

Rep 987

Mr Roger Collyer

Matter 5

Replacement Submission

## Inspector's Matters, Issues & Questions

Matter 5: (Issue 5) Employment, Economic Development and Town Centres

### Hastings Local Plan 4.32 p34

Submission:

Planners of these hopelessly grandiose schemes used to operate when there was a river of cash flooding the economy.

## Further Statement

*'Contemporary, eco friendly conference and banqueting centre'*



### Squandermania

#### Zero interest rate policy - zirp

**£2.5m is spent on a 'contemporary, eco friendly conference and banqueting centre' on Queensway Employment Corridor.** It has 'sustainable design, biomass boiler and toilets flushed by rainwater'. Property developers in cahoots with banksters and public relations people are responsible.

Hastings Local Plan is overloaded with offices, shops and industrial parks for which there is no demand, evident from years of low level occupancy for existing premises. Grant money is wasted.

Centre of Economics and Business Research forecasts that by 2017 'internet sales will make up 15.7% of all retail sales, up from 9.5% in 2012.' Policy DS3 of the Local Plan targets 20,500sqm more retail space in Hastings town centre. The market for commercial property has changed entirely, arguments of the last decade don't work.

Commenting about Enviro21 business park, East Sussex Energy Infrastructure & Development Ltd, known as Sea Change, told Hastings and St Leonards Observer: "We found the economic climate meant there was more demand for smaller and larger units than the midsize units on site."

## What do planning policy team do?

AFTER seeing publicity for the Shaping Hastings planning initiative in the *Observer* in recent months, I went to the Aquila House offices of the Planning Policy Team.

The people there were very nice and answered some questions I asked. They gave me a copy of the Hastings Planning Strategy report.

After having such a good feeling about the exercise you may imagine my horror to read details of what is being proposed for central Hastings. They include an additional 21,700sqm of offices and an additional 20,500sqm of shops. These are massive areas.

Throughout the document there is mention of regeneration activity, sustainable regeneration, more sustainable patterns of development, contributing to the town's built environment, supporting economic development and regeneration.

Writing 'economic regeneration' several times in reports like this does not make it come true. We can all see that building more offices and shops in Hastings is speculation, not regeneration.

What looked like a good way of burning-off a wad of cash years ago doesn't look so clever now. In point 2.65, on page 22 of the report, there is a suggestion that in 2028, plans will be made for 2066 celebrations that 'will attract international interest'.

Does the Planning Policy Team lark about all day? Do they have basic maths skills? The report has seen a lot of work and it does have some nice maps, but 'contribute positively to the local economy?' I don't think so.

**NICOLA WARING**  
Sedlescombe Road South  
St Leonards

Observer, August 24 2012



Dynamic business environments ready to go

# Inspector's Matters, Issues & Questions

Matter 5: (Issue 5) Employment, Economic Development and Town Centres

## Hastings Local Plan 4.32 p34

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| GROWTH FUNDS<br>FUND PROVIDER & FUND | PERCENTAGE GROWTH                  |                        |                        |                        |                        | PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS |                     |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
|                                      | Oct 07<br>to<br>Oct 08             | Oct 08<br>to<br>Oct 09 | Oct 09<br>to<br>Oct 10 | Oct 10<br>to<br>Oct 11 | Oct 11<br>to<br>Oct 12 | No. of<br>Holdings | Fund Size<br>(mil.) |
|                                      | Aviva Inv Property Investment Fund | -22.4                  | -15.2                  | 14.1                   | -6.8                   |                    |                     |
| Aviva Inv Property Trust             | -20.7                              | -19.4                  | 15.1                   | -1.6                   | 0.9                    | 69                 | £1,636.6            |
| Henderson UK Property                | -19.2                              | -20.7                  | 16.1                   | 5.4                    | 6.1                    | 112                | £807.5              |
| Ignis UK Property                    | -23.5                              | -8.5                   | 17.2                   | 4.3                    | 0.7                    | 59                 | £696.3              |
| Legal & General UK Property          | -15.0                              | -9.7                   | 14.0                   | 3.8                    | 2.7                    | 62                 | £671.6              |
| M&G Property Portfolio               | -22.6                              | -12.9                  | 13.3                   | 3.3                    | 1.3                    | 147                | £2,090.5            |
| SLI Select Property                  | -37.0                              | -22.9                  | 10.8                   | -1.2                   | 7.4                    | 58                 | £517.1              |
| SWIP Property                        | -22.1                              | -13.4                  | 13.2                   | 3.0                    | -2.0                   | 74                 | £2,288.3            |
| Threadneedle UK Property             | -8.9                               | -5.0                   | 6.2                    | 2.0                    | -1.2                   | 80                 | £397.1              |

Hargreaves Lansdown, November 2012

Outside London, UK commercial property prices have struggled. With the UK economy weak further capital declines appear likely. The fund's process of seeking high yields and minimising vacancy rates should maximise total returns'.

