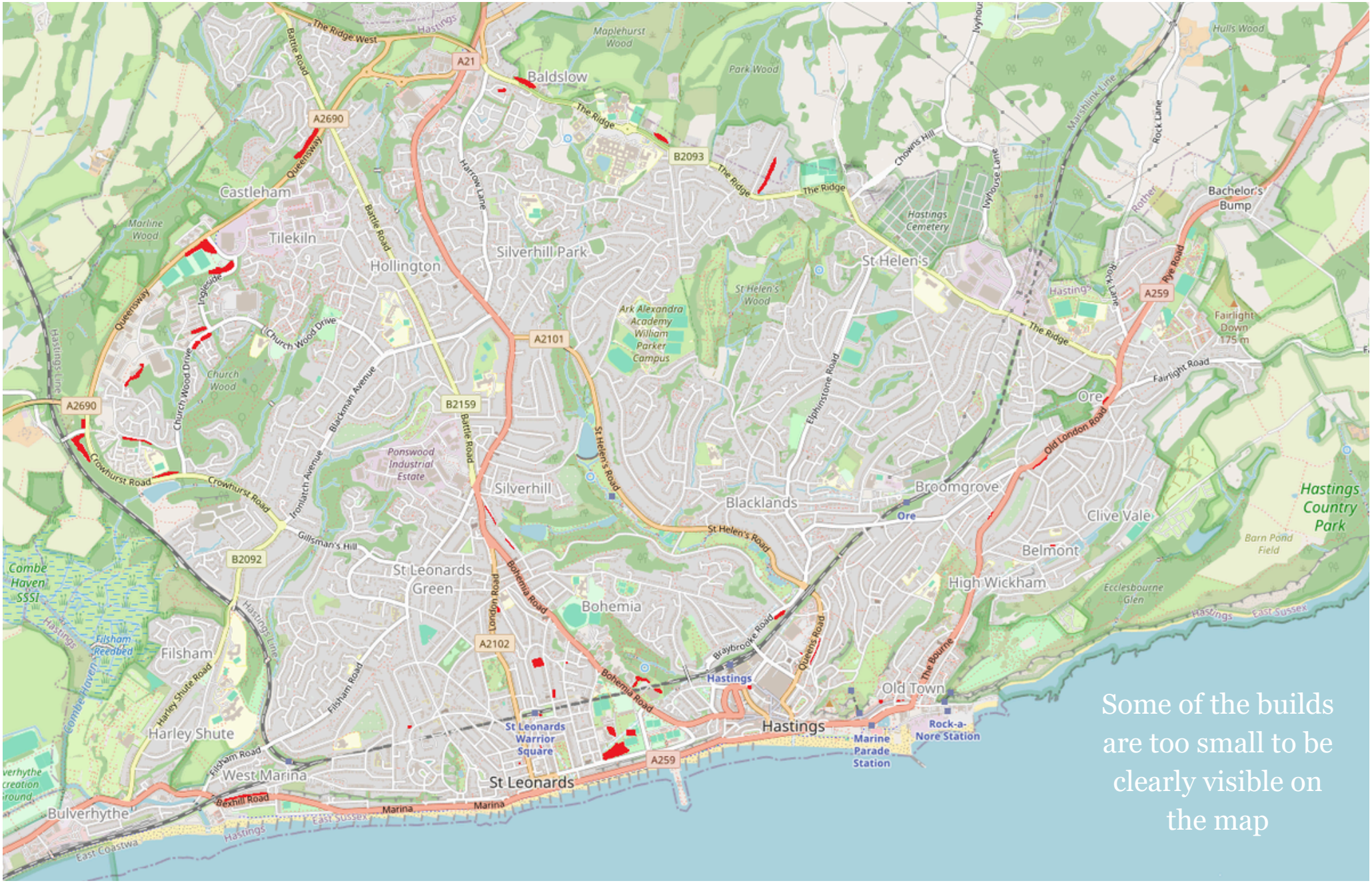
The report also explores how employment zones can offer more units. As retail is not performing as strongly as it once was, spaces on these sites often remain empty.

Also, these sites can use their land more efficiently. By converting and building new units into mixed-use units (combining commercial and housing units), this could increase the number of new builds in the town by 200 units.

It also explores how the large volume of empty units and unused retail outlets in the town represents potential for greater development. The value in these properties lies in both using the town's housing stock more efficiently and expanding existing buildings upwards to provide more living space. This could increase the number of new units by 300 without sacrificing any additional environmental space the town possesses. Further, our research also considers how retrofitting large empty property units can not only regain lost capacity but also increase it. It is estimated that such an approach would add another 300 units.

Together, the report demonstrates that by focusing on developing smaller plots, filling unused units and more efficiently using employment zones, the town can have more ambitious housing targets. Collectively, this would produce 2,423 additional units currently not in the local plan to better meet the town's housing needs. These units could house an estimated 3,300 people. If 30% of these were social or affordable (727 units housing 990 people), this would provide enough housing for all 631 households in temporary accommodation. Also, this, on top of housing outlined in the Local Plan, would provide housing for the 1,611 households currently on the waiting list. Therefore, the financial and social case is clear; Hastings must be more innovative and ambitious with housing targets.

The red shows where the building would roughly occur - there would be minimal impact on the town's landscape



The next two pages of this report outline a list of potential small sites and where these sites are located. For those without time, the report ends here. For those with time, the report then outlines the sites that could be better utilised in more detail. This helps the readers to understand how the numbers presented in the previous pages can be achieved.

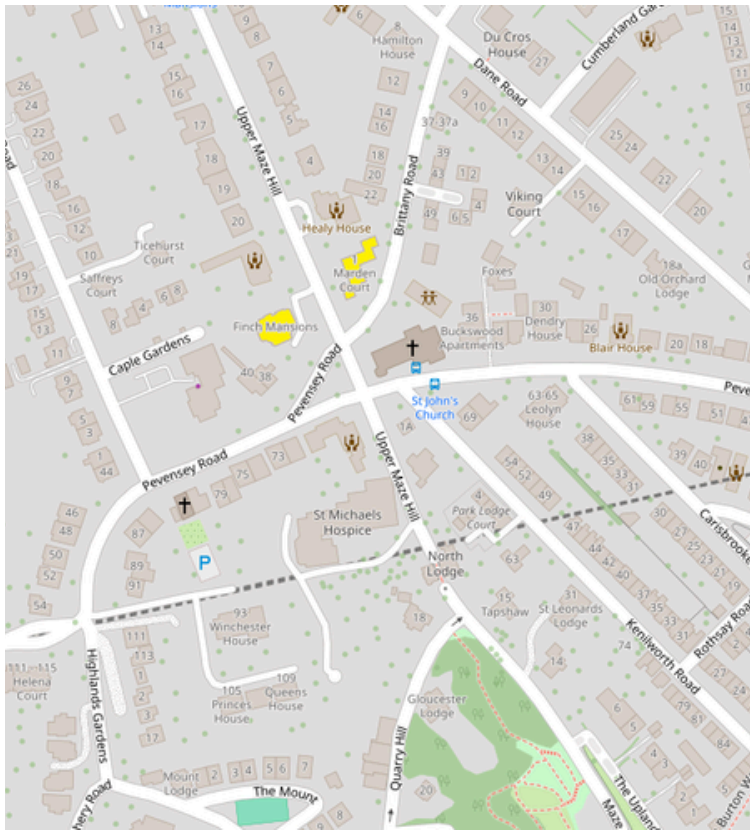
N	Description	Location	Proposition	Ward	Units	People
1	Unused land off main road	Chruchwood Drive	Flats - large build	Hollington	100	150
2	Unused land off main road	Queensway Gateway	Flats - large build	Hollington	250	350
3	Unused land off main road	Queensway Gateway	Pefabricated units	Hollington	12	20
4	Land off Bodiam Drive	Churchwood area	Houses - smaller build	Hollington	15	50
5	Gritting Site - lack of use	Crowhurst Road	Houses - smaller build	Wishing Tree	20	60
6	Combe Valley Way	Crowhurst Road	Houses - larger build	Wishing Tree	40	60
7	Employment Zone for sale	Whitworth Avenue	Flats - large build	Conquest	100	200
8	Unused land slope	Bexhill Road	Two bedroom flats	West St Leonards	8	15
9	Spare land plot 44-46 Pevensey	Pevesey Road	A couple of Flats	Maze Hill	6	10
10	Spare Land Devlopment CPR1	Chapel Park Road (Upper)	Small row of flats	Gensing	15	30
11	Spare Land Devlopment CPR3	Chapel Park Road (lower)	Small row of flats	Gensing	15	30
12	Cherry Tree- spare Corner	Cherry Tree	A corner house	Gensing	1	5
13	Unused land on off-road	Clarence Road	Houses - relatively small	Gensing	8	40
14	Unused land rear of house	Woodland Vale Road	Flats - relatively small	Gensing	25	50
15	Unused land next to woods	Summerfields	Flats - large build	Gensing	200	300
16	Disused Braybrooke Road site	Braybrooke Road	Houses - smaller build	Braybrooke	24	35
17	Unused land on backroad	Wellington Mews	Flats or small homes	Castle	25	25
18	Small empty plot CH street	Courthouse Street	One block of Flats	Old Hastings	3	5
19	Robertson Hill Bank	Robertson Hill	Small row of houses	Tressell	5	20
20	Belmont south end	Belmont Road	Adjacent House	Old Hastings	1	5

