

BODY: CABINET
DATE: 7th September 2011
SUBJECT: Proposed Submission Core Strategy
REPORT OF: Senior Head of Development and Environment

Ward(s): All
Purpose: For Members to approve the Proposed Submission in preparation for formal submission of the Strategy to the Secretary of State.

Decision type: Budget and Policy Framework

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Recommendation:

1. Cabinet recommend to Full Council that the Core Strategy document as amended, is approved for publication as a Proposed Submission Core Strategy for the formal statutory publicity and consultation requirements;
2. To delegate authority to the Senior Head of Development and Environment in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member to make minor amendments before publication; and;
3. That following the end of the representation period to delegate to the Senior Head of Development and Environment in consultation with the LDF Steering Group, authority to submit the Core Strategy to the Government.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Eastbourne Local Plan or LDF Core Strategy has been shaped over the last 5 years by close consultation with local people and civic groups. The Council has also worked closely with our neighbours, Wealden District Council, to ensure that the enormous amount of research that has informed this plan is complimentary for both of the administrative areas. What has grown out of all that work is a holistic plan that will shape the future development of Eastbourne for the next 15 years. It is intended as a guide for the community to show where and how the town will grow and develop in the future. It will also be a guide for decision makers and developers about what is likely to be acceptable by way of proposed developments.
- 1.2 At its heart the Plan sees Eastbourne evolving carefully as a place that protects its outstanding environmental quality, its historical character and tourism potential. New housing, shopping and employment developments will be built in such a way that meets the needs of local people and businesses sensitively within the existing

built up areas. It will be designed in such a way that it is supported by the necessary infrastructure to create healthy, just and sustainable communities.

- 1.3 The main spirit of the Eastbourne Local Plan (LDF:Core Strategy) spatial strategy is to stimulate regeneration and renewal of the town centre, delivering sufficient improvements to the provision of community facilities at Sovereign Harbour and protecting its green heart at Eastbourne Park as well as the areas of outstanding natural beauty that have been incorporated into the South Downs National Park.
- 1.4 Therefore the majority housing will take place on land that has already previously been developed. A modest number of small Greenfield sites have also been identified as having potential for housing, but these have been assessed as being of low value and poor quality. Higher residential densities will also be supported in some of the town's most sustainable neighbourhoods: Old Town, Meads, Upperton, Langney and Seaside, subject to the usual design and conservation policy requirements.
- 1.5 So that people can easily find out and influence what is likely to change in their area, this Eastbourne Local Plan has divided up the town into 14 neighbourhoods. A key diagram for each shows the overall vision and indicates the key places of change likely to occur in each area over the plan period. Each neighbourhood vision has been based on extensive analysis of local information as well as local knowledge through neighbourhood consultation events for each area.

2.0 Proposed Submission version

- 2.1 The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the relevant government regulations and guidance and has now reached the stage of Proposed Submission. The Proposed Submission stage now requires a further period of publicity to enable stakeholders and interested parties an opportunity to make formal representations based on the 'soundness' of the Strategy that will be considered by an independent Planning Inspector early next year (expected to start in April 2012).
- 2.2 The need for the Core Strategy to be 'sound' before it can be approved by the Inspector and adopted by the Council, is a key requirement of the government regulations. 'Soundness' is defined as: 'justified, effective and consistent with National Policy'. Justified means that the document must be:
 - Founded on robust and credible evidence
 - The most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives."
- 2.3 To be effective: Core Strategies must be:
 - deliverable;
 - flexible; and
 - able to be monitored.
- 2.4 The recently published National Planning Policy Framework (currently also out for public consultation until 17th October 2011) adds an additional criteria that the Plan must have been 'Positively Prepared'. This is defined as being 'based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements,.. *'with the presumption in favour of sustainable development'*.
- 2.5 The draft National Framework also alters the emphasis for 'Effective' to ensure that

the plan is based on effective joint working on cross boundary strategic priorities.

- 2.6 As well as incorporating the changes outlined in the previously approved Consultation report, (See Cabinet minutes dated 13th July 2011), this latest Proposed Submission version includes the following:
- Updated housing figures following the latest returns on housing delivery, windfalls and known developments;
 - Contingency policies should the housing market not recover as quickly as anticipated and expected housing delivery targets are not being met;
 - Stronger emphasis on maximizing the opportunities for renewable energy in new developments;
 - A stronger focus on positively planning for the future by changing the neighbourhood visions into policies, and strengthening the infrastructure delivery proposals.
 - Other Policy updates to reflect the recently issued draft National Planning Policy Framework as well as recommendations made following a 'technical health check' by legal specialists.
- 2.7 Please note that in the interests of economy the full text of the Proposed Submission Core Strategy document has not been printed with the agenda. Copies will be placed in the Members' Room, on the Council's website at <http://www.eastbourne.gov.uk/council/meetings/cabinet> and at the Town Hall reception for inspection purposes. Members of the Cabinet and the Planning Committee and the Opposition Leader will be sent copies. Other Members' requiring a printed copy should contact the Planning Policy Manager (contact details at the head of this report).

3.0 What happens next?

- 3.1 Once approved by Full Council (14th September) the Proposed Submission version of the Eastbourne Local Plan (or LDF:Core Strategy) will be published for interested parties to make formal representations based on the soundness of the plan to be considered by a Planning Inspector at Planning Examination. After the 12 week consultation period (16th September – 9th December) has ended the Council will consider and summarise the representations made.
- 3.2 The legislation allows the Council to then make fairly minor changes to the Plan before formally publishing the Submission version again for formal consideration and deliberation by the Planning Inspectorate at Public Examination (expected to be February 2012).
- 3.3 It is recommended that Cabinet delegate to the cross party LDF Steering Group the approval of the final document that is submitted to the government for the public examination.

4.0 Resource Implications

- 4.1 The Council has budgeted £143,000 for progressing the Core Strategy through to its adoption., It is therefore crucially important that the Council is happy with the Spatial Strategy proposed for consideration by the Planning Inspectorate. The Public Examination will be an intensive period of work for the team and has been resourced to take this into account.

4.2 Financial

There are no direct financial implications to the Council of this report. The cost of the publication and publicity for the Submission document will be met from within the existing service budget.

4.3 Legal

As stated above, the production of a Local Development Framework which includes a Core Strategy is a statutory requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended in 2008).

4.4 Staff Resources

Officers in the Planning Policy Team will manage the publicity arrangements for the Proposed Submission document, the collection and processing of representations and the preparation of the necessary documentation for submitting the Core Strategy.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 Cabinet are requested to recommend to Full Council that the Proposed Submission version of the Eastbourne Local Plan be approved as a basis for publication and a final opportunity for the community to make representations on its soundness. It is recommended that the LDF Steering Group consider a summary of the representations made and the need for further changes, before the final document is submitted to the Secretary of State in February 2012 for Public Examination later in the year.

Iona Cameron

Planning Policy Manager

Background Papers:

The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning (CLG, 2008)

Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended)

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