

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 23 October 2019

Title: Eastbourne Local Plan – Issues and Options Report

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning

Cabinet member: Councillor Jonathan Dow, Cabinet member for climate change

Ward(s): All

Purpose of report: To seek Cabinet approval to publish the Eastbourne Local Plan Issues & Options Report for public consultation between 1st November 2019 and 10th January 2020

Decision type: Key Decision

Officer recommendation(s):

- (1) That Cabinet approve the publication of the Eastbourne Local Plan Issues & Options Report (Appendix 1) for public consultation between Friday 1st November 2019 and Friday 10th January 2020;
- (2) The Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place Services, to make minor changes to the Issues and Options Report prior to publication if necessary.

Reasons for recommendations:

- (1) To meet the requirements of Regulation 18 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) in the preparation of a Local Plan
- (2) To ensure that the Eastbourne Local Plan is progressed in accordance with the timetable set out in the Eastbourne Local Development Scheme.
- (3) To ensure that any minor or typographical errors can be corrected prior to the Issues & Options Report being published for consultation

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] requires local planning authorities to prepare succinct and up-to-date plans that provide a positive vision for the future of their area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings (para 15).
- 1.2 The existing local plan is now considered to be out of date, and the Eastbourne Local Development Scheme [LDS], which was adopted by Full Council in February 2019, identifies a timetable for the preparation of a new Local Plan for Eastbourne.
- 1.3 As part of the preparation of a local plan, local planning authorities are required to invite statutory consultees and other stakeholders with an interest in the area to make representations on what the Local Plan should contain, and to take these representations into account when preparing the new Local Plan. The requirement to consult is being met through the publication of an 'Issues and Options' report for public consultation, which invites comment on the main issues that the Local Plan should address and on potential options for addressing those issues.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan, which contains the strategic planning policies for Borough (excluding the area within the South Downs National Park, which is under the planning jurisdiction of the South Downs National Park Authority) was adopted in February 2013 following Public Examination by a Planning Inspector in May 2012.
- 2.2 Amendments to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations in December 2017 require local planning authorities to undertake a review of a local plan every five years starting from the date of adoption.
- 2.3 The five year anniversary of the Core Strategy was on 20th February 2018. A review conducted through the Authority Monitoring Report 2017/2018 identified that the Core Strategy requires updating due to the under delivery of housing against the housing requirement set out in the plan, an increase in the housing need requirement calculated through the Local Housing Need standard method,

and the lack of a five year housing land supply.

2.4 In response to this, the LDS was revised to set out a timetable for the preparation of a new Local Plan, which will supersede all existing planning policies for Eastbourne.

3.0 Eastbourne Local Plan

3.1 The NPPF requires that local planning authorities (individually or in conjunction with other local planning authorities) prepare a plan that sets out the strategic policies for their area, with non-strategic policies being included in either the same plan or a separate plan. This is known as the Local Plan.

3.2 The new Eastbourne Local Plan will cover the area of the Borough outside of the South Downs National Park. It will contain both strategic policies that set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and non-strategic policies that will contain more detail for the determination of planning applications.

3.3 The new Eastbourne Local Plan will cover the period between 2018 and 2038, and is required to look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from adoption, which is anticipated for late 2021.

3.4 The timetable for the preparation of the new Local Plan in the updated LDS is as follows:

- Issues and Options Consultation: November-December 2019
- Proposed Submission: November-December 2020
- Submission: February 2021
- Examination: May-June 2021
- Adoption: November 2021

4.0 Issues and Options Report

4.1 The Issues and Options Report will form the first stage of public consultation in the preparation of the new Local Plan. Its purpose is to seek views from the local community and other stakeholders on the key issues that the Local Plan will need to address, and options for how they can be addressed, that will help the Council to develop a draft strategy and policies for the Local Plan.