21	Ashburnham Back	Old London Road	Row of small flats	Ore	20	60
22	Former Garage	Old London Road	Some houses	Ore	10	10
23	Linley Drive X2 sites	Lindley Drive (Rear)	Unused Council Land	Baird	12	20
24	Potential back land sites	Parkwood Road	Houses - larger build	Conquest	50	100
25	Land behind stores	Stockton View	Small row of houses	Ashdown	5	10
26	Spare Land - The Ridge	Maple Heights	Houses - larger build	Ashdown	40	80
27	Queensway Land	Washington Avenue	Houses - smaller build	Ashdown	20	60
28	Opposite Prince Albert Pub	Town Centre	Building flats in space	Castle	4	5
29	Gap in George Street	George Street	Building flats in space	Old Hastings	30	30
30	Gaps in West Street	West Street	Building flats in space	Old Hastings	10	15
31	Gaps in Old Town High Street	High Street	Building flats in space	Old Hastings	4	5
32	Vacant Tennis Courts	St Margaret's Road	One block of Flats	Central St Leonards	10	10
33	Empty spaces on Western Road	Western Road	Building flats in space	Central St Leonards	5	5
34	Former Convent site	St Margaret's Road	Historic England Plans	Central St Leonards	200	300
35	Disused Café'	St Leoanrds Station	One block of Flats	Central St Leonards	10	10
36	Empty Space near Queensbury House	Priory Road	Building flats in space	Castle	20	20
37	Empty Buildings, Unused Retail Space & Empty Retail				300	300
38	Additional units from Retrofitting				300	300
39	Empty Spaces less than 0.25 hecters				300	300
40	Better Using Employment Zones				200	200
	Total				**2,423**	**3,300**

The table above shows how the numbers listed in the report's introduction are reached. Each site is given a breakdown of how many units could be built and how many people could potentially live within these spaces. None of these sites are in the Local Plan and therefore can be added to produce more ambitious house-building targets. As this report hasn't conducted an extensive survey, these numbers are conservative estimates based on a very small analysis of available plots in the Hastings borough.

Section 1: Small builds and overlooked plots

This section of the report outlines how small and overlooked plots of land can add a significant amount of housing currently not included in the local plan. Firstly, overlooked plots are often small plots of land that can fit in large numbers of units. We estimate these overlooked sites can produce 1,342 units not included in the local plan. The example to the left shows how this has been done in the past. Finches Mansions and Marden Court were built to fill empty plots at the end of Upper Maze Hill Road. These buildings generated 70 flats within a very small area, showing the potential these overlooked empty plots of land possess.



The photos to the right show Finches Mansions and Marden Court. These show the significant number of units that can be built within relatively small areas. They also show how these small, overlooked sites can produce higher house-building targets without putting the town's environment at risk.

Secondly, as mentioned earlier in the report, the SHELIA (The Strategic Housing & Economic Land Availability assessment) does not identify sites of less than 0.25 hectares. Therefore, this approach misses many very small sites across the town that have development potential.

This section identifies some of these sites, but these were found on a very light scan of the town. Local researchers have estimated that a further 300 units could be made available from these very small sites. On top of the 1,323 units, this produces a significant addition to the local plan and more ambitious targets.





Churchwood Drive

Large Space avaliable

Location: Churchwood Drive (between Tesco and St Leoanrds Motors):

Land Type: Large plot of green land at the side of the road, unused.

Reason: Large land space for a big development - currently unused - little environmental value - connected to a main road.

Development Proposed: Multiple flats - 5 floors,

Number of new Units: - 100 units.

Number of people housed: 150 people.





Queensway/ Napier Road.

Large Space avaliable





Location: Queensway/Napier Road, adjacent to Plastica Pools.

Land Type: Large unused plot of green land.

Reason: Large land space for a big development - currently unused - little environmental value - connected to a main road - nearby supermarket.

Development Proposed: 1 & 2 bed flats - 5 floors,

Number of new Units: - 250 units - potential for more if specific designs are adopted.

Number of people housed: 350 people.

Queensway/ Napier Road (Opposite)



Spare land adjacent to the playing field



Location: Queensway/Napier Road, Opposite the playing fields.

Land Type: unused land with some vegetation.

Reason: Land that is covered by light tree and shrub cover - limited environmental value.

Development Proposed: 10-12 prefabricated units.

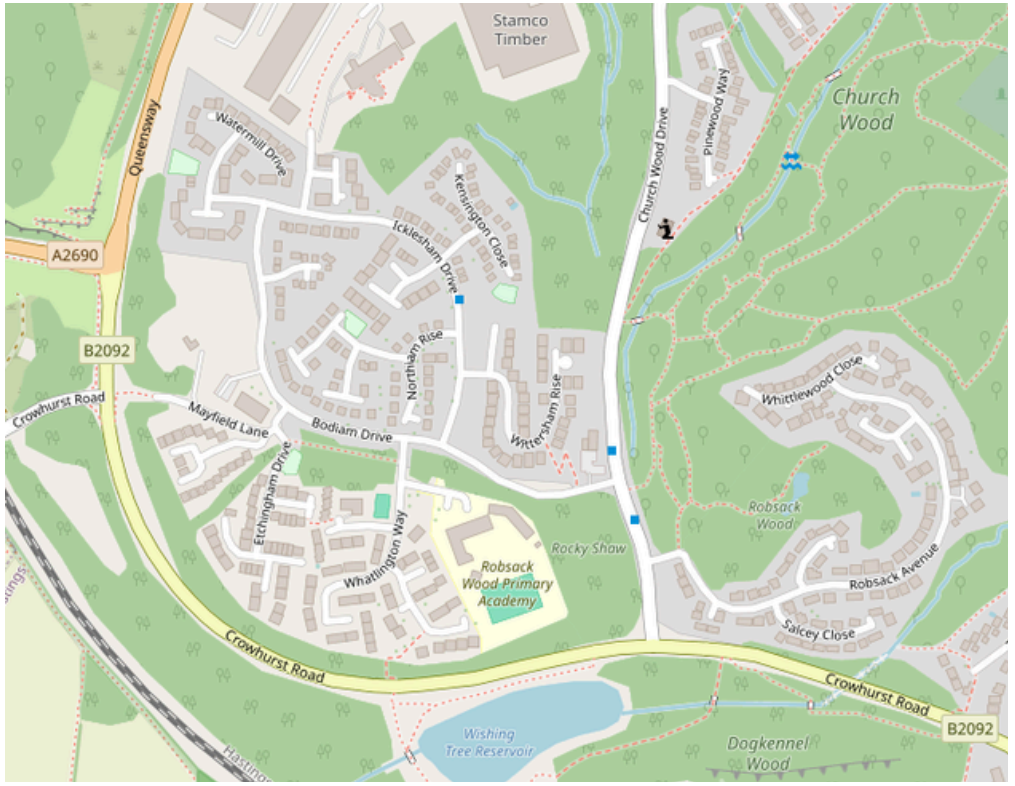
Number of new Units: - 12 units.

Number of people housed: 20 people.

Bodiam Drive

Churchwood area, a very large garden





Location: A large garden area in the Churchwood Road area.

Land Type: Unused green land.

Reason: Land could be used more efficiently; little environmental value - the area already has similar development.

Development: Houses.

