

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>8 July 2015</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Seafront Local Plan – Issues and Options Report</b>
<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>Senior Head of Planning, Regeneration and Assets</b>

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<b>Ward(s)</b>	Meads, Devonshire, Sovereign
<b>Purpose</b>	For Members to approve the Seafront Local Plan Issues and Options Report for consultation with the community and stakeholders.
<b>Contact</b>	Matt Hitchen, Specialist Advisor (Planning), 1 Grove Road, Eastbourne Tel no: (01323) 415253 E-mail: <a href="mailto:matt.hitchen@eastbourne.gov.uk">matt.hitchen@eastbourne.gov.uk</a>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That Cabinet approve the Seafront Local Plan Issues and Options Report for consultation with the community and key stakeholders between July and October 2015.</li><li>2. To delegate authority to the Senior Head of Planning, Regeneration and Assets in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member to make minor amendments before the commencement of the 12 week consultation period.</li></ol>

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS), which outlines the work programme for the production of planning policy documents, identifies the preparation of a Seafront Local Plan to maximise the seafront's contribution to the town as a defining asset and significant contributor to the local economy. The LDS schedules consultation on an Issues and Options Report to take place over the summer of 2015.
- 1.2 The Seafront Local Plan will be a Development Plan Document that will form part of the Local Plan for Eastbourne. It will set a framework for future development on the seafront with the aim of enhancing the positive contribution that the Seafront makes to the town and the local economy. The Seafront Local Plan will have to be in conformity with the Core Strategy and the Town Centre Local Plan, as well as national policy.

## **2.0 Issues and Option Report**

- 2.1 An Issues and Options Report is a consultation document that sets out what are considered to be the main issues relating to the future of the seafront, and a range of different options for how these issues can be addressed. It is the first formal consultation phase in developing the Seafront Local Plan, and the local community and other stakeholders will be asked to provide their input into whether the right issues have been identified and which options they would prefer to take forward into the Seafront Local Plan.
- 2.2 The Issues and Options were developed through evidence gathering and engagement with stakeholders. This includes evidence studies such as the Tourist Accommodation Study, which was produced by consultants in 2015, a survey of seafront users that took place in summer 2014, and a stakeholder event held in February that was attended by over 60 stakeholders.
- 2.3 The Issues and Options Report provides context and background to the seafront, identifies a vision for the future of the seafront up to 2035, identifies the key issues that the Seafront Local Plan ought to address, and presents a range of strategic options based around different themes for the future direction of the Seafront Local Plan.
- 2.4 For the purposes of the Seafront Local Plan, the seafront has been divided into seven character areas. The Issues and Options Report provides a profile of each character area and also presents options for how much change there should be in the character area.

## **3.0 Key Issues**

- 3.1 The Issues and Options Report sets out the key issues that the Seafront Local Plan ought to address in order to improve the seafront and maximise the contribution that it makes to the local economy. The consultation asks the community and other stakeholders whether they agree with the issues, or if there are any additional issues that should be considered.
- 3.2 The issues for the seafront identified in the Issues and Options Report are:
- **Accessibility to and along the Seafront** – links between the seafront and other ‘trip-generators’ could be improved, as could physical access to certain areas of the seafront.

- **Managing the supply of Tourist Accommodation** – an adequate supply of visitor accommodation needs to be maintained in order to cater for the people who want to visit. It is crucial that the accommodation stock remains fit for purpose and meets the requirements of current and future visitors to the area in terms of quality, type and quantity.
- **Under-utilisation of sites along the seafront** - There are a number of sites along the seafront that could make a more significant contribution to the seafront. These areas have potential for either some minor change or comprehensive redevelopment to enhance the offer and attraction on the seafront.
- **Limited provision of leisure and community facilities** - the provision of leisure and community facilities is limited, and many consider that the leisure offer is dated, fragmented and too far removed from the areas where there are the highest levels of activity.
- **Widening the appeal of the Seafront** - In order to broaden the range of visitors to the town, the seafront should provide activities and facilities that appeal to a wide range of people, whilst also strengthening the appeal to existing markets.
- **Protection of the Natural and Built Environment** - The high quality of the built and natural environment is what makes Eastbourne unique and is part of its charm that appeals to visitors, and it is important that this is maintained.
- **Lack of opportunities for seafront activities** - The seafront is Eastbourne's main attraction as a tourist destination, and it is important that seaside type activities are provided to meet the expectations of visitors.
- **Effects of working beaches** - The working beaches are a traditional feature of the seafront and an important part of the seafront economy, but they can be relatively unattractive and adversely affect the feel and setting of a particular area.
- **Quality of Public Realm** - The quality of the public realm is an important factor in the look and feel of the seafront, and it is important that the seafront is an attractive place where people want to spend their time.
- **Future infrastructure requirements** – the seafront is part of the town's primary defence against coastal flooding and this should not be compromised. In addition, there are other infrastructure provisions on the seafront, such as the Waste Water Treatment Works, that may impact upon seafront activity.

