

Hastings Local Plan
Development Management Plan
Examination in Public

Examination Statement
Supporting Statement by East Sussex County Council
to Hastings Borough Council Statements

Matter 1 (General Principles)

Matter 2 (Housing)

Matter 6 (Implementation and Monitoring)

Supporting Statement from East Sussex County Council to Statements from Hastings Borough Council

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement from East Sussex County Council supports and complements Hastings Borough Council's statements in response to the Inspectors Matter 1 (General Principles), Matter 2 (Housing) and Matter 6 (Implementation and Monitoring). It focuses on the Inspector's issues and questions which are relevant to the County Council in its role as the local highway and education authority and a key infrastructure provider. It also confirms and sets out examples of the close and productive joint working with the Borough Council in the preparation of its Development Management Plan.

2. Matter 1 – General Principles

- 2.1 *Question 1.1 – Which measures has the Council taken to comply with the duty to co-operate, with which local authorities and other bodies has that co-operation taken place and what has been the outcome of that co-operation? What documentary evidence is there to convince all concerned that effective co-operation has taken place and which evidence is there in the Plan of the effectiveness of that co-operation? How has the Council acted as a “good neighbour” in the preparation of the Plan? And which measures has the Council taken to ensure that the Plan is legally compliant?*
- 2.1.1 Throughout the development of the Planning Strategy and the Development Management Plan, the Borough Council has worked constructively with the County Council on infrastructure issues and on transport matters. This has also included Rother District Council in view of the very close interrelationships between the growth needs within the two Authorities and associated infrastructure needs.
- 2.1.2 Evidence of this collaborative approach is found within the transport studies jointly commissioned by the County Council, Hastings Borough and Rother District Council to assess traffic conditions in Hastings and Bexhill and the impact of growth proposed in the two Local Plans (both Hastings and Rother having recently successfully adopted their Core Strategies/ Planning Strategies) on the road network. This work and the collaboration of the three authorities have led to the current construction of the Bexhill and Hastings Link road and its complementary measures which will enable sustainable growth to be successfully delivered in both Authorities. The Borough Council has also worked with the County Council and the local cycle groups to develop and adopt a walking and cycling strategy for the Borough.
- 2.1.3 The Development Management Plan includes particular site specific transport measures in the commentary and within Policies for individual sites and/or in the relevant design briefs within the Plan. Further information on infrastructure requirements is provided in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan Updated 2014 (IDP) which supports the Plan. These documents both reflect the joint co-operation of both authorities to ensure that the infrastructure to support growth is identified and will be delivered in a timely manner to support development both in Hastings and also in its neighbouring authority: Rother. The IDP schedule has been prepared to a common format agreed across all Authorities in East Sussex, work which has been coordinated by officers from the County Council, to ensure that there is consistency across all the county's IDPs especially on cross authority boundary infrastructure.

- 2.1.4 A further example of effective co-operation, which is reflected in the Plan and the IDP, is the development of a strategic network of cycle and pedestrian routes, linking communities with green infrastructure, the seafront and the town centre to support planned development and improve connectivity in the town. The identification of the network was underpinned by a strong partnership of the County Council and Hastings Borough Council working with the voluntary sector and local walking & cycling groups. This work helps underpin the overarching sustainability objectives reflected within both the Plan and within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

3. Matter 2 - Housing

- 3.1 *Question 2.4 - In general terms, and subject to more detailed discussion later, are there any matters like topography, effect on natural and/or historic assets, contamination, the provision of infrastructure and land instability which could reduce the number of dwellings envisaged for particular sites? And, if so, to what extent might the Plan fall short of the provision of housing required of it and what would be the consequences in terms of alternative sites to provide for any such shortfall? And which site(s) is/are possible candidates? What are the advantages and disadvantages of those sites?*
- 3.1.1 In relation to the infrastructure element of this question, please refer to the County Council's response to Matter 6 questions 6.1 and 6.2 set out later in this statement

4. Matter 6 – Implementation and Monitoring

- 4.1 *Question 6.1 – Has there been an adequate assessment of the quality and capacity of infrastructure for transport, water supply etc as required by the Framework paragraph 162?*
- 4.1.1 Throughout the development of the Planning Strategy and the Development Management Plan, the Borough Council has worked collaboratively with the County Council. This has ensured that adequate assessments have been undertaken to show that there is either capacity within County Council infrastructure to accommodate the proposed growth or conversely to highlight what infrastructure is required to support development and identify mechanisms to show that these schemes or improvements can be delivered. As a key infrastructure provider the County Council therefore feels that the plan is based upon an adequate and robust evidence base.
- 4.1.2 In considering the various consultation exercises and in response to emerging issues and versions of the Plan the County Council has provided numerous iterations of advice to the Borough Council regarding the testing of options, commenting on site specific proposals and on Policy wording. This has helped to inform and identify infrastructure that will be required to support the housing and employment growth proposed in the Planning Strategy and the sites identified in the Development Management Plan. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan Updated 2014 (IDP) accompanying the Development Management Plan properly reflects that advice and incorporates transport and education infrastructure requirements including those which cross authority boundaries.