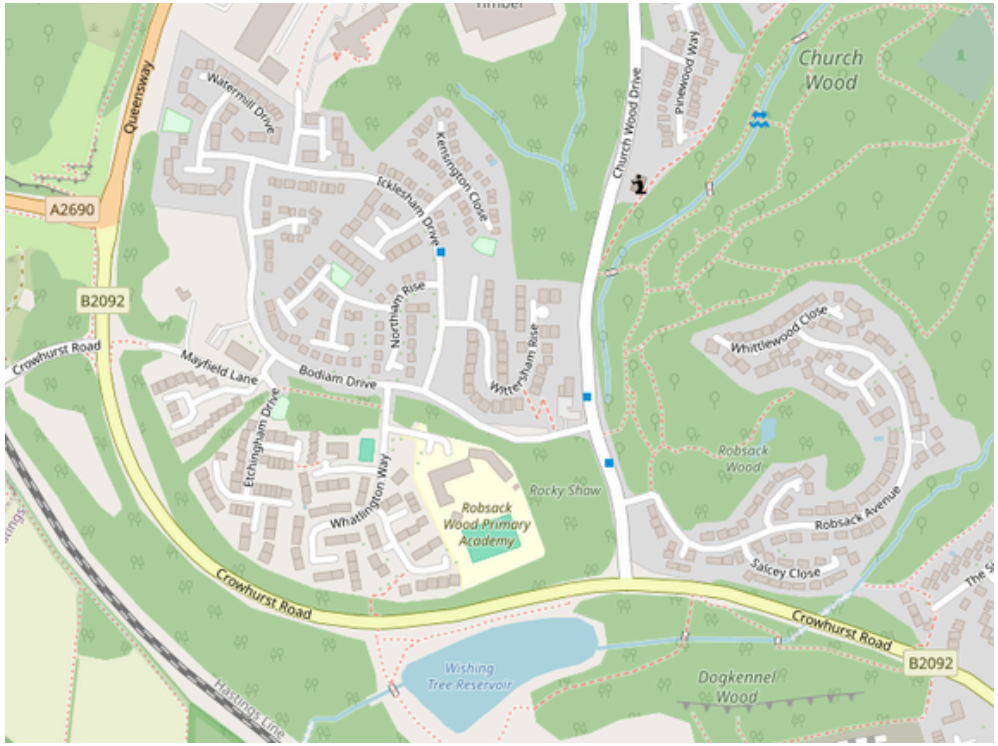
Number of new Units: - 15 units.

Number of people housed: 50 people.

Crowhurst Road

ESCC land





Location: A proposed gritting site - land owned by ESCC.

Land Type: Developed brownfield site.

Reason: A gritting site will be rarely used; the land could be better used for housing.

Development: Houses.

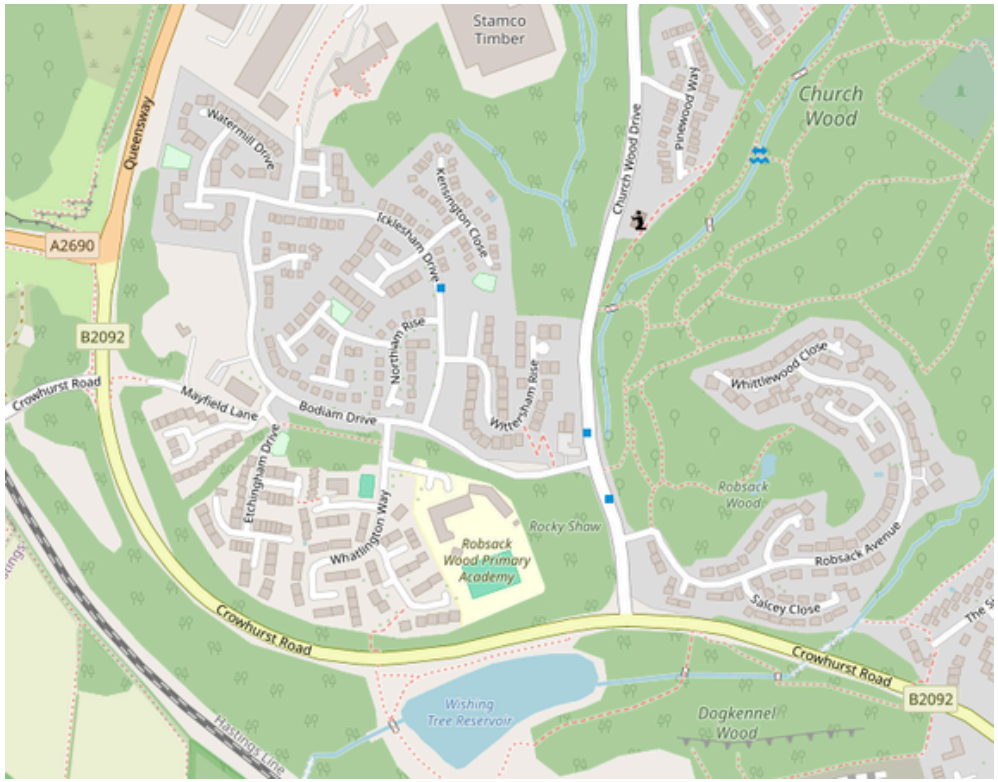
Number of new Units: - 20 units.

Number of people housed: 60 people.

Crowhurst Road

ESCC owned unused land





Location: Land just off Crowhurst Road.

Land Type: A spoil dump.

Reason: The land has been damaged by the construction of the new road. It could be used for housing without damaging the environment.

Development: A tall building - flats.

Number of new Units: - 40 units.

Number of people housed: 60 people.

Highland Drive

Unused employment Zone

Location: A 1.5-hectare employment zone off Whitworth Road.

Land Type: A brownfield site near a roadway.

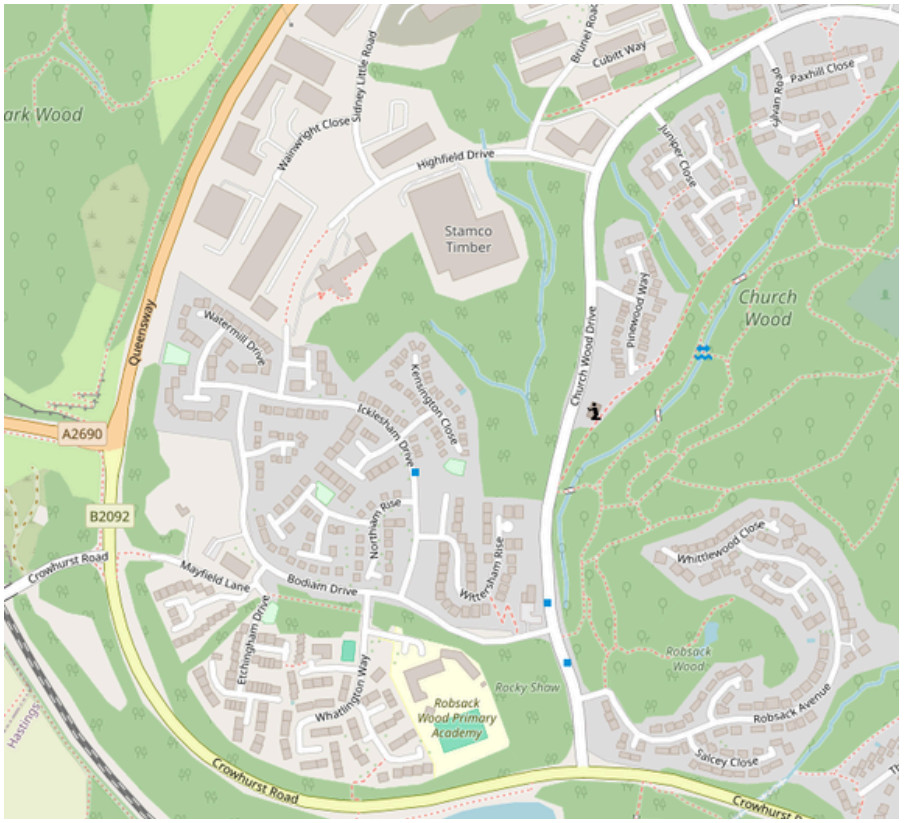
Reason: The land is owned by HBC and is currently for sale - available for residential use.

Development: Mixed-use - employment offices and a series of flats.

Number of new Units: - 100 units.

Number of people housed: 200 people.

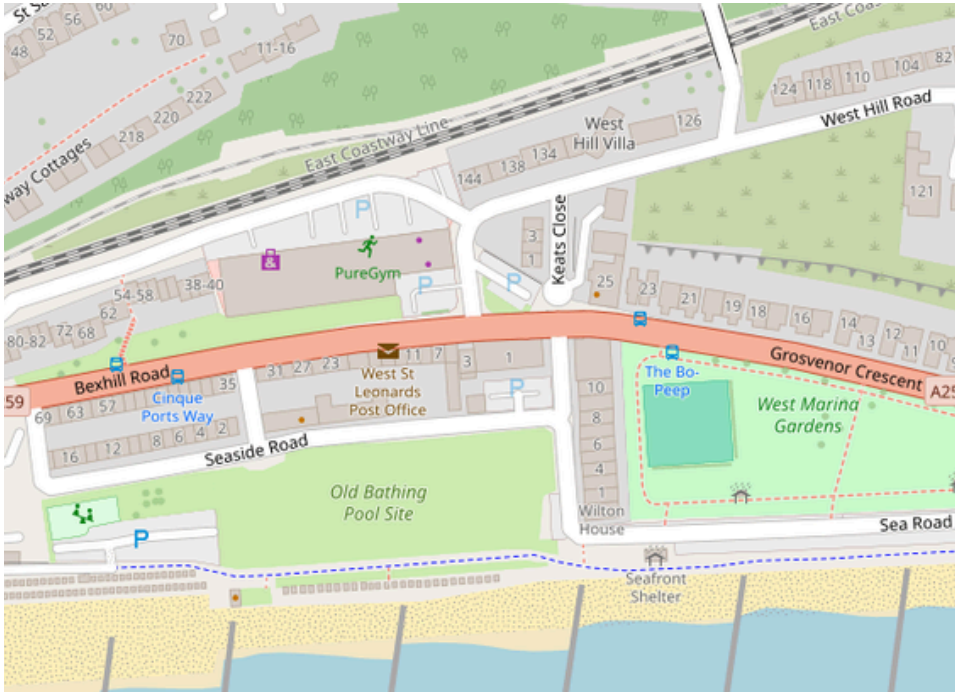




Bexhill Road

Unused strip of land.