Threadneedle UK Property, November 2012

"As someone who was trained as a scientist I have a slight problem with that, in that I don't wholly believe that you can have 'evidence' for something in the future. But that's the way we have to do it. If our predictions are not based on 'expert' studies, they won't be accepted by the inspector and the plan will be rejected."

Cllr Chowney, Observer, September 2012

Banking and financial crises lead to far deeper downturns and slower recoveries than normal cyclical recessions. Kenneth Rogoff, former chief economist at IMF has joined the debate among leading economists about whether the West has reached the end of growth because technological progress that has driven living standards for 250 years has run out of steam.

Britain has passed another important milestone, public sector net debt moved from 69.3% of GDP in November 2012, to 70.7% in December. Rising above 70% for the first time since the early 1970s.

"Developers will soon be able to convert office buildings into blocks of flats without asking councils for permission under radical changes to the English planning system. The value of office developments fell sharply at the start of the financial crisis. While London has bounced back, regional office buildings and older properties nearing obsolescence have been the worst affected. In the downturn, a combination of oversupply, changing corporate requirements for office space and shrinking workforces has left many lying empty."

Financial Times, January 22 2013



Victim of stealth investment

## Inspector's Matters, Issues & Questions

Matter 5: (5.3) Employment, Economic Development and Town Centres

### Hastings Local Plan 5.28 p44

Submission:

There is no evidence that additional offices and retail developments at Priory Quarter will contribute positively to the local economy.

## Further Statement



### Empty Space

**Funded by South East Local Enterprise Partnership using Growing Places Funding**

The vision for a vibrant Priory Quarter and Trinity Triangle 'buzzing with cafes, restaurants and lively new leisure facilities; a multi-screen cinema, multi-storey car park and public squares; an expanded Priory Meadow shopping centre; streets and neighbourhoods newly alive with specialist shops and services' is speculator speak for 'build it and they will come'.

Local Plan relies on Employment Strategy and Land Review (ESLR), August 2011. 'Business Needs', 'Key findings', section 5.24 of the document, records the number of businesses looking for alternative or additional accommodation fell from 25% in 2007 to 14% in 2008 and 10% in 2010.

Of those businesses seeking alternative or additional accommodation 41% required office space, 82% of them requiring this under 1,000sqft. Lacuna Place, Havelock Road, available from 3,221sqft to 22,601sqft, has not let in 5 years.

Across industry sectors, manufacturing businesses were the most likely to be looking, construction and wholesale and retail the least likely.

ESLR refers to East Sussex Annual Business Survey, it finds around 14% of businesses in Hastings and Rother, and 15% in Bexhill were 'struggling', with a further 22% in Hastings, 20% in Rother and 15% in Bexhill reported as 'vulnerable'. No evidence supports a requirement for additional office space and shops in central Hastings.



Selling our soul with our savings

## Polished not, demolished

ATTEMPTING to answer the question from Jo Legg in last week's *Observer*: 'Why are we spending money on new offices that are empty when the seaside tourist attractions we once had can be rebuilt?', I've had a good look through the recent Hastings Local Plan, Hastings Planning Strategy Proposed Submission Version May 25 - August 17, 2012.

It claims to 'set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth.' It doesn't do this. Remember, it's a vision.

Since the decline of traditional seaside tourism in the 1960s and 1970s, when it was cheap to go to Spain, attempts have been made to 'broaden the economic base of the town'.

Mega millions have been thrown in this direction. SEEDA, Sea Space, Regional Growth Fund, Hastings and Bexhill Taskforce, Irish Banks, Growing Places Fund, East Sussex Energy Infrastructure and Development, and others, have spent the money unwisely, extending a long period of decline.

Demolition of Havelock Mansions, Havelock Road, for an office building, is a current example of this destructive irresponsibility. Hastings remains in the top 20 most deprived local authority areas in England.

Councils go to government for funds for these schemes, overlooking the risks.

The whole premise rests on the basis that the investment will attract businesses. If the businesses don't come there's a big debt and no means to pay it off. That leads to higher taxes and business rates.