Transport

- 4.1.3 In response to issues raised and indeed concerns expressed during the representations process significant traffic modelling undertaken by the County Council and Hastings Borough Council during the preparation of the Planning Strategy and the Development Management Plan to inform a joint transport capacity assessment to determine the impact of proposed development on the transport network. This concluded that the growth proposed could be accommodated with appropriate mitigation measures on the wider road network as identified in the IDP. To accommodate the proposed site allocations particular site specific measures will be needed some of which, where the detail is clear, have been identified in the Development Management Plan. These will need to be investigated in more detail however it is appropriate for this to be undertaken at the time that proposals for individual site allocations come forward for planning consent to take into account the conditions at that time. This need is properly reflected in the Policy wording that accompanies the individual allocations within the DMP.
- 4.1.4 Since the Planning Strategy examination and its subsequent adoption in February 2014, much progress has been made on undertaking further detailed capacity assessment on The Ridge which has been identified in the transport capacity assessment, as the first in a series of corridor studies to be undertaken by the County Council. The corridor study has taken a holistic view of all transport requirements and considered the movement and access for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users along and across the corridor.
- 4.1.5 The modelling work has identified the need for capacity improvements at a series of junctions on The Ridge. The Ridge Movement and Access Improvements study highlights that improvements to the Queensway and Harrow Lane junctions are being delivered as part of the Bexhill Hastings Link Road complementary measures whilst the junction with Junction Road is proposed to be closed as part of the Queensway Gateway Road proposals. In addition, the study highlights that the junctions of Hillside Road, Chowns Hill and Elphinstone Road are already being considered separately. Of the remaining junctions on The Ridge, the study recommends that improvements could be made to the traffic signal timings at the A259 Rye Road to improve the overall capacity of the junction.

Education

- 4.1.6 As highlighted in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Update July 2014 (IDP) (paragraph 5.4), East Sussex County Council as the Local Education Authority has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places in the County to meet present and future demand for places. ESCC's Pupil Forecasting Model is used to assess education requirements across the Borough including Early Years provision and sixth form. This is based, in part, upon input on the projected housing growth live birth data, GP registration and Child Benefit as well as policy based projections. This is reflected in the 'School Organisation and Place Planning in East Sussex 2013/14' (SOPP) document approved by the County Council's Cabinet in December 2013.
- 4.1.7 The County Council and Borough Council have worked closely throughout the development of the Planning Strategy and the Development Management Plan to establish the education requirements arising from the growth proposed within the Planning Strategy and now more site specifically through the DMP. It also estimates costs of provision, location and timescales and shows where, how and when

provision is needed. The education requirements are set out in the SOPP and the IDP.

4.2 *Question 6.2 – Is there a reasonable prospect of the required infrastructure being in place throughout the plan period to provide for the proposed development?*

4.2.1 The County Council is confident that the necessary identified infrastructure in the IDP can be funded and delivered within the timeframe of the Development Management Plan and in a timely fashion to support the growth identified within the Plan. I am further persuaded to this conclusion by the major construction now evident in respect of the Bexhill Hastings Link Road and the recent success of funding bids secured from the Growth Deal for other significant transport infrastructure. Further detail on this success is set out below.

Transport

Bexhill Hastings Link Road

4.2.2 As identified in Hastings examination statement the major piece of transport infrastructure critical to the delivery of the plan is the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road and its complementary measures. The Link Road is now fully funded, construction is well underway and the road is programmed to be open by May 2015.

4.2.3 The complementary measures, which are secured as a planning obligation to the Link Road permission, comprise improvements to the Queensway and Harrow Lane junctions with The Ridge and bus priority measures on the A259 between Glyne Gap and Filsham Road and are fully funded by the County Council. The Ridge junction improvements are programmed for implementation before the Bexhill Hastings Link Road opens; the A259 bus priority measures are programmed to commence in summer 2015 following the opening of the Link Road.

South East Strategic Economic Plan

4.2.4 The Government seeks to prioritise delivery of economic infrastructure, including roads through Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP's), the South East Local Enterprise Partnerships (SELEP) (covering Essex, Kent and East Sussex) being the LEP for the area.

