

Hastings Borough Council

Hastings Development Management Plan : Examination in Public

Introductory Statement

Councillor Peter Chowney-Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Planning and Regeneration

(Council's opening statement ,referring to the differences between the proposed and Revised proposed Submitted Versions of the Plan and the representations thereon)

I am grateful to our Inspector to be able to present this brief opening statement to the examination into the Council's Development Management Plan. May I also take this opportunity not just to welcome all those attending the examination but also to say thank you to those very many individuals and organisations who have worked with us in offering comments and in responding to the Council's consultation exercises. These comments and representations have proved invaluable to us in shaping and developing the Plan in order to best meet needs of our existing and future communities.

This Plan now provides the specific Site Allocations and Development Management policies to deliver the Vision, Objectives and amount of growth for employment, housing and other growth set down in the adopted Hastings Planning Strategy 2014 .Importantly it also identifies those key heritage and environmental assets within the Borough and our policies for ensuring their protection and enhancement whilst also accommodating necessary growth.

As I set out in my opening statement for our Planning Strategy , although Hastings is in the South East Region (a region generally considered to be prosperous) it faces a number of unique challenges and our biggest single priority for the Borough is for economic and physical regeneration. Economic growth and prosperity remain at the heart of this Development Management Plan. But we are also blessed with significant Heritage and Environmental assets – for example our many Listed buildings (900) and Conservation Areas (18), our historic seafront, as well as registered historic parks, national and Local wildlife sites and designated landscapes.

We have consulted very widely in the preparation of this Plan – with residents , businesses, local amenity and other organisations as well as with statutory consultees and key delivery

partners such as East Sussex County Council and our neighbours Rother District. Whilst no amount of consultation on Planning matters can ever guarantee consensus I consider that we have arrived at a Plan which is appropriate for our Borough and when set against reasonable alternatives . In essence we believe the Plan is positively prepared, justified by the evidence that we have collected over many months and from many sources, deliverable within the Plan period to 2028 and in line with what is required of us as a Council by National guidance.

Within this opening statement I will, as suggested by the question posed of us , refer to the differences between the proposed and revised versions of the Plan and indicate how and why these changes have been incorporated into the 2014 submission version.

Consultation, and the changes to the Plan that have resulted from it, have been a key part of building our Plan and the extensive nature and content of this is set down in our submitted Consultation Statement .At the pre examination meeting I was aware that some people expressed concerns about our online consultation system and accessibility of documents . As lead Member I undertook, at the Inspectors suggestion, to look into this. I have found no difficulty both in accessing and downloading these documents using my smartphone or computer and advised the officers accordingly .It is also worth emphasising that in our many consultation adverts and publicity that we clearly advised that in addition to online representations that people could pick up hard copies of the documents, guidance notes and response forms in order to make their representations .

We have made a number of significant changes (over one hundred) to the Development Management Plan as a direct result of these consultation exercises. Following initial informal consultation stages in 2012 two rounds of formal representations were invited: firstly to the Proposed Submission version of the Plan in 2013 and subsequently to the Revised Proposed Submission Version in 2014. I will briefly run through a number of examples to show how comments and representations received have helped shape the final submitted version of the Plan . Each of these significant changes is set down within the DMP itself at Appendix D and by reference to Sections of the Plan itself and where the change proposed is shown alongside the reason for the change.

Within the **Introduction** to the Plan an update is given on the adoption of the Planning Strategy together with further explanation of the extra consultation carried out on this revised proposed submission DMP. Additional text is also inserted to set out the structure of the DMP to assist clarity and navigation of the Plan itself .A New Chapter has been inserted (section two Part (i)) in response to consultation comments and for added clarity to explain the role of the Development Plan – this also led to insertion of new Policy LP1. Also now included to assist prospective applicants is reference to the Council’s validation checklist.

Section Two includes a number of changes to Development Management Policies in response to a number of comments received including from ESCC and the

telecommunications industry. Other changes have been made to ensure adequate guidance is available in the Policies and text to deal with issues of local character, and that appropriate consideration of heritage / landscape value is considered in the use of Policy DM1. Policy DM4 has been added to to enable matters relating to access, transport appraisals and provision of pedestrian and cycle routes to be considered as part of new developments. Policy DM5 (Ground conditions) and text at 2.42 and 2.43 has been amended to reflect comments from the Environment Agency .The earlier reference to Marine Conservation Zones has been omitted since these MCZs have not been locally ratified by Government.