Some would think that Britain's economic woes, and boarding-up new office and retail developments around town, would trigger greater scrutiny, yet Cllr Peter Chowney, lead member, Hastings Borough Council, carries on regardless and recommends building another 200,000 sqft of offices in Hastings town centre.

The foot-of-pride has come down and there ain't no going back. Built in the 1880s, Havelock Mansions should've been polished, not demolished.

**ELAINE FAIS**  
Grove Road  
Eastbourne

**Observer, August 24 2012**

## Inspector's Matters, Issues & Questions

Matter 5: (5.6) Employment, Economic Development and Town Centres

### Hastings Local Plan 9.17 p77

Submission:

Protect Magdalen Road Convent from housing development.

## Further Statement



### Under threat

#### Those we have known

The plan for a housing development at Magdalen Road convent ground follows the rejection of an ill-planned development at Archery Road. Chairman of the planning committee for Hastings felt at a 'Salem witch trial' for championing the developer's scheme.

Esteemed architects and heritage and planning experts opposed the plan. A front page photo of the celebrations could have been for a really desirable development about to begin when the plan was rejected.

Trouble, time and trauma, for three years.

The case against housing development of any kind at the convent ground is in the high value of language schools and tourists to the town's economy. At an average £1,000 per trip, student revenues can be increased.



Not let in 5 years.

'The preferred approach has scored well against the social and economic sustainability objectives.

Continuous investment and funding from both the private and public sectors to support the current and future development will contribute to the economy; provide further job opportunities, addressing accessibility and deprivation.'

Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy, HBC, May, 2008

## Are major retailers expanding their activities?

I HAVE to say I was extremely confused by the recent letter in the *Observer* from Cllr Peter Chowney, who uses the 'don't blame me guv it was the experts' approach.

A trained scientist ought to be more sceptical of studies predicting Hastings needs more than 20,000sqm of additional retail space in the town centre.

Appreciating that 'with more people shopping online, our town centres may change in ways that none of us can predict' he goes on to say: 'So we've made a case for 20,000sqm of retail development within the shopping area'.

I can't get my head around it.

Are Marks and Spencer, Next, Primark, Halfords, New Look, Boots and Debenhams expanding their activities to fill this space?

If they're attracted by the prestige and low rent in the new space what will happen to their existing premises? More offices?

Later in the letter Cllr Chowney suggests there are three 'significant and growing clusters of employers in Hastings now'.

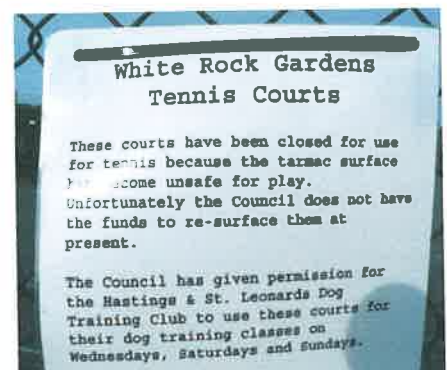
I know that one of these, financial services, is not growing, it's in sharp decline and, search as I do, I've seen no jobs in 'high-vacuum' businesses in the recruitment pages.

As for jobs in the 'creative and cultural sector' his letter is in an edition of the *Observer* full of condemnation over the closure of the St Mary-in-the-Castle venue, is it not cultural enough?

In conclusion, he says the Hastings Development Management Plan is based on 'informed guesses', this I can understand. Keep up the good work.