4.2.5 SELEP brought forward the concept in the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) of "Investing in our Growth Corridors". Both the County Council and the Borough Council inputted to the earlier drafts of the then emerging SEP which now identifies the A21/A259 Hastings/Bexhill Growth corridor as one of three such corridors in the East Sussex area and confirms that "in this corridor we have the opportunity to directly create 5278 jobs and 765 new homes by 2021 and facilitate 9,700 jobs and 11,300 homes through our (SELEP's) proposed transport schemes".

4.2.6 On 4th July 2014 the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) secured £442.1m from the Government's Local Growth Fund to support economic growth in the area with £64.6m of new funding confirmed for 2015/16 and £143.6m for 2016/2017.

4.2.7 In East Sussex, a total of £54.58m has been secured across the funding period with a significant proportion for delivering transport infrastructure. In the context of delivering infrastructure in Hastings and to accommodate the housing and employment growth proposed within the DMP, this includes the previously committed £15m of funding for the Queensway Gateway Road within the £69.5m of local major transport scheme funding allocated by Government to the South East Local Transport Body in July 2013; £6m towards a package of junction improvements in the Bexhill and Hastings area and a further £6m towards a package of walking and cycling improvements in the Bexhill and Hastings area. Further detail on each of these schemes is outlined below.

Queensway Gateway Road

4.2.8 As highlighted in paragraph 4.2.5, the SELEP SEP brought forward the concept of a A21/A259 Growth Corridor. The South East LEP Strategic Economic Plan identifies “many investment opportunities close to the A21 (including) North Queensway”, and further states that “to enable new growth, we (SELEP) are seeking investment in the Queensway Gateway Road...”

4.2.9 The Queensway Gateway Road provides a new link between Queensway and the A21 south of The Ridge and directly unlocks the employment space on sites LRA7 Land at the junction of the Ridge West and Queensway and LRA8 – Land in Whitworth Road and land at North Queensway – as identified within the Hastings Planning Strategy and now allocated within the Development Management Plan. It will also provide much improved connectivity for a further 75,500sqm of employment space in North Bexhill/North Hastings along on the A259/A21 growth corridor to Kent, London and beyond via the A21 and Eastbourne, Brighton and Gatwick via the A259.

4.2.10 The road is a single carriageway road with a roundabout at either end and a central roundabout which will provide access into the employment allocations contained within the DMP. Complementary to the scheme is the proposed closure of Junction Road at both its current junction with The Ridge and the A21 Sedlescombe Road as well as the proposed closure of the northern end of Maplehurst Road with the A28

4.2.11 In view of the employment driver for the Queensway Gateway Road, Sea Change Sussex - the Economic Regeneration Company for East Sussex are the applicants for this Queensway Gateway which is now the subject of a planning application and subject to securing planning permission, will commence construction in 2015.

Hastings and Bexhill Walking / Cycling Strategy and Funding Package

4.2.12 The County Council is developing a package of walking and cycling measures and has produced a Walking & Cycling strategy and action plan for the Hastings area. This built upon work undertaken as part of development of the Development Management Plan which identified the need for a strategic walking and cycle network across Hastings to support housing and employment growth in the town; this requirement is reflected in the IDP.

4.2.13 The County Council has now secured £6m of capital funding through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership’s Local Growth Deal from 2018/19 to 2020/21 (£2m per annum) towards delivering a walking and cycling package for Hastings and Bexhill that supports growth in the area. This is subject to the LEP approving a business case and the County is confident that such a business case can be successfully

made. This will be augmented by funding from other funding sources such as development contributions and external funding bids.

- 4.2.14 In addition the County Council has secured £684,000 of revenue funding for 2015/16 from the Department for Transport's Local Sustainable Transport Fund 2015/16. This will be used to deliver targeted measures and initiatives such as the Bike It programme, run by Sustrans on behalf of the County Council, along with sustainable travel marketing initiatives, as outlined as actions in the strategy action plan.
- 4.2.15 In 2014/15 the County Council is also undertaking detailed design work on the east - west walking and cycle routes included in the strategy action plan, along with an audit of existing cycle parking provision. The Ridge Movement and Access Improvements study has also identified the provision of a predominantly off-road cycle facility and a series of pedestrian crossing points along sections of the corridor to serve the existing & new housing and employment sites as well as the Conquest Hospital and local schools.
- 4.2.16 Therefore, there is more than a reasonable certainty that the walking and cycling infrastructure identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be delivered to support the proposed development.