Location: Strip of land alongside TK Maxx on Bexhill Road.

Land Type: Combination of brownfield and inefficiently used green space.

Reason: Land originally set aside for a bus layby near the retail space.

Development: Proposed: 6 two-bed flats with parking underneath.

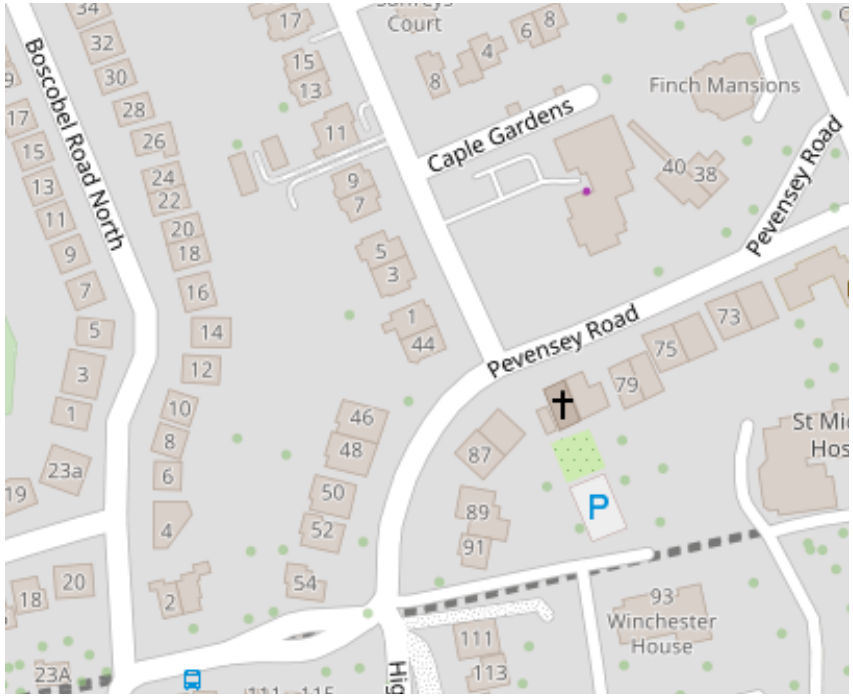
Number of new Units: - 8 units.

Number of people housed: 15 people.

Pevensey Road

Empty plot of land between large houses





Location: Adjacent to 44 Pevensey Road

Land Type: A spare plot of land between two large houses in a built-up area.

Reason: Spare land with little environmental value; no trees or biodiversity.

Development: A couple of large flats.

Number of new Units: - 6 units.

Number of people housed: 10 people.

Chapel Park Road

Space for a houses





Location: A spare plot of land on Chapel Park Road (Upper end).

Land Type: Small plot of green land - unused.

Reason: Spare space available in a densely populated area - little environmental value.

Development Proposed: A series of flats.

Number of new Units: - 15 units.

Number of people housed: 30 people.

Note: Trees have now grown on the plot; the area would need to be checked for wildlife before building on it.

Chapel Park Road

Space for a houses

Location: A spare plot of land on Chapel Park Road (lower end).

Land Type: Small plot of green land - unused.

Reason: Spare space available in a densely populated area - little environmental value.

Development Proposed: A series of flats.

Number of new Units: - 15 units.

Number of people housed: 30 people.

Note: Now that trees have grown on the plot, the area would need to be checked for wildlife before building on it.





Church Road/ Cherry Tree Close



Space for a house

Location: On the Corner of Church Road and Cherry Tree Close.

Land Type: Small plot of green land.

Reason: Spare space available on a corner in an already built-up area. Will produce minimal environmental impact.

Development Proposed: A small house.

Number of new Units: - 1 unit.

Number of people housed: 5 people.



Clarence Road

Spare land in the Bohemia area



Location: Long gardens backing houses on Bohemia Road. An unmade road with a mix of uses.

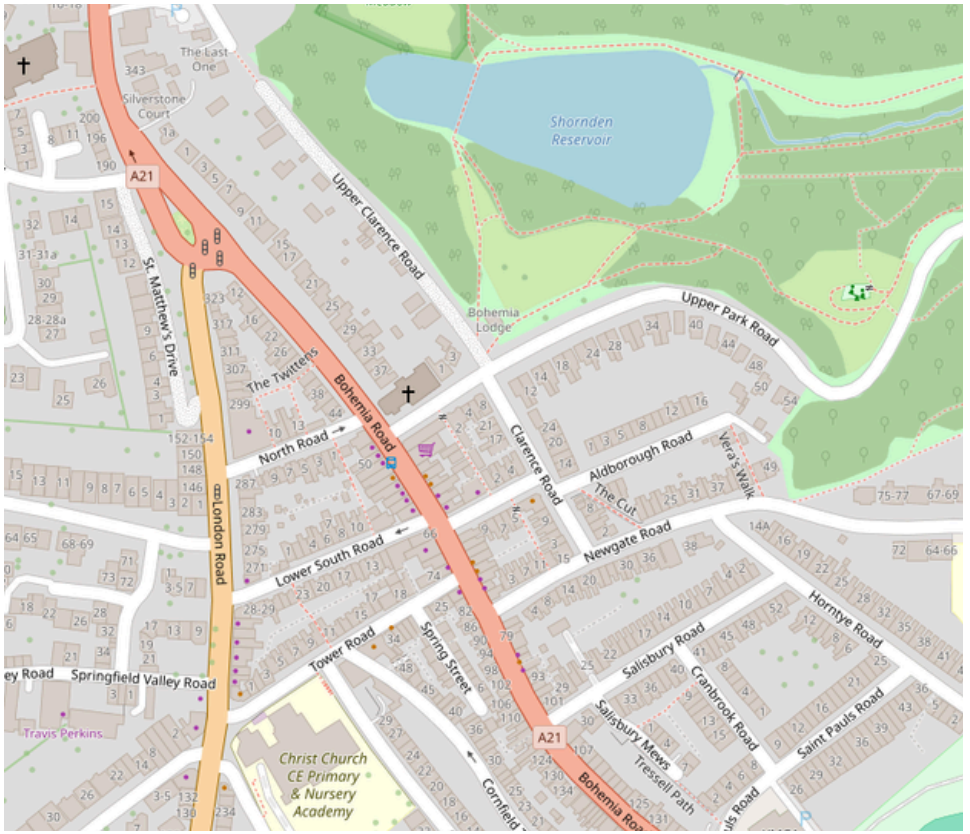
Land Type: Combination of brownfield and inefficiently used green space.

Reason: Land that is not being used as effectively as it could- space for housing.

Development Proposed: Potential for a couple of small site developments - 4 units each.

Number of new Units: - 8 units.

Number of people housed: 40 people.



Woodlane Vale

Unused strip of land.

Location: Land rear at the top of Woodland Vale Road.

Land Type: Unused Brownfield site, little environmental value.

Reason: Backland not used - could be more efficiently used - access from 49 Woodland Vale Road.

Development: Potential for 25 flats, with a possible bridge link to London Road. Also, planting space is available.

Number of new Units: - 25 units.

Number of people housed: 50 people.





Bohemia Road

Unused strip of land - space for a significant site.

Location: Summerfields: behind and to one side of the sports/swimming centre

Land Type: Unused green land.

Reason: There is a substantial green, unused area with no trees, with limited environmental value. An existing 5/6 storey flat block nearby on Bohemia Road already exists without damaging the woodland.

Development: Potential for 4 flat blocks of 6-7 storeys. Sloping ground down to Summerfields Woods would allow for additional space (green space or car parks).

Number of new Units: - 200 - 300 units.

Number of people housed: 300 people.





Braybrooke Road



Unused brownfeild site

Location: 12 - 19 Braybrooke Road (former housing site and garage)

Land Type: Unused brownfield land.

Reason: The land has previously been built on. It can be redeveloped with minimal environmental impact.

Development: A terrace of flats.

Number of new Units: - 24 units.

