

BODY: Scrutiny Committee
DATE: 8 February 2010
SUBJECT: Eastbourne Park Supplementary Planning Document
REPORT OF: Chief Executive - as acting Senior Head of Environment and Planning

Ward(s): All

Purpose: To inform Members of the Scrutiny Committee about the ongoing work on developing the Eastbourne Park Supplementary Planning Document.

Decision type: Information

Contact: Iona Cameron, Planning Policy Manager (Job Share), Planning Policy Unit, 1 Grove Road, Eastbourne
Tel no: (01323) 415249
E-mail: iona.cameron@eastbourne.gov.uk

Recommendation: Members consider and endorse the ongoing work on the Eastbourne Park Supplementary Planning Document.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Eastbourne Marshes is the historical name for the flat, low-lying landscape of approximately 1,000 acres of grazed wetland at the centre of Eastbourne which provides a 'green heart' for the town. Eastbourne's expansion over the years has meant Eastbourne Marshes have been almost completely surrounded by urban development. Although they contain nationally rare wildlife habitats and species, Eastbourne Marshes have no formal environmental protection. There is also a nationally important archaeological site on Shinewater Marsh which is also without formal protection.
- 1.2 In 1967 the Eastbourne Urban Plan first proposed the idea of an 'Eastbourne Park' to be created by reclaiming large tracts of Eastbourne Marshes to provide playing fields, sports centres, camping facilities, open spaces and lakes. In 1990 an Eastbourne Park Plan was adopted which included development opportunities, new highways, sports and leisure facilities, and greater landscape diversity for recreation and the creation of new habitat. These aspirations were enshrined in planning policy in the Eastbourne Borough Plan 2001-2011 (2003).
- 1.3 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) brought in a new system of planning that requires Local Planning Authorities including Eastbourne to create a portfolio of documents collectively entitled the Local Development Framework (LDF), consistent with national and regional policy whilst reflecting local needs and aspirations. The first of these documents will be the Local Development Framework: Core Strategy, an overarching document that sets out the headline vision, objectives and policies for the town to 2026.

1.4 The Eastbourne Park Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will accompany the LDF: Core Strategy and provide detailed policy guidance. The purpose of the emerging Core Strategy and accompanying SPD will be to conserve and enhance the existing environmental, landscape and biodiversity characteristics of Eastbourne Marshes for future generations, whilst sensitively developing the town's most important under-used resource to improve the social and economic wellbeing of the community.

2.0 Issues

2.1 The Eastbourne Park SPD focuses on the Eastbourne Park area to bring together the various components such as biodiversity, recreation, water level management and economic development, to create a far reaching vision for managing the area for the next 20 years, proposing objectives and policies to be implemented by the Council as part of the LDF.

2.2 As a marshland area surrounded by Eastbourne, this 'green lung' of countryside into the core of the town, is now recognised as an important asset for the residents and visitors of Eastbourne. Since the creation of the current Borough Plan policies, analysis by independent consultants revealed that without the provision of the proposed Highways infrastructure, the development costs for providing the necessary infrastructure including raising ground above the flood plain are likely to make the schemes less profitable and less of an incentive to develop.

2.3 National Planning Policy Guidance 25: Development and Flood Risk' has also been revised and many of the Borough Plan sites would no longer meet the Environment Agency's minimum requirements for allocation. A Joint Transport Assessment has since been commissioned with Wealden District to assess whether the relief roads are still needed and will confirm whether there is any external funding that could be made available.

2.4 An Eastbourne Park Biodiversity Report completed in 2007, highlights the nationally scarce and fragile flora and fauna communities that exist, particularly along the drainage ditches.

3.0 Vision And Objectives

3.1 The new approach proposed here will be to firstly formally protect the natural marshland environment of Eastbourne Park as a Local Nature Reserve, as recommended in the Eastbourne Biodiversity Report, to enhance the existing habitats to increase biodiversity wherever possible and to provide for recreational and interpretative needs where it does not conflict with environmental requirements.