IVAN BURGE  
Tower Road West  
St Leonards

Observer, September 14 2012



Closed to students and holidaymakers

# Inspector's Matters, Issues & Questions

Matter 5: (5.6) Employment, Economic Development and Town Centres

## Hastings Local Plan 9.17 p77

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### Table 2 Exchange Rates

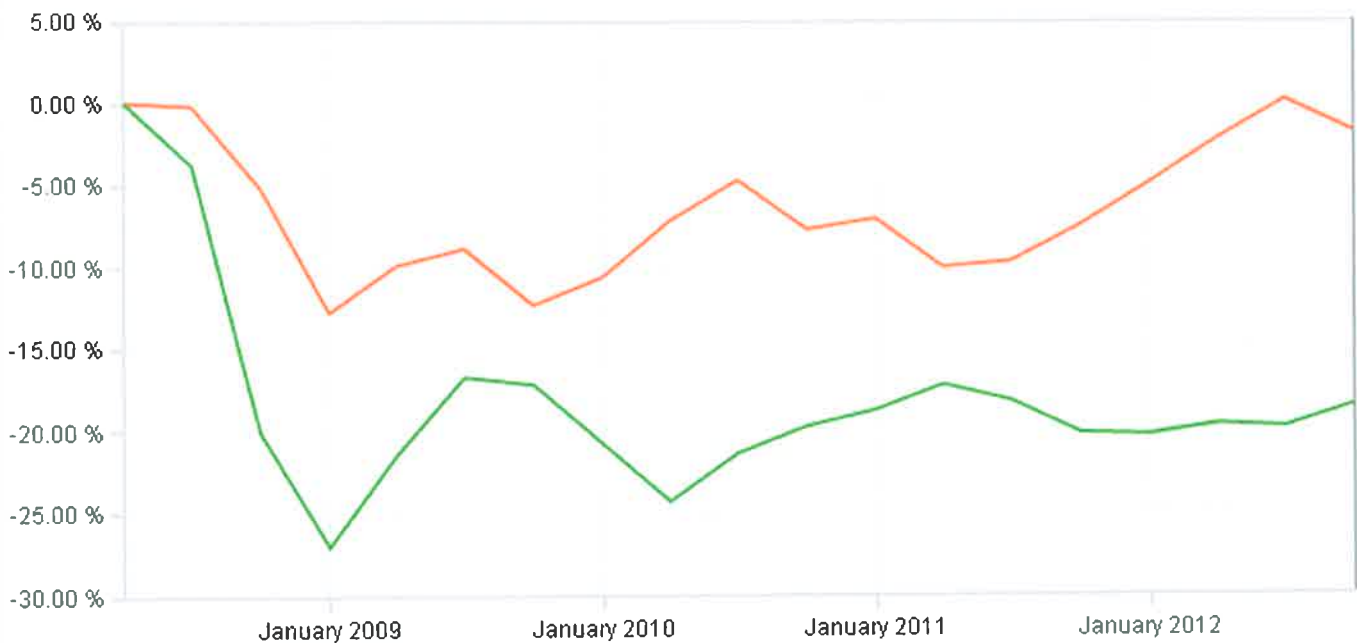
PRICE: Bid    VALUES: % Change    FREQUENCY: Quarterly

Graph    Table

Average BID rate for the 3 month period

GBP / EUR

GBP / USD



OANDA Rates™

The deteriorating performance of the Hastings holiday trade cannot be explained by rising costs for overseas visitors. When the GBP is set next to the EUR it can be seen that Hastings holidays have been between 10-15 per cent better value than in 2008.

When set against USD the effect is greater. This is of interest to language school students and their parents.

At the same time, holders of GBP have found overseas travel costs higher, so have contributed to the resurgence of resorts in England.

“For the next century visitors brought life and prosperity to the towns. But the rise of cheap Mediterranean holidays began the decline of the traditional English resort.

Hastings’ visitor sector was replaced by manufacturing and public employment as the foundation of the local economy”.  
Hastings Official Business Guide, 2013-2014

## Inspector's Matters, Issues & Questions

Matter 5: (5.7) Employment, Economic Development and Town Centres

### Hastings Local Plan 5.71 p53

Submission:

Annual Plan HBC 22nd February 2007. Begin to undertake external refurbishment works to Pelham Crescent and Arcade.

## Further Statement



### Broken promises

#### Gets much worse

Hastings Local Plan strategic policy for the seafront states: 'we will encourage the regeneration of key landmark sites along the seafront, from the Stade to West Marina, supporting development that builds on the Seafront's distinctive heritage and attractiveness as a destination for leisure and recreational activity'.

There has been no adherence to this policy in the past.

Hastings Borough Council Annual Plans detail activities that will be undertaken towards meeting 3-year goals. These plans are monitored quarterly by Overview and Scrutiny Committee and are the means by which the Council is publicly held to account.

Included in the Annual Plan 2007/2008, agreed by Council 22nd February 2007, is written: Begin to undertake external refurbishment works to Pelham Crescent and Arcade'.

Targets/Milestones 2.1 reads: 'Our zero tolerance approach to neglected and derelict buildings and land target at least 30 neglected and derelict buildings or areas of land, prioritising those in the central St Leonards Renewal area and in Pelham Crescent and Arcade'.



Neglected and derelict



Zero tolerance



Pelham Crescent 2013

### JOB CUTS

#### Shameful waste

YOUR report headed 'Job cuts on the cards as council loses £15m, in the Observer (December 21), came as little surprise.