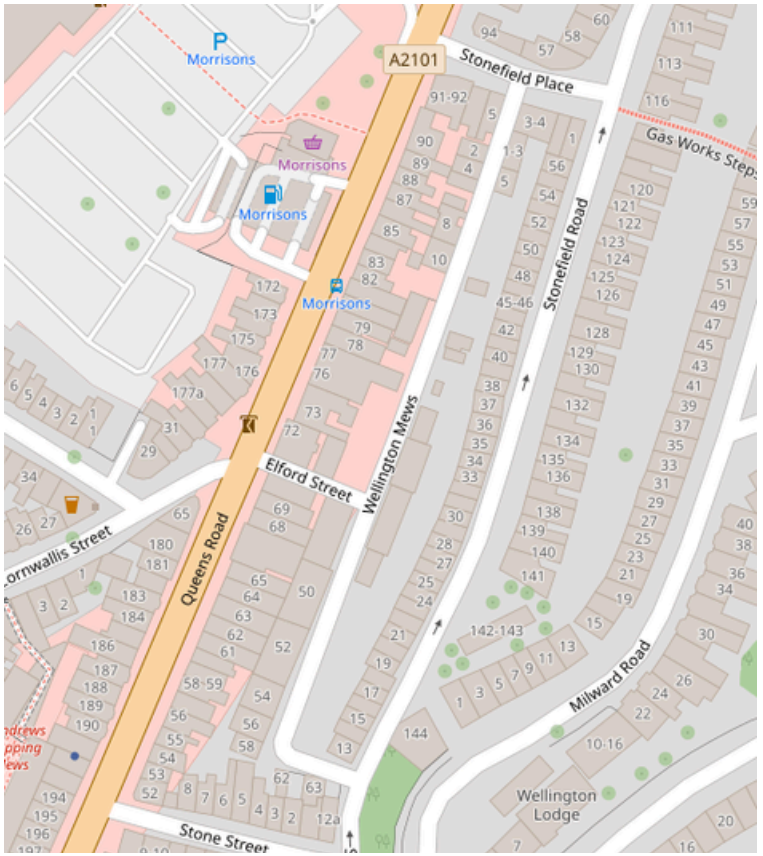
Number of people housed: 35 people.



Wellington Mews

Unused Land rear of the shops on Queens Road





Location: Service road to Queens Road shops and back to houses on Stonehouse Road.

Land Type: Unused brownfield land.

Reason: All brownfield land. It could be used more efficiently.

Development: Small flats, where space is used, and a change of use can be agreed.

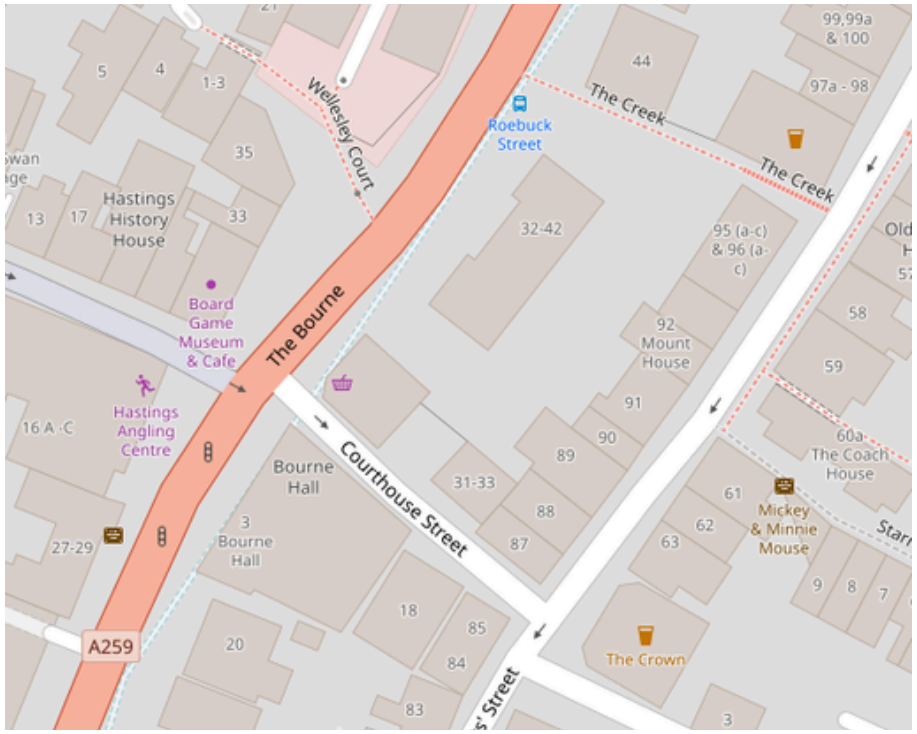
Number of new Units: - 25 units.

Number of people housed: 25 people.

Courthouse Street

Courthouse Street - empty plot





Location: Courthouse Street - Opposite 1 Bourne Hall.

Land Type: Empty plot of brownfield land, fenced off and currently unused.

Reason: Empty plot of land, fenced off and currently unused.

Development: A small block of 3 flats.

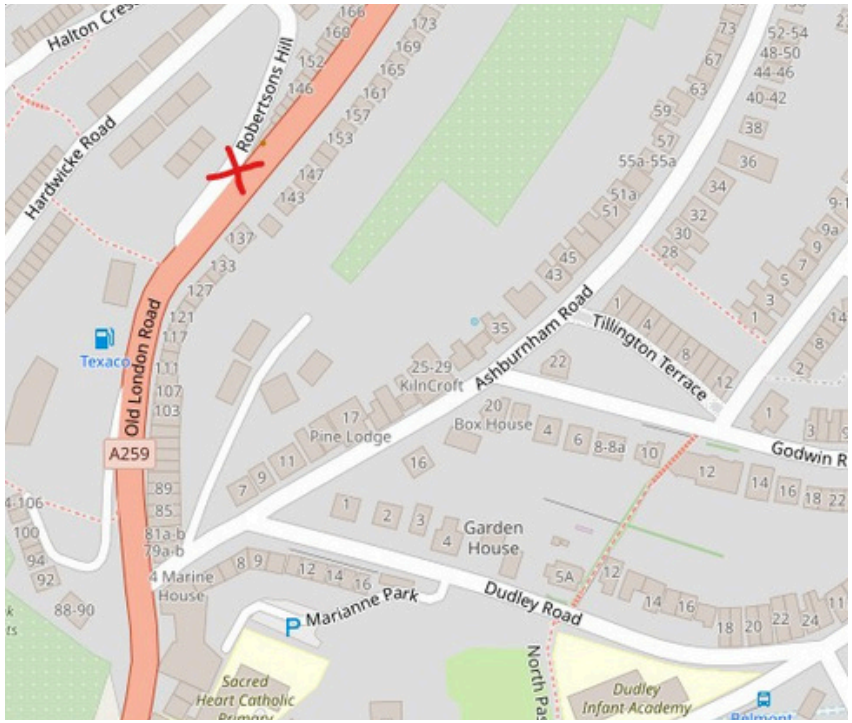
Number of new Units: - 3 units.

Number of people housed: 5 people.

Robertson Hill

Hobbit-like sheltered housing





Location: Bottom of Robertson Hill

Land Type: Small plot of green land (little environmental value).

Reason: Inefficient use of land; the area road is not densely populated.

Development Proposed: Hobbit-like self-built, earth-sheltered houses, such as those built by the Hockerton Housing Trust.

Number of new Units: - 5 units - small houses.

Number of people housed: 20 people.

Belmont Road - South End

One House

Location: Bottom of Belmont Road

Land Type: Small plot next to a listed building available.