3.2 A cross party Members Steering Group has been established and has agreed the draft vision as:

By 2026 Eastbourne Park will provide a unique, accessible and sensitively managed green heart which makes a significant contribution to the social, economic and physical wellbeing of the community.

3.3 **Appendix A** provides a list of 10 objectives that have been chosen for the SPD. With each objective, alternative options have been identified and research is being carried out to evaluate and determine how feasible they will be to implement.

4.0 **Constraints and Opportunities**

4.1 Besides EBC and ESCC, the Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement own several major areas of the Park however there are also many other private and commercial landowners. Landowners may have their own proposals for the use of their land. When assessing such schemes in the planning decision process, outcomes should be decided as part of an overall vision, not by a piecemeal process.

4.2 The purpose of the SPD is to focus on agreeing a far reaching vision for the whole of Eastbourne Park. So consultation with landowners regarding various proposals at an early stage, will allow a formulation of ideas as to what options may be feasible and where they are best located.

4.3 Although the main highways into town now lie through Eastbourne Park and the built up area surrounds it, much of Eastbourne Park is inaccessible to the public with no rights of way except for the new Shinewater Country Park. However, good public access is now regarded as a priority to provide local routes for both informal recreation and walking/cycling connections between different parts of the town.

4.4 The Environment Agency and tenant farmers already use a network of raised access tracks alongside main water courses in all four sectors for management purposes. These tracks are above projected flooding levels, and could be considered a starting point for choosing suitable routes for improving public access. Additional links and sewer crossing points will however be required between them. As some are vehicular access tracks, they may be suitable for cycling and horse riding.

5.0 **Community Consultation**

5.1 The wider community had an early chance to inform the contents of the emerging Supplementary Planning Document (formerly referred to as the Area Action Plan) via a Stakeholder event held on Friday 3rd July at the Winter Gardens. A copy of the Feedback report is available on the council's LDF website. This will be complemented by a further Stakeholder and Landowner forum to be held later this Spring, the date of which has yet to be arranged.

5.2 The next Stakeholder Forum will give representatives of the Eastbourne park community and wider interested parties a chance to understand the advantages and disadvantages of each of the options before indicating which they would prefer to emerge as the Council's preferred strategy for the future of the area.

6.0 **Member Involvement**

6.1 A High Level Members Working Group made up of Councillors Tutt, Wallis and Howlett and Belsey has helped to steer the spatial development options. Several meetings have been held in 2009 to discuss the vision, objectives options, consultation arrangements, as well as arising issues. Further Members Working Groups will be held to: evaluate the options; inform the preparation of the Core

Strategy policy and guide the implementation plan as well as guide the detailed Supplementary Planning Document. The Local Development Framework Steering Group will also review the emerging policies to ensure consistency with other LDF documents as well as the Council's corporate and community strategies before making its recommendations to Cabinet. **Appendix C** provides a draft Project timetable.

7.0 Implications

7.1 Eastbourne Borough Plan 2001 - 2011

7.1.1 The Borough Plan consists of various development allocations and chapters which will be gradually updated by the LDF: Core Strategy and associated Local Development Documents. All new policies and proposals must comply with the national planning policy statements and Town and Country Planning regulations if they are to be judged 'sound' by the Planning Inspector at Public Examination.

7.1.2 Financial

The cost of the consultation exercises and site visits can be met from within the existing service budgets. Removal of the council owned development allocations from the Borough Plan 2001-2011 has led to a decrease in the value of the Council's assets. As at 1 April 2006 the value of the 3 allocated areas totaled just over £13m. As at 31st March 2009 this had been reduced to just over £4m. The value at 31 March 2010 is likely to be even lower. Part of the decrease is of course due to market conditions. A detailed evaluation of the costs and infrastructure requirements will be carried out as part of the preparation of a practical framework of policies and proposals for the Local Development Framework: Core Strategy.