Hastings has played the 'deprived' card for years, Michael Foster MP was good at it, helping win big money to develop the town.

Recent loss of the 'Transition Grant for economically deprived areas' is understandable but how an Efficiency Support Grant can be won is unclear.

Sacrificing £150,000 revenues from car and coach parking at the Stade each year doesn't help, nor losing millions of tourist trade income. Paying £500,000pa for management of White Rock Theatre doesn't help either.

Now that the gravy train has hit the buffers what's been achieved? A town centre of offices to let and a countryside scarred by new roads and killed off by industrial parks unlikely to repay the investment.

Amber Rudd MP points out Hastings receives the ninth highest (out of 326) per dwelling grant of all local authorities. This is a shameful performance after so much has been spent.

**PETER DACE**

Redwell Avenue  
Bexhill

Observer, January 4 2013

# Inspector's Matters, Issues & Questions

Matter 5: (5.7) Employment, Economic Development and Town Centres

## Hastings Local Plan 5.71 p53

Submission:

Annual Plan HBC 22nd February 2007. 'Begin to undertake external refurbishment works to Pelham Crescent and Arcade'.

## Famously Hastings

### Informed guesses

Explore the new European standards for bathing water in partnership with the Environment Agency and water authorities'. Work with partners to maximise tourism by implementing the Destination Management Strategy.

HBC Annual Plan 2007/2008  
22nd February 2007

'Performance Management. This commissioning process is intended to link more closely the funding of the Third Sector with the Borough Council objectives and targets; there must be a strong focus on performance management to ensure effective service delivery. A funding agreement specifying the terms and conditions of the grant will provide details of the required service levels, monitoring arrangements and any penalties for underperformance or non-delivery.'

Head of Regeneration, Report to HBC Cabinet, 7th July, 2008

Preferred approach -

Enviro-Enterprise Corridor

'This was a new approach that came about following the Issues and Options consultation.

As such, it has not been appraised before. Developments will be built to high environmental standards, with the provision of renewable energy generation within the area.'

Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy, HBC, May, 2008

'The Hastings and Bexhill Task Force is continuing to provide the strategic direction for regeneration in Hastings and Bexhill, as well as performing a steering group function for 'Sea Space'. Although part of SEEDA, Sea Space has developed a strong track record over the last 8 years in delivering key economic regeneration projects. Although its activities have been part funded through SEEDA, there is a good prospect - and desire by all local authorities - that its role will continue beyond the closure of SEEDA.'

HBC, 2011

'JSA claimant rates are above the regional average, such that if Hastings and Rother had a Job Seekers Allowance rate equivalent to the South East rate there would be 1,831 and 212 less JSA claimants respectively as at January 2011. In other words, an extra 2,043 people would be in work.'

HBC, 2011

"..this plan is important: it will affect dramatically how the town changes in the coming years. It will shape the look, feel and prosperity of Hastings not just for us, but for generations to come."

Foreword to Hastings Local Plan  
Hastings Planning Strategy Proposed  
Submission Version 25th May - 17th  
August 2012

"..there isn't a high level of empty offices in the town."

Cllr Chowney, Observer,  
14th September 2012



Quangocracy at work



## Inspector's Matters, Issues & Questions

Matter 5: (5.11) Employment, Economic Development and Town Centres

### Hastings Local Plan 7f) p26

Submission:

No mention here about the condition of the sea.

## Further Statement



### Dirty water

#### Making best use of the seafront and promoting tourism

**The Economic Impact of Tourism Hastings 2011**, from Tourism South East, reports: 'The value of tourism in Hastings, at £239 million in 2011 increased by 2.8 per cent from 2010'.

It confirms tourism in Hastings is suffering.

Retail price inflation in January 2011 stood at 5.1 per cent. Peaking in September 2011 at 5.6 per cent, in December 2011 it was 4.8 per cent. One element contributing to these numbers is VAT, which was 17.5 per cent in 2010 increasing to 20 per cent in 2011.

To have stood still, tourism related expenditure in Hastings would exceed £245 million in 2011, at £239 million it is going backwards.

When set against Volume & Value of tourism across all England, which generated overnight domestic trips up 9% over 2010 and Trip Value up by 13%, reflecting both the increase in volume as well as inflationary pressures, Hastings performance is poor, due to failure to boost the industry and because traditional seaside tourism has experienced a revival in the UK in general.