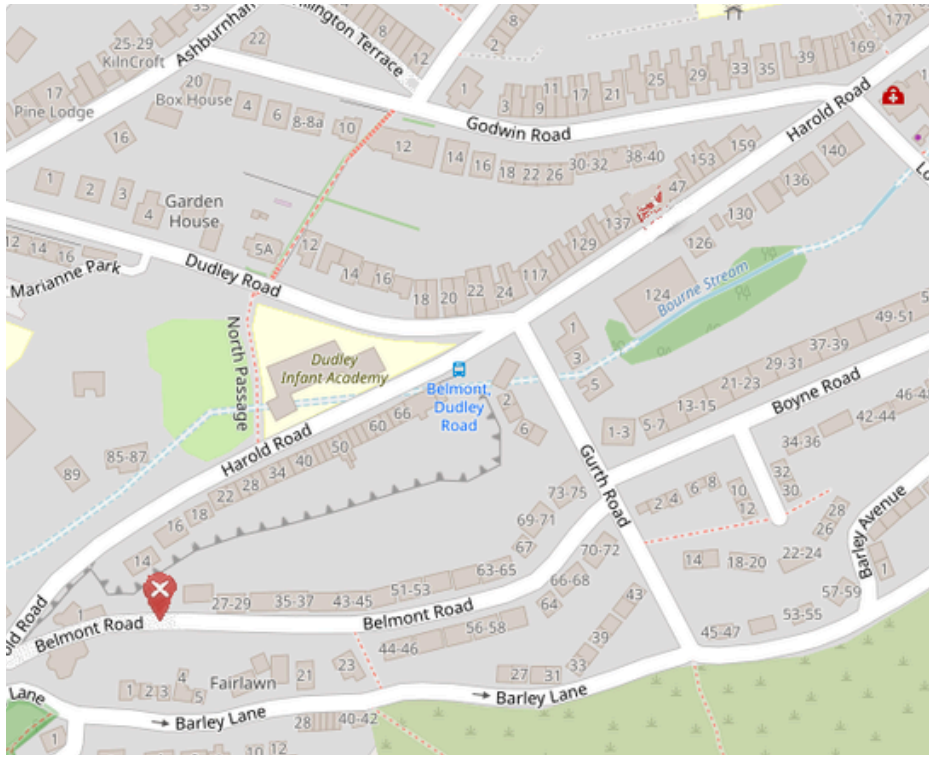
Reason: Spare space - inefficient space usage.

Development Proposed: One house, adjacent to a listed building.

Number of new Units: - 1 unit - A small house or block of flats.

Number of people housed: 5 people.





Old London Road - Back Gardens



Spaces for Housing units.

Location: Old London Road, next to the back gardens of houses on Ashburham Road.

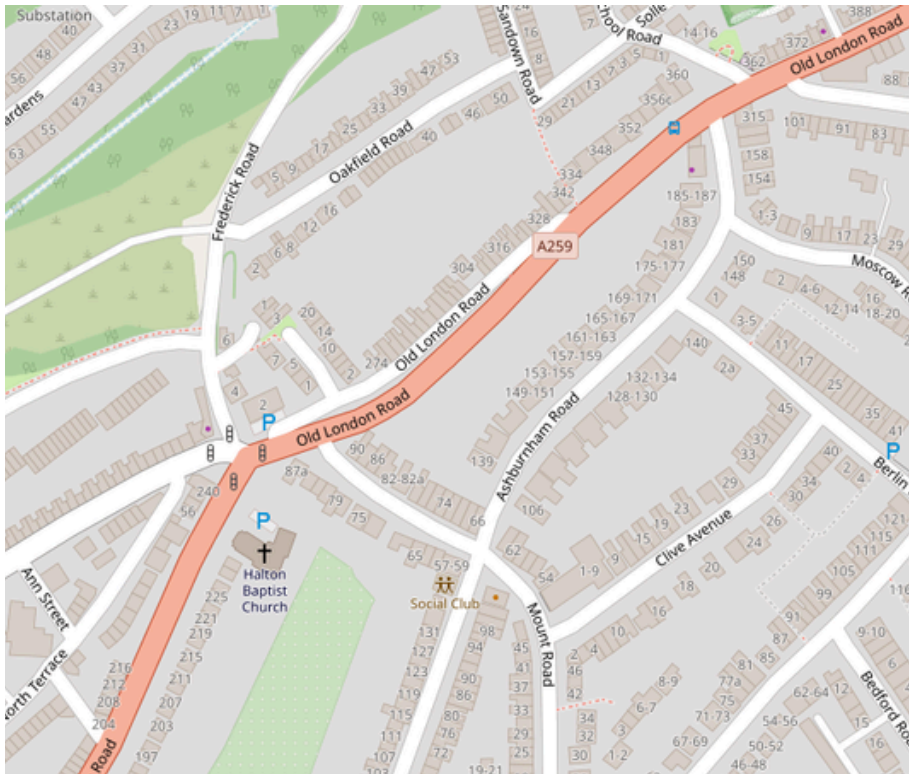
Land Type: Small plot in front of some back gardens.

Reason: Spare space - inefficient space usage - good public transport connections, shops nearby.

Development Proposed: Small flats.

Number of new Units: - 20 units.

Number of people housed: 60 people.



Unused Land - Old London Road

Space for new housing





Location: 381-391 Old London Road (former garage).

Land Type: Small brownfield site.

Reason: A former garage brownfield site that is now empty - can be redeveloped with minimal environmental impact.

Development Proposed: Small flats.

Number of new Units: - 6 units.

Number of people housed: 20 people.

Linley Drive - unused sites X2

Space for new housing

Location: Rear land on Linley Drive

Land Type: Small brownfield site.

Reason: Unused land in areas where the council built council housing.

Development Proposed: Small bungalows.

Number of new Units: - 12 units.

Number of people housed: 20 people.







Parkwood Road

An unused back land site

Location: The rear of houses on Parkwood Road.

Land Type: Unused rear land - extending a Brownfield site.

Reason: The land is already residential and can be better used by extending it.

Development: Some houses.

Number of new Units: - 50 units.

Number of people housed: 100 people.





Stockton View





Unused Land behind harrow stores

Location: Land behind Harrow stores around the Stockon View area.

Land Type: Unused land - Brownfield site.

Reason: Land is not being used as effectively as it could.

Development: A few houses on the spare land available.

Number of new Units: - 5 units.

Number of people housed: 10 people.

Space on the Ridge

A large, undeveloped strip of land





Location: Land off The Ridge, adjacent to Maple Heights.

Land Type: Unused green land.

Reason: Land could be used more efficiently; little environmental value - the area already has similar development.

Development: Houses.

Number of new Units: - 40 units.

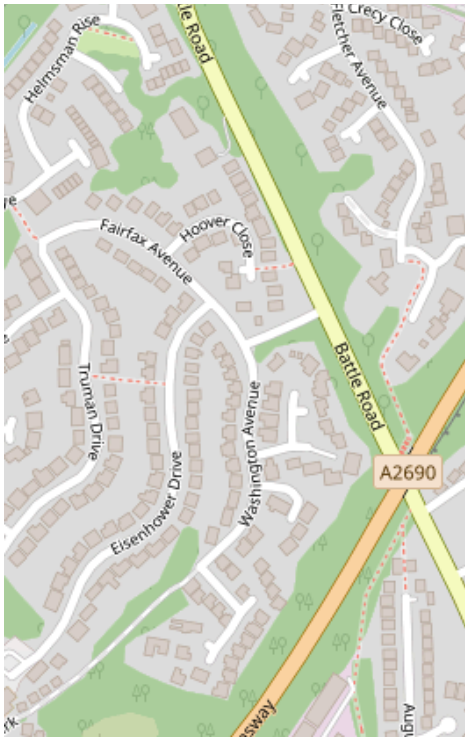
Number of people housed: 80 people.

Washington Avenue

Large unused space around Queensway Gateway & Washington Av.







Location: Land off Washington Avenue, backing onto Queensway.

Land Type: A green site near a roadway.

Reason: The land has little environmental value; it can be connected to major roads. There is also a small unused link road where some housing could be built.

Development: Some houses.

Number of new Units: - 20 units.

Number of people housed: 60 people.

Opposite the Prince Albert pub

Former Seminar Rooms and Library building





Location: Brook Street.

Land Type: Brownfield (already built on).

Reason: Empty building - no current viable future. A series of small rooms which could be made into larger flats.

Development Proposed: A block of flats.

Number of new Units: 5

Number of people housed: 10 people.

Large empty Urban spaces

Large Spaces still exist in built up areas.

Location: 39 - 40 George Street.

Land Type: Brownfield, demolished unit (previously built on).

Reason: A large space has been left by a demolished building; this land could be used for housing.

Development Proposed: Large block of flats.

Number of new Units: 30

Number of people housed: 30 people.





Small Empty Urban Spaces

Small spaces exist even in the Old Town



Location: West Street - Empty or unused plots.

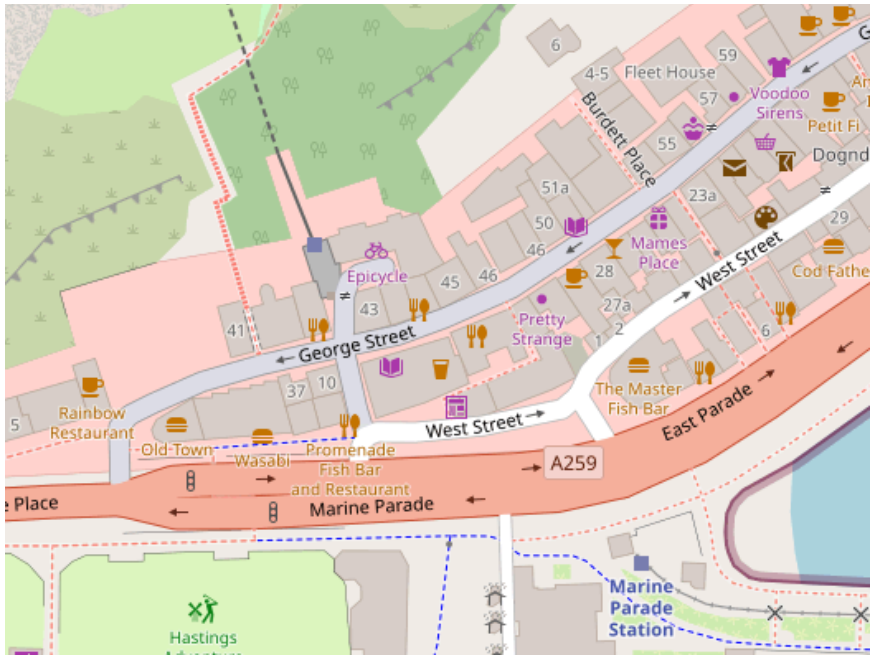
Land Type: Brownfield, demolished unit (previously built on).