Hastings and Bexhill junction improvement package

- 4.2.17 To support the development of the Hastings Local Plan Planning Strategy and subsequently the Development Management Plan, a joint transport capacity assessment was undertaken by the County Council, Hastings Borough Council and Rother District Council to determine the impact of proposed development on the transport network and which has identified that a number of junctions will be at or near capacity. These junctions have been identified in the IDP as critical or important infrastructure required to support the delivery of the Planning Strategy.
- 4.2.18 Since the Planning Strategy examination, further detailed capacity assessment has been undertaken on the junctions on The Ridge identified in the transport capacity assessment, as the first in a series of corridor studies that will be undertaken by the County Council. The corridor study has taken a holistic view and considered the movement and access for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users along and across the corridor. Further details on the improvements identified in the study are set out in section 4.1.5 of this statement.
- 4.2.19 Through the South East LEP Local Growth Deal, a sum of £6m - £1.5m per annum in 2017/18 to 2020/21 – has been secured subject to a LEP approved business case to deliver the junction capacity improvements in Bexhill and Hastings identified in the transport capacity assessment. The County is confident that such a business case can be successfully made and that these improvements will be delivered within the Plan period.

Education provision

- 4.2.20 The County Council is undertaking a number of strands of activity to ensure it is well placed to deliver the necessary additional education infrastructure in a timely fashion. For example, expansion of Robsack Wood Community Primary School is currently underway with completion expected by September 2015. The project is being funded from the County Council's capital programme, S106 contributions and Government grant.

- 4.2.21 In addition the County Council is undertaking feasibility studies at a number of schools to decide how best to provide the additional primary school places required over the plan period. Feasibility studies have also been undertaken on expanding Early Years provision and these have identified various projects which are being progressed across the Borough which will enable additional places to be created by Sept 2015.
- 4.2.22 The funding of the proposed education provision across the Borough outlined in the IDP will be provided through section 106 development contributions, and other funding sources including basic need funding from Central Government.
- 4.3 *Question 6.3 – Is there any prospect of park and ride scheme(s). Is this a matter which has been discussed with relevant bodies?*
- 4.3.1 Park and Ride can only realistically be successful as part of an overall parking strategy for the town which includes a parking restraint policy and resident parking schemes coupled with the promotion of walking, cycling and public transport and the associated infrastructure.
- 4.3.2 In order for park and ride to be successful, cost effective and attract motorists, the following are considered necessary:
- There needs to be limited supply of on and off street parking
 - Cost of parking in the town centre is high
 - The number of private non-residential parking in the town centre is limited
 - Park and ride buses must offer competitive journey times relative to travelling by car into the town centre with bus priority/lanes on the key routes from the site direct into the town centre
 - There are suitable sites, with at least 500 – 600 spaces to ensure a cost effective and viable bus operation, on the edge of the urban area and on the key radial routes coming into the town.
- 4.3.3 The issue of introducing park and ride was considered in some detail at the examination on the Hastings Local Plan Planning Strategy. As the Highway Authority and also responsible for parking in Hastings, the County Council advised the Inspector that it did not believe Hastings met, or indeed could meet, the above criteria to consider introducing park and ride facilities for the following reasons:
- There is a high level of competitively priced on and off street parking in the town centre;
 - there is not a limited level on private non-residential parking
 - there are limited, indeed if any, sites of sufficient size on the key radial routes into the town to provide potential park and ride sites to ensure a cost effective and viable bus operation; and
 - the difference in journey times between park and ride buses and cars travelling into the town centre is unlikely be sufficiently competitive.
- 4.3.4 Since the Planning Strategy examination, this situation has not changed and therefore the County Council believes that whilst the proposition of park and ride may seem laudable it is simply not a viable proposition at this juncture.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 This statement supports and complements Hastings Borough Council's statements in response to the Inspectors Matter 1 (General Principles), Matter 2 (Housing) and Matter 6 (Implementation and Monitoring).
- 5.2 In complying with the duty-to-cooperate the statement highlights that the Borough Council has worked constructively and collaboratively with the County Council and Rother District Council on specific infrastructure issues and transport matters throughout the development of their Planning Strategy and Development Management Plan.
- 5.3 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan which supports both these documents reflects the joint co-operation between the County Council and Borough Council in ensuring that the infrastructure to support growth is identified and will be delivered in a timely manner. The Borough Council has worked collaboratively with the County Council and Rother District Council to enable the delivery of the Bexhill Hastings Link Road and its complementary transport measures as well as working with the County Council on the development and adoption of a walking and cycling strategy for the Borough.
- 5.4 ESCC is confident that the necessary identified infrastructure in the IDP can be funded and delivered in a timely fashion to support the growth identified within the Plan. The County Council has sought and has been successful in securing £27m of Local Growth Fund monies via the South East Local Enterprise Partnership to enable the delivery of the Queensway Gateway Road, walking and cycling improvements and a package of junction improvements in the Borough. The development of these schemes or packages has been progressed since the examination of the Borough Council's Planning Strategy and there is more than reasonable certainty that these will be delivered within the timeframe of the Plan.