Local Plan relies too heavily on proactive performance and long-sighted informed guesses about office jobs and shopping centres, reactive performance can achieve short-term return in known market conditions. Continued decline for Hastings' tourist trade can be arrested.

## Problem has been looming for years

ON the matter of poor sea water quality 'We need to talk Hastings up', Cllr Peter Chowney writes to the *Observer* 'it is something we'll be making sure Southern Water tackles vigorously'.

This is unconvincing, the problem has been looming for years and should be addressed properly. Frankly, I don't care if improving sea water quality 'could be unpopular' with householders whose 'new toilets have been fitted in houses and plumbed into surface water drains rather than sewers'. To learn that some 'may not even know that their toilet is plumbed 'illegally' demonstrates grotesque failure.

Saying: 'Whatever happens, I'm optimistic that tourism in Hastings will remain an important part of the local economy' Cllr Chowney gives me no comfort at all. 'Whatever happens' means what? Sea water quality may improve, or it may not.

The part of the letter I think is completely absurd is when he says people should 'not write off the entire tourism sector without any justification'.

If letters to the *Observer* are anything to go by people are wishing to protect Hastings for holiday visitors. Those that come close to writing off tourism in Hastings are the Marine Conservation Society which says: 'We have got to get to grips with this problem, if we don't it could be the death knell for some resorts' and the inaction of Hastings Borough Council.

**BRYAN FELLOWES**  
*Bulverhythe Road*  
*St Leonards*

**Observer, September 14 2012**



**The changing demands of visitors**



**£1,000 per trip**

# Inspector's Matters, Issues & Questions

Matter 5: (5.11) Employment, Economic Development and Town Centres

## Hastings Local Plan 7f) p26

Submission:

No mention here about the condition of the sea.

### You're missing the bigger picture complaining about parking

IN the letter in the *Observer* headed 'Businesses are suffering due to parking restrictions', Peter Moffat-Bailey is missing the bigger picture.

Thank heavens Cllr Chowney, deputy leader of Hastings Borough Council, has a letter on the opposite page confirming Hastings has 'a tourism sector that is re-shaping itself to meet the changing demands of visitors'.

The coach park at The Stade used to serve Hastings Old Town, bringing day-trippers to spend money.

Now, people disembark at the Old Town and coaches drive west to Falaise Road to park, or further, to Seaside Road, Grosvenor Crescent. Creating congestion, it's expensive and polluting.

I was there on the bank

holiday and saw a party of people in wheelchairs and their carers.

One lady was upset having left something on the coach but it was too late, it was gone but would be back in two hours.

The drivers of the big foreign coaches have a trick though. They take coach loads of students to Blue Reef aquarium.

Driving east, they take a right into The Stade as far as possible, then back out into traffic, then drive west and park where they wish.

Being left-hand drive vehicles, students are all over the road to alight the coach on the off-side in the traffic.

No one is moving these guys until everyone is back on board.

I thought this made no sense, until I got to Stade Hall and the Jerwood Gallery to see acres

of empty space and one of the high-quality restaurants Cllr Chowney refers to in his letter.

It was empty, save for a woman in a pink top and white dress on the terrace.

Peter Moffat-Bailey misleads your readers by writing that many businesses are up for sale 'because of a slump in trade', Cllr Chowney's analysis shows 'tourism in Hastings is thriving'.

Being a self-confessed 'old Hasting', Mr Moffat-Bailey really must catch up. When the economy improves we'll all be applauding Hastings Borough Council for the foresight.

Coach loads of low spending visitors? Let Eastbourne have them, it'll be like *Celebrity Big Brother* down here.

**ERIC CHATER**  
*Old London Road*

**Observer, September 14 2012**



By the seaside

## Show me the money

### Improve our chances

**Tourism Hastings 2011** finds tourism-related expenditure to have supported 3,818 FTE jobs. Once part-time and seasonal employment is added, the total number of jobs supported increased to 5,160 Actual jobs. These numbers show that small shifts in share of the overall market for tourism revenues has significant impact on the town's economy.

A move from the 2.8% nominal growth achieved by Hastings, to the performance of England overall, would have generated hundreds of jobs in 2011.

Economists see long-lasting stagnation in their crystal balls. Recent cuts to the budget for maintaining parks and gardens and continued neglect of the holiday trade is consistent with absence of coach parking, poor sea condition and sharing the information centre at the town hall.

Any measure of effective promotion for Hastings has been missing for a long time.



Coach-jostling pollution



Congestion, poor safety, nil care