## 4.0 Policy Options

4.1 The Issues and Options Report presents a series of options for how the seafront could change in the future, based around a number of themes.

4.2 The Policy Themes and a summary of the strategic options for each theme are as follows:

- **Tourist Accommodation** – presents options relating to the approach for the retention of existing tourist accommodation and the provision of new tourist accommodation.
- **Leisure and Recreation Facilities** – presents options relating to how new sports and recreation facilities and children’s play areas should be provided.
- **Accessibility** – presents options for how to provide improved linkages between the seafront and the Town Centre, Devonshire Park and the South Downs National Park, and to make underused areas of the seafront more accessible.
- **Commercial uses** – presents options for how additional food and drink facilities could be provided, whether there should be more activity in the evenings, and how to address the issue of ‘working beaches’.
- **Seafront Activities** – presents options for how seafront activities, such as use of the beach and water based activities, could be better structured and how they could be improved.
- **Natural Environment** – presents options for how best to balance the protection of landscapes and nature conservation with improvements to the seafront.
- **Built Environment** – presents options for how best to balance the protection of historic buildings and conservation areas with improvements to the seafront.
- **Community Use** – presents options for how community facilities and open spaces should be provided in the seafront area.
- **Tourist Attractions and Facilities** – presents options relating to how and in what format additional tourist attractions should be provided on the seafront.

4.3 The Issues and Options Report asks consultees to comment upon which of the options they would prefer to be taken forward into the Seafront Local Plan.

## **5.0 Consultation**

- 5.1 The Seafront Issues and Options Report will, if approved by Cabinet, be subject to a 12 week formal consultation between 17 July and 9 October 2015. This will coincide with the peak tourist season during which the seafront will be used heavily.
- 5.2 As consultation will take place during the time when the seafront is heavily used, this presents an ideal opportunity to engage people in the consultation. It is anticipated that exhibitions will be held at the events taking place at this time such as Airbourne, and the Eastbourne Hospitality Association have agreed to promote the consultation via their member's hotel establishments. Consultation will also be undertaken with stakeholders on the Local Plan mailing list. The consultation will be made available on-line, allowing representation to be made electronically via the Council's on-line consultation portal. The consultation procedure will be in compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement.

## **6.0 Resource Implications**

### **6.1 Legal Implications**

- 6.1.1 The Seafront Local Plan Issues and Options Report has been prepared in compliance with Regulation 18 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and with regard to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework which requires 'early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses'. Even at this early stage, the Council must also comply with Section 33A, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) which imposes a duty to cooperate with other local planning authorities on issues which are likely to have a significant effect on more than one planning area.

### **6.2 Financial Implications**

- 6.2.1 There are no financial implications to the Council as a direct result of this report. The cost of the publication and publicity for the Seafront Local Plan will be met from within the existing service budget.

### **6.3 Human Resource Implications**

- 6.3.1 Officers in the Regeneration and Planning Policy team will manage the consultation arrangements for the Seafront Local Plan, and the collection and processing of representations received.

## 6.4 Equalities and Fairness Implications

- 6.4.1 An Equalities and Fairness Impact Assessment was undertaken during the scoping stage in the production of the Seafront Local Plan, and the assessment demonstrates that the Seafront Local Plan is unlikely to have any significant impacts on equalities and fairness.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

- 7.1 The Local Development Scheme identifies the production of a Seafront Local Plan to maximise the seafront's contribution to the town as a defining asset and significant contributor to the local economy. The first formal consultation stage in this process is the publication of an Issues and Options Report.
- 7.2 Cabinet is requested to approve the Seafront Local Plan Issues and Options Report for consultation with the community and stakeholders between 17 July and 9 October 2015.
- 7.3 It is anticipated that a further report will be submitted to Cabinet in 2016, outlining the representations received and considered in the production of the draft Seafront Local Plan.

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### Background Papers:

- Seafront Local Plan Issues and Options Report (June 2015)
- Seafront Local Plan Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report (June 2015)

To inspect or obtain copies of the background paper, please refer to the contact officer listed above.

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