7.1.3 Legal

The production and implementation of the Local Development Framework: Core Strategy is a statutory requirement of the Town and Country Planning Act 2008. The Eastbourne Park Supplementary Planning Document will outline the detailed policy guidance for its vision to be met.

7.1.4 Human Resources

Officers in the Planning Policy Team and across the Council have been involved with both consultation arrangements and attendance at the Members Working Group.

8.0 Other Implications

8.1 There are significant and wide ranging implications arising from the contents of this report. A full assessment of the social, environmental and economic implications will be presented in the sustainability appraisal which will be a background paper to the Supplementary Planning Document.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 In summary Scrutiny are asked to note and support the preparation of the Eastbourne Park Supplementary Planning Document and the ongoing evaluation of

the various options for achieving the Council's vision and objectives for the area.

Iona Cameron
Planning Policy Manager (Job Share)

Background Papers:

Eastbourne Community Strategy 2005-2020
Eastbourne Borough Plan 2001-2011 Saved Policies
Eastbourne Park Management Plan Consultation Draft 2005
Eastbourne Park Sites Development Feasibility Study 2006
Eastbourne Park Economic Assessment of Local Plan Allocation Sites – Engineering Constraints and Costs
Eastbourne Landscape Character Assessment 2007
Eastbourne Park Biodiversity Report 2005
Eastbourne Parks Amphibians and Reptiles Assessment 2005
Eastbourne Biodiversity Assessment 2007
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1: Inception Report and Scope of Works 2007

Note:-

Appendix A – Summary of objectives, proposals, costs and timescale
Appendix B – Project Timetable

Appendix A – SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES, PROPOSALS, COSTS AND TIMESCALE

EASTBOURNE PARK SPD	TIMESCALE		
Objectives and Proposals	S	M	L
<p>1. Conserve and enhance the unique landscape character, biodiversity and archaeology</p> <p>Low Cost Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the pro-active management and grazing of currently abandoned land • Screen urban development with new planting of native trees and bushes on raised perimeter banking • Provide an archaeological assessment of all Eastbourne Park • Designate Shinewater site as a Scheduled Ancient Monument • Provide on site interpretation panels and leaflets to interpret the Shinewater site <p>Medium Cost Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate parts of Eastbourne Park with statutory protection as a Local Nature Reserve <p>High Cost Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a regionally important visitor centre within nature reserve, as a gateway for residents and visitors to Eastbourne • Plant energy crops for use in local installations utilising renewable energy • Incorporate an archaeological visitor centre with Bronze Age reconstructions in a marshland environment 	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>
<p>2. Minimise the risk of flooding in the urban area</p> <p>Medium Cost Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the effective flow of water through existing sewers and channels • Extend or create extra flood storage lakes in Eastbourne Park <p>High Cost Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreate the former marshland environment to hold flood water • Extend or create extra flood storage lakes in Eastbourne Park • Increase the capacity of the outfalls to the sea 	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p></p> <p>✓</p> <p></p> <p>✓</p>
<p>3. Provide accessible walking and cycling routes linking different parts of the town</p> <p>Low Cost Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide initial access routes on EBC land • Creation of public open access land <p>Medium Cost Option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a series of circular and connecting walking and cycling routes throughout the Eastbourne Park area 	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>
<p>4. Ensure integrated management that will safeguard all stakeholder interests</p> <p>Low Cost Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a management forum or group representing all interested parties • Retain existing management • Identify a suitable organisation to purchase or lease land to develop and manage agreed options • Landowners enter land into grant aid schemes including Higher Level Stewardship • Provide wide consultation throughout the production of the SPD to allow 	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>