4.2 The Issues & Options Report contains six main topic areas that attempt to mirror the Corporate Plan and other Council priorities. The main topic areas are: Carbon Neutrality; Prosperous Economy; Quality Environment; Thriving Communities; Housing & Development; and Effective Infrastructure.

4.3 Vision and Objectives

4.3.1 The Issues and Options Report sets out an ambitious vision for how Eastbourne should look, feel and function in 2038. This was informed by a Councillor workshop and extensive discussion with the Local Plan Steering Group. A set of 16 objectives for the Local Plan stem from this vision.

4.4 Carbon Neutrality

4.4.1 In July 2019, the Council declared a climate emergency and set out the aim to be a carbon neutral town by 2030. The Local Plan will have a significant part to play in achieving this ambition. The Issues and Options Report identifies the issue of carbon emissions from domestic and commercial energy use, and from road transport, which we must seek to reduce.

4.4.2 The Carbon Neutrality section seeks views on the extent to which the Local Plan should increase energy efficiency in new development in the context of national policy restrictions and viability issues. It considers how renewable energy generation should be encouraged both within new development and independent from new development, and how the Local Plan can promote a modal shift from car to more sustainable modes of transport, in order to reduce carbon emissions. It also reflects on how carbon emissions can be minimised, through on-site means as a first priority, with options for off-site offsetting where this is not possible.

4.5 Prosperous Economy

4.5.1 Although the Eastbourne economy has been performing well, there are issues with the availability of land for commercial development for growing businesses that the Local Plan needs to address. The Local Plan will need to consider how the town centre should evolve in light of the changing nature of town centres from selling products to experiences. Also, maintaining Eastbourne as a modern day tourist destination is an issue that the Local Plan will seek to address.

4.5.2 The Prosperous Economy section considers options for the provision of workspace, particularly in relation to the types and locations in order to encourage growth in higher value sectors. It presents options on the extent to which uses in the town centre should be allowed to diversify from traditional retail uses, and also identifies options for how the tourism industry is best supported through the appropriate provision of tourist accommodation.

4.6 Quality Environment

4.6.1 Eastbourne's location at the foot of the South Downs is a key part of the town's

green setting, and it is important that the Local Plan gives full attention to Eastbourne's high quality environment to ensure that it is protected and enhanced to complement growth that will occur over the plan period.

- 4.6.2 The Issues and Options Report seeks views on how the town can be made more resilient to flooding, and particularly how Eastbourne Park should be addressed in the future. It also considers how a net-gain in biodiversity can be achieved, and the impacts of potential development on the townscape and landscape.

4.7 Thriving Communities

- 4.7.1 The Local Plan should support Eastbourne's diverse communities, particularly in terms of the provision of services and facilities in appropriate and accessible locations, with the aim of reducing inequalities within communities across the town.

- 4.7.2 The Issues and Options Report asks whether the neighbourhoods, as defined in the previous Local Plan, are still relevant and should be taken forward as a basis for planning in the future. The Thriving Communities section considers how the Local Plan should make provision for open space, sport and recreation, and asks where local services should be located and how Eastbourne can be made safer and more accessible.

4.8 Housing & Development

- 4.8.1 The NPPF requires that Local Plan should identify sufficient developable land to meet the local housing need, unless there are strong reasons for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development. Housing need is determined using the standard methodology in the NPPF.

- 4.8.2 The Local Housing Need for Eastbourne is calculated as 668 homes per annum over the plan period, however physical and environmental constraints in Eastbourne that means this is likely to be achievable. The Issues and Options Report identifies options for the level and distribution of housing that could be delivered, ranging from 191 to 358 homes per year, which would be dependent on the types and sizes of homes that could be delivered. It also considers how affordable homes and housing for the ageing population should be provided, and seeks views on the types and sizes of housing that should be delivered over the period to 2038.

4.9 Effective Infrastructure

- 4.9.1 The Infrastructure section identifies the main infrastructure issues that will need to be addressed through Local Plan policies on contributions from new

development to ensure that growth in Eastbourne is sustainable.