Examples of Changes in **Section Three** dealing with Housing provide additional wording in Policy HC1(conversions) and HC2 (residential institutions)to add clarity in application of these Policies .**Section Four** contains changes to Policy HN3 regarding demolition of Heritage assets to reflect National Policy changes in respect of Conservation Area Consent. Former Natural Environment Policies HN6-HN8 are now amalgamated for clarity and to better align with the adopted Planning Strategy. A new Policy HN9 provides further protection for areas of landscape importance in accordance with the overarching Policy in the Planning strategy .

Within **Section Five** text is introduced as a result of discussion at the Planning Strategy Examination whilst changes to Policy SA1 (Hastings Town Centre) are inserted in response to comments received on the Plan. Policy SA2 is amended to reflect the neighbourhood centres within the Town and Policy CC1(Caravan camping and chalets) is revised, again in response to comments received .

Section Six(Site Allocations) has seen changes in each of the Focus Areas 1-13. These include the insertion of new sites to reflect permissions granted, removal of others(site GH7) to reflect completed sites, and additional wording to accommodate responses and comments made . eg from the Environment Agency regarding FB2-land at former West St Leonards Primary School. Others such as Policy SAP4 have changes to reflect latest discussions with developers/ landowners and in response to representations received eg Policy CLB6 (former convent of the Holy Child Jesus.)In some allocations and Policies eg HOV4-HOV6 site boundaries and capacities to deliver houses have been amended to reflect latest planning consents and comments received.A new Policy HOV11 is inserted to rectify a mapping error and for clarity. In Focus Area 12 one site(CV06) has been deleted because of uncertainty regarding delivery .Another change from the earlier version of the Plan is that all Site Allocation Policies are now shown in a shaded text box to assist clarity in differentiating between Policy and supporting text..

Within **Section Seven on Implementation and Monitoring** targets, indicators and layout have been amended to reflect new Policies and to better conform to the Planning Strategy. Appendices have been re named and renumbered accordingly including Appendix D- (Significant Changes to the DMP since original publication in January 2013) to illustrate and explain the changes between the two versions of the Plan and the reasons for these changes

..Finally a new section – **Glossary** is included for clarity and necessary changes have been made to the **Proposals Map**.

These examples of significant changes, which are all detailed within Appendix D of the DMP, show how the Council has responded positively to comments and representations received in addition to accommodating changing legislative and other circumstances (eg consents granted, deliverability) as the Plan developed from the 2013 (proposed submission) to the 2014 (revised proposed submission) versions .As an integral part of this process and to correct anomalies, factual errors in the Plan as well as to respond to comments received from the proposed and the revised versions of the submitted Plan we also published a schedule or proposed minor amendments to the Plan in July of this year . This schedule is part of our submitted evidence and is included in the examination library .

To manage the Council’s ambitions and need for growth whilst balancing them with the protection of this quality of environment has been challenging and we recognise that over the period of the Plan demands for new housing will grow. This demand also needs to be met with an appropriate level of employment growth to find a better balance between jobs and houses. In this regard I am delighted with recent progress on a number of significant proposals, particularly the Hastings Bexhill Link Road – a project that has been at the cornerstone of our vision for economic regeneration and an objective jointly held by Rother and ESCC, to unlock potential for growth. Major works are now evident on site and further funding bids have been successful from the LEP to implement other key schemes. Sir,I would encourage you to visit this scheme if at possible to witness for yourself the excellent progress made on implementation of this key infrastructure/ cornerstone of our proposed vision and strategy for growth .

A number of the DMP allocations are also already coming forward as schemes and are now being delivered on the ground – for example office accommodation by Sea Change at Priory Meadow in addition to a number of residential schemes including by Amicus, one of our partners in delivering affordable housing. Work has begun in earnest on the restoration of our historic pier and where the local community has been fully behind our endeavours to ensure continuing regeneration of the seafront and promotion of our tourism economy.

To conclude,all of this gives me great confidence as to the deliverability and appropriateness of the Plan. Hastings remains committed to a “plan led system” shaped by extensive consultation and partnership working and supported by both a technical and consultative evidence base. Subject to any modifications that may be felt necessary to the Plan by our Inspector the Council has submitted what it considers a sound Plan that builds upon our adopted Planning Strategy and that I believe is best suited to meeting the existing and future needs of the Borough.

A copy of this Statement will be made available to the Programme Officer.

Councillor Peter Chowney – Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Planning and Regeneration.

Hastings Borough Council

18th November 2014