<p>every opportunity for stakeholders to state their own preferences</p> <p>Medium Cost Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a suitable organisation to purchase or lease land to develop and manage agreed options 	✓		
<p>5. Contribute to the local economic infrastructure and help to attract inward investment</p> <p>Low Cost Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove the Borough Plan housing and employment allocations in the flood plain, but retain relief roads <p>Medium Cost Option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow efficient combined heating and power mini networks to be used by local neighbourhoods <p>High Cost Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restore the wetland environment and create a nature reserve, thereby attracting tourism and more employment opportunities Create a visitor centre with nature reserve as a regionally important gateway to Eastbourne and the South Downs National Park Allow renewable energy initiatives including wind turbines, solar pv and planting of energy crops 	✓	✓	✓
<p>6. Provide opportunities for people to lead healthy lives</p> <p>Low Cost Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide picnic areas Extend facilities for fishing on the lakes Allow development of a garden centre/ nursery to encourage healthy gardening activities Involve volunteers from the community <p>Medium Cost Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide walking and cycling routes Increase the number of play grounds for all ages Permit canoeing and kayaking on selected water courses Designate an area for the development of a water sports activity centre Provide more allotments to meet demand 	✓	✓	✓
<p>7. Encourage an understanding of the natural and semi-natural environment</p> <p>Low Cost Option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish access, provide interpretation and events in Eastbourne Park <p>High Cost Option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an environmental education centre Establish a regionally important wetland visitor centre to town and/or South Downs National Park 	✓	✓	✓
<p>8. Lessen the effects of deprivation and social exclusion</p> <p>Low Cost Option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide access between the different residential areas and into local countryside Create an improved environment by bringing wildlife into the community Encourage community involvement with Eastbourne Park to raise the understanding of the value of the high quality environment to local residents <p>High Cost Option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create local community facilities as a hub for Shinewater Park 	✓	✓	✓

		✓	✓
9. Promote sustainable tourism and recreational development			
Low Cost Option:			
• Develop an equestrian centre			✓
• Provide a camping and/ or caravan site		✓	✓
Medium Cost Option:			
• Provide compatible water recreation on a flood storage lake		✓	✓
• Create a sports complex			✓
• Develop an agri-tourism farm			✓
• Create a cycle hire activity centre		✓	✓
• Create an events showground		✓	✓
• Create an adventure or theme park			✓
• Provide a camping and/ or caravan site			✓
High Cost Option:		✓	✓
• Develop an agri-tourism farm			
• Create an adventure or theme park			✓
• Create a health farm or spa			✓
• Provide tourist accommodation on moored boats			✓
10. Establish links between the green heart and other wildlife habitats			
Low Cost Option:			
• Establish ecological corridors to other natural areas		✓	✓
• Modify grassland mowing regimes along ecological corridors	✓		
• Encourage the management of gardens and neighbourhoods as part of an integrated green network	✓		
• Encourage schools to create wildlife habitat areas	✓		
High Cost Option:			
• De-culvert main water courses to allow for a more diverse range of wetland habitat		✓	✓

Appendix B – Project Timetable for Eastbourne Park Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Stage 1 Background

(June '08 - April '09)

Collate and Summarise all background materials
Field Research & Site Visits
Prepare and Edit Stage 1 report (Strategic Environmental Assessment/ SA)

Stage 2 Identification of a vision for the future of Eastbourne Park

(April '09 - Jan '10)

Establish and hold Steering Group Meetings
Present summary of existing and background materials
Generate Vision and Objectives
Undertake Stakeholder Forum (Reg 25) to inform AAP & feedback
Evaluate various options
Complete sustainability Appraisal

Stage 3 Development of a Practical Framework of policies & proposals

(Jan '10 - June '10)

Development of composite alternative options & phased implementation Plan
Stakeholder Feedback
Detailed evaluation of Infrastructure requirements
Drafting of a LDF: Core Strategy policy
Political and Corporate Approval of Policy & Proposals (*LDF Steering Group 8th June, Cabinet September*)
Publication of LDF:Core Strategy policy proposals (October 2010)

Stage 4 Publication of full Draft SPD for public comment

(June '10 – Sept '12)

Draft full SPD for publication
On line consultation for 12 weeks (Nov – Jan '11)
Analysis of consultee comments
Editing of SPD
Formal approval of SPD for use (September '12)