- 4.9.2 The Issues and Options Report will ask for views on what the priorities should be for infrastructure contributions and where the balance should lie between on-site and off-site requirements of new development. It will help to identify the requirements for new infrastructure provision and where improvement to existing infrastructure needs to be made.

5.0 Consultation

- 5.1 The Issues and Options Report has been prepared in consultation with the Local Plan Steering Group, and has been informed by discussions with stakeholders including infrastructure providers and neighbouring authorities.
- 5.2 In addition, the Vision for the Local Plan, as contained in Appendix 1, was informed by a Councillor workshop held on 8th July 2019, and all Councillors were invited to comment on the vision once drafted and prior to inclusion in the Issues and Options Report.
- 5.3 If approved, the Issues and Options Report will be subject to public consultation between Friday 1st November 2019 and Friday 10th January 2020. Consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which was revised and adopted in February 2019. The SCI identifies a minimum consultation period of 8 weeks; however this has been extended to include an additional two weeks to compensate for the consultation being undertaken over the Christmas period.
- 5.4 All statutory bodies and individuals and organisations who have asked to be informed of the progress of the Eastbourne Local Plan will notified directly about the consultation. The consultation will be publicised on the Council's website, in the Eastbourne View – Winter Edition, through press releases and social media, and by working in partnership with members and community groups.
- 5.5 A Strategic Environment Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, which has already undergone consultation with the statutory environmental bodies, will be published alongside the Issues and Options Report for wider comment.

6.0 Financial appraisal

- 6.1 The financial implications of publishing the Issues and Options Report will be minimal, and will be primarily associated with producing consultation material and hiring venues for consultation events. As such, it is considered that these costs will be covered within the existing budget.

7.0 Legal implications

7.1 The Issues and Options Report has been prepared in order to comply 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. The Council must also comply with Section 33A, of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) which imposes a duty to co-operate with other local planning authorities on issues which are likely to have a significant effect on more than one planning area. *Legal Implications Provided 01.10.19 008597-LDC-JCS*

7.2 The Issues and Options Report has been prepared in accordance with the Council's adopted Local Development Scheme, which will be a matter of legal compliance once the Local Plan progresses to Public Examination.

8.0 Risk management implications

8.1 The risk of not undertaking an Issues and Options consultation at this time is that the preparation of the Local Plan will be delayed, which means that the Local Development Scheme (LDS) that sets out the timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan will be not achieved. As the Local Plan will play a key role in helping to reduce carbon emissions, delay in the Local Plan may also have the effect of delaying the Council's objective of being a carbon neutral town by 2030.

9.0 Equality analysis

9.1 It is not considered that an Equalities and Fairness Analysis is required for the Issues and Options Report because it does not contain policy and only asks for comment on what the Local Plan should contain. A 'No Relevance' report is provided as a background paper to this report.

9.2 The new Local Plan itself will need to undergo an equalities and fairness analysis, and this will be undertaken during the preparation of the plan.

10.0 Environmental impact analysis

10.1 The NPPF identifies that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and when the Local Plan undergoes examination by a Planning Inspector, it will be assessed in these terms. It will also undergo Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), to assess its environmental impact, throughout its preparation and compliance with the SEA Regulations will be assessed at the examination of the Local Plan.

10.2 Carbon Neutrality is a key issue identified in the Issues and Options Report. The Issues and Options Report seeks views on how the Local Plan can ensure sustainable growth contributes to the Council's aim to be a carbon neutral town by 2030. The Council's Sustainability Policy has informed the preparation of the Issues and Options Report.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Eastbourne's Direction of Travel: Issues and Options for the Eastbourne Local Plan

Background papers

The background papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

- Equalities and Fairness 'No Relevance' Report
- Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report
- Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
- Strategic Housing & Employment Land Availability Assessment
- Economic Development Needs Assessment
- Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Framework for Statement of Common Ground

Link to background papers is <https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/planning-policy/new-eastbourne-local-plan-2018-2038/>