

Matter 1/Rother District Council (0467)

**Independent Examination
of the
Hastings Borough Council's
Development Management Local Plan**

Statement on behalf of Rother District Council

Matter 1 – General Principles

October 2014

Issue 1:

Whether the Council of all the legal requirements and, in particular, the duty to cooperate; and, in general terms, whether the Plan conforms with the Council's adopted Hastings Planning Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in terms of type, amount and distribution of development, the plan period and the conservation of historic and natural assets.

1. Rother District Council endorses the Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate published by the Borough Council in July 2014. It believes that the Borough Council has duly complied with its obligations under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and with the guidance in the Framework on '*Planning strategically across local boundaries*' (paragraphs 178-181) insofar as the District Council is concerned.
2. Without repeating the advice to the Inspector in the Borough Council's Statement of Compliance, the District Council wishes to highlight the principal measures that support its belief that engagement has been on a constructive, active and ongoing basis, as required, and have yielded positive outcomes.
3. Engagement with the District Council has been on-going for a long time and, most critically, has shaped the development of the Planning Strategy upon which the current Development Management Plan (DMP) is based. Also, that engagement has embraced the 'strategic priorities' identified in paragraph 156 of the Framework, notably housing, employment and cultural infrastructure, transport, energy, infrastructure and landscape, as outlined below:

a) Housing

The scale of housing has been jointly evidenced, as has the approach to potential sites straddling the boundary, resulting in consistent and compatible planning strategies and key allocations.

The approach to development to the north-west of the Town is the most obvious example of this.

b) Employment

As with housing, the quantum of employment land and floorspace requirements has been developed through joint evidence studies by the two Councils.

The Borough Council can also be seen to be allocating employment land in line with its strategic requirements. The District Council is specifically supportive of employment allocations close to the District boundary, at LRA7, LRA8, HOV11 and HOV 12 (representations 9615, 9616, 9618 and 9617 refer). Indeed, the latter two sites are being put forward drawing on jointly commissioned evidence work.

Furthermore, the actual deliverability of allocated sites is benefitting from ongoing cooperation, notably through the Hastings and Rother Task Force, 'Team East Sussex'¹, and Sea Change Sussex. With the support of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), the area has secured significant Local Growth Fund (LGF) monies for economic growth, as well as gained Assisted Area status.

It is noted that the District Council is particularly supportive of the cultural sector and of the links between the De La Warr Pavilion and cultural facilities in Hastings.

c) Transport

Transport communications is a key issue for the local area and has resulted in a clear strategic approach involving all relevant authorities.

Joint transport modelling identified the need for a number of transport improvements, notably to key junctions and to walking and cycling opportunities, outline proposals for which have now received provisional funding approval as part of the SELEP bid for LGF funds to support the overall quantum of development.

¹ The Group responsible for drawing together the East Sussex component of the SELEP economic strategy and funding bids.

Funding has also been agreed in principle as part of this process for a road scheme that opens up important employment development sites between Queensway and the A21 that are allocated in the DMP. The District Council welcomes the minor amendment HBC/MA/57 that reflects the working with the County Council that clearly helps deliver this scheme.

d) Energy

The Council has supported the Borough Council in relation to its investigations into wind energy potential that has resulted in Policy FB12 – land south of Upper Wilting Farm.

The District Council welcomes Minor Amendment HBC/MA/12 which satisfies its concern (representation 9614 refers) that the acceptability of any scheme will depend upon demonstrating that it respects the range of environmental factors reflected in the policy criteria.

e) Infrastructure and landscape

There has been particularly close dialogue in relation to ‘green infrastructure’. The District Council has supported Policy HN9 – Areas of landscape Value (Representation 9612 refers).

More specifically, the two Councils, together with the County Council, have a long-established cooperative approach to the development of the Combe Valley Countryside Park, which underpins the site-specific allocation in the DMP (policy HN8).