Reason: A large space has been left by a demolished building; this land could be used for housing.

Development Proposed: A small block of flats

Number of new Units: 10; people housed: 15









Empty Spaces even exist in dense areas

Room for a small unit?

Location: 59 **-** High Street, Old Town

Land Type: Brownfield (previously built on).

Reason: Space for a unit in a built-up area - no environmental value.

Development Proposed: A large house.

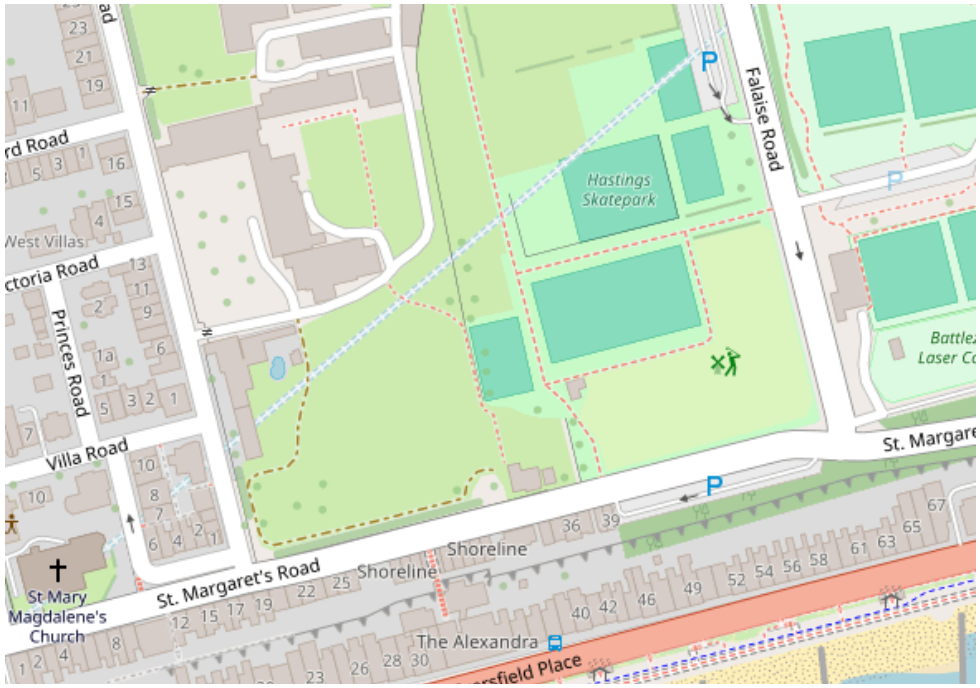
Number of new Units: 4; people housed: 5.



Vacant Land

Disused Tennis Courts





Location: St Margaret's Road.

Land Type: Brownfield (already built on).

Reason: The free spaces could provide new high-rise flats that could house many people whilst sacrificing little space.

Development Proposed: Building flats on areas where disused tennis courts exist and likely won't be used for some time.

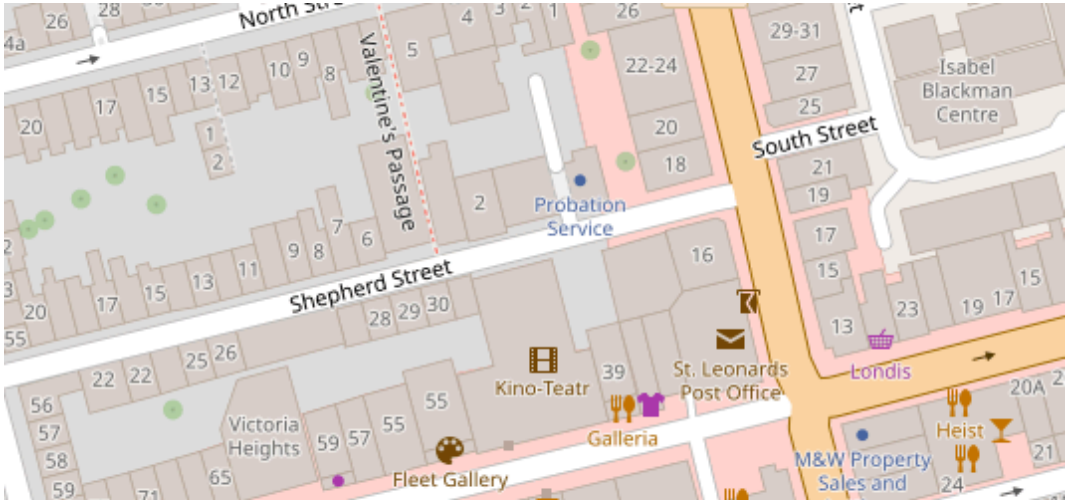
Number of new Units: 10.

Number of people housed: 10.

Unused Car Parking Space

Spare Plot of Land





Location: Opposite 1 Shephard Street.

Land Type: Brownfield (already built on).

Reason: Little-used car park. The space and additional land could provide many dwellings whilst sacrificing little space.

Development Proposed: Flats within the spare, mostly unused land.

Number of new Units: 10.

Number of people housed: 10 people.

Unused Land - Small plots

Unused Plot on Western Road

Location: Unused plot - Opposite Cross Street.

Land Type: Brownfield (already built on).

Reason: Unused space. The space and additional land could provide a small number of dwellings.

Development Proposed: Fill empty spaces with flats.

Number of new Units: 5; people housed: 5





Sites that are in administration

Former School & Convent

Location: St Margaret's Road.

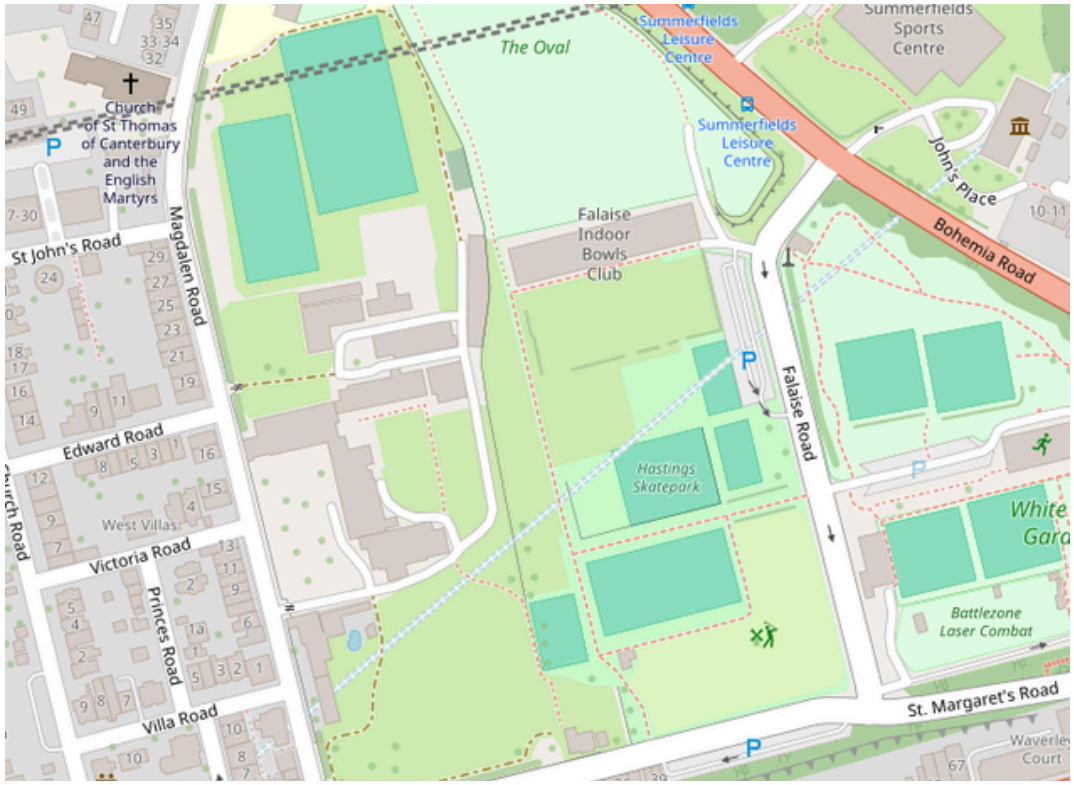
Land Type: Brownfield (already built on).

Reason: Unused land, and the housing could generate revenue to save the heritage-protected site from being left vacant.

Development Proposed: Houses as set out by Heritage England.







Disused Business Buildings



Empty Cafe’

Location: Outside St Leonards station.

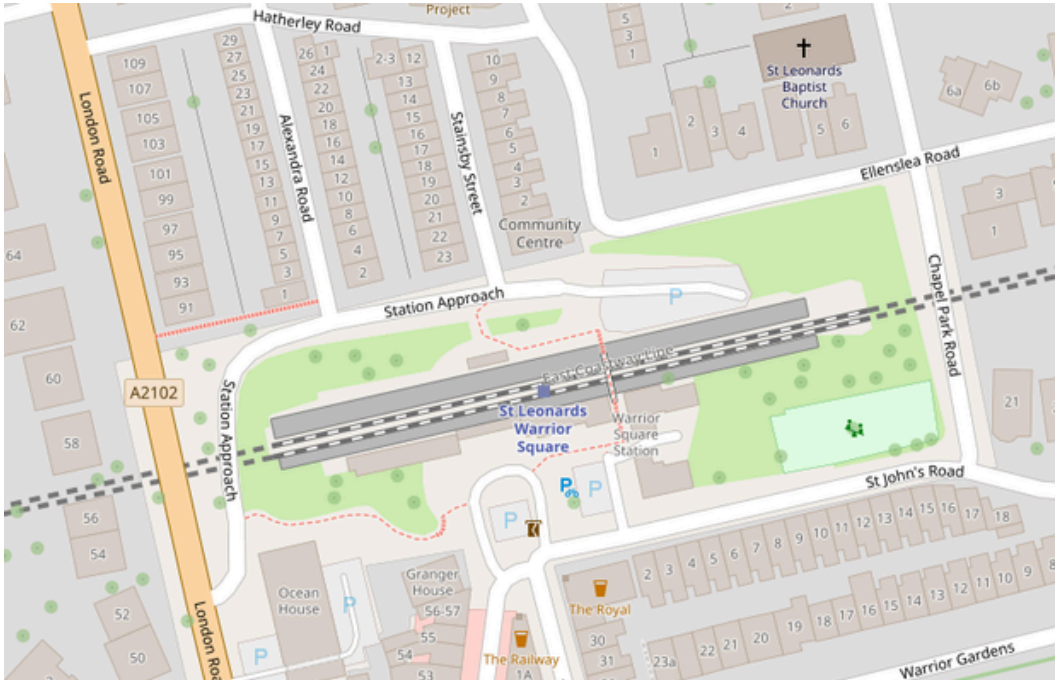
Land Type: Brownfield (already built on), within an already built-up area, so it will have minimal environmental impact.

Reason: Empty building - no current viable future.

Development Proposed:

Number of new Units: 10.

Number of people housed: 10 people.



QueensBury House -

Rear View



Spare landspace

Location: 1 - Havelock Road - rear (Priory Street access).

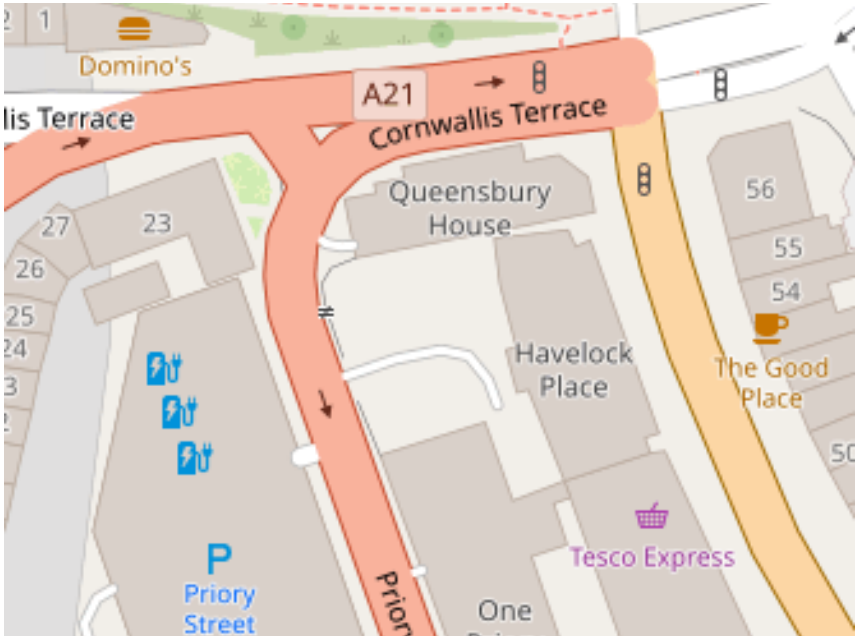
Land Type: Brownfield (already built on).

Reason: Unused land next to an empty building with no current viable future.

Development Proposed: Building a block of flats on the spare land adjacent to the abandoned Queenbury House building.

Number of new Units: 20.

Number of people housed: 20 people.



Section 2 - Empty buildings and shops

Many buildings remain empty across the town.

Whilst even large empty buildings can only supply a few units at a time, collectively, these buildings and shops could easily supply 300 more units.

The Hastings Town centre has a concentration of these large buildings, but significant gains can be found across the town.

Whilst filling in empty properties provides the quickest gains, further units can be provided by increasing the height of empty units, where possible.
The following images give examples, but not a full list, of the town's empty properties.



Empty buildings - Alot in the Town Centre









Empty buildings - Some even exist in high density areas- such as the Old Town.





Urban Central St Leonards also has empty units









Section 2 continued – Unused Retail Space

Vacant shops often have empty floors above, which could be converted into one-bedroom housing units. Whilst this provides small gains, when considering the volume of empty units and the empty space above them, these gains could be notable in highly dense areas.

With new legislation making it easier to take action against empty high-street units, the capacity to turn these empty units into new housing is greater than in past years.







Plenty of retail spaces are long-term empty units









Plenty of retail spaces are long-term empty units

Some empty retail units also offer the opportunity to expand upwards, whilst others already offer several floors of unused housing space.

Across the town, these opportunities could offer 100 more units. These units would mostly be one-bedroom flats, which are in high demand amongst those who most need housing support.







Section 3 - Retrofitting large empty Buildings - e.g. Town Centre Flats

Retrofitting buildings falling into disrepair could reduce environmental damage and landfill waste, and increase the number of units by expanding existing buildings. This approach could provide an extra 300 units across the town.

Location: **Clifton Court:** Holmesdale Gardens

Land Type: Brownfield (already built on).

Reason: Empty Building - no current viable future. Could provide a series of flats.

Development Proposed: If retrofitted, could provide more flats than previously was the case. Otherwise, it requires building a new structure.

Number of new Units: 70 - additional new units (20 if retrofitted). People: 100 - houses an extra 20 people.



Retrofit Design by Little Ship Architects.



Four Courts

Not fit for purpose Four Tower Complex - Retrofitting example



Retrofit Design by Little Ship Architects.

Location: Wishing Tree Area.

Land Type: Brownfield (already built on).

Reason: Buildings that are deemed to have no viable future. The space and additional land could provide many new dwellings.

Development Proposed: A large series of flats or houses. Retrofitting would provide more units.

Number of new Units: 580 (180 new units), 700 people - house 180 more people.



Section 4 - Employment Zones

Employment Zones often have unused retail space and could use land more efficiently. With technology changing shopping habits, large retail units are hard to sustain. Creating a mixture of housing and retail units in these areas could help sustain the local economy while also meeting housing demands, potentially creating another 200 units.



Conclusion

This report has outlined how delivering a significant number of additional units is possible by focusing on smaller, overlooked plots of land. This approach, alongside addressing empty units and more efficiently using land in industrial zones, can deliver much more ambitious housing targets that can better meet Hastings' housing needs.

These additional units, alongside the units outlined in the local plan, can not only address the growing use of temporary accommodation, but can also provide a longer-term sustainable solution to HBC's growing housing bill. Therefore, this would improve HBC's finances and provide more funds for services that we all value and enjoy. Further, meeting these housing needs will provide a significantly more effective method of combating worsening relative poverty levels, as a lack of accessible housing is the largest factor driving these trends.

Therefore, this report would advocate that the council incorporates this approach, and the sites set out in this report, into the Local Plan. Whilst not a complete solution, this will allow the council to have more ambitious housing targets that can better meet the town's future housing needs.