

Community Services

Introduction

12.1 This chapter gives consideration to the availability of infrastructure and other community facilities to serve existing and new development. It outlines the responsibilities of the various agencies involved in the provision of community services and includes the Council's planning policies relating to the provision of infrastructure and other community services in association with new development.

STRATEGY

12.2 The Council is keen to promote a full range of local community services to be available and accessible within the District to meet the reasonable expectations of existing and new residents. This is especially pertinent to new housing development. The concerns about such services becoming stretched by major new developments or about delays or other inadequacies in accompanying services and community facilities are recognised and will be addressed as fully as possible.

12.3 With the exception of recycling facilities, the District Council is not the Authority or Agency responsible for directly providing the services. Its influence is principally as the Local Planning Authority responsible for local plan preparation and development control. The service providers, who have been consulted during the preparation of this Plan, will be able to take account of the Plan's proposals and policies in their own programmes.

12.4 Certain services are provided locally, for example libraries, while others have nationally determined levels of service. There are changes in the form of delivery of many services, particularly as some move into the private sector. This necessitates continued close liaison between the Council and the relevant agencies to ensure service provision and development is properly co-ordinated and is not disrupted or prejudiced.

12.5 It is the aim of the Plan's strategy to ensure that all works, services and community facilities required by development will be provided at the appropriate time. In accordance with this the following objectives are defined:-

(1) to support the provision of a wide range of community services to meet the needs and expectations of the existing and future residents;

(2) to assist the relevant service providers to assess and develop their own programmes to meet the

requirements of the existing and the projected population and developments of the Local Plan in an efficient manner;

(3) to avoid any delays or other inadequacies in the availability of community services.

GENERAL APPROACH

12.6 In view of the prior need to secure the necessary infrastructure to service new development and the important contribution that the community services referred to above make to the quality of life, it is appropriate to clearly set down the policy framework within which to consider development proposals, including ones for the supply of those services. Accordingly, in line with Structure Plan Policies S4 and S5 and the above strategy, the following policy is put forward:-

CS1 Development will not be permitted before the Council is satisfied that the capital works directly required to service the development are provided at the time development takes place or will be provided at the appropriate time.

12.7 In accordance with this policy, in appropriate cases developers and landowners will be expected to provide the works and services made necessary by proposed developments or will be expected to make financial contributions to such works. Where necessary and appropriate these will be secured through legal agreements. This policy is in line with Government guidance in Circular 1/97 which states that such works should be directly related to and made necessary by the proposed development. The policy should not be taken to infer that development which is otherwise unacceptable would be made acceptable through the provision of such works and services.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

12.8 The provision of health care within Wealden underwent a fundamental administrative change in April 1993 with the formation of a new County-wide East Sussex Health Authority, effectively merging the former Brighton, Eastbourne and Hastings Health Authorities. The new Health Authority, which is organised to relate to District and Borough boundaries, is responsible for the 'purchasing' of health care, while the actual provision of health services throughout

Wealden now rests with the Eastbourne and County Healthcare NHS Trust.

12.9 Hospital care for residents of the northern parts of the District is currently met by facilities in Tunbridge Wells together with those in Crowborough and Uckfield. The Crowborough War Memorial Hospital in Southview Road provides a locally valued range of primary health care and maternity services. Grove House has been built within the grounds of the hospital and provides both psychiatric and elderly day care facilities. The Uckfield Community Hospital provides a wide range of comprehensive health care facilities.

12.10 In terms of general hospital health care, the southern part of the Plan area is served by the hospitals in Eastbourne. These include the Eastbourne District General Hospital and All Saints' Hospital. Planning policies applicable to nursing homes are contained in Chapter 6.

12.11 The County Council's County-wide Community Care Plan 1998/2001 examines existing services and outlines proposals for the provision of a wide range of community care services, including group homes which are operated jointly by Social Services and the Health Authority.

12.12 The East Sussex Family Health Services Authority (FHSA) co-ordinates and partly funds the provision of doctors' surgeries as well as the services provided by dental practitioners, pharmacists and opticians. A number of the doctors' practices in the District have tentative plans to alter and expand their premises owing to cramped conditions. However, the FHSA generally considers that there is no shortfall in the provision of general practitioner services.

12.13 The Council considers it important that doctors' and dental surgeries be adequately provided for within the towns and villages of the District. Accordingly, the Council would look sympathetically on any proposals for new, replacement or extensions to surgeries in accordance with the relevant policies in the Plan. In particular, they should not have a detrimental impact on residential character and amenities, particularly with regard to car parking and traffic generation.

12.14 The County Council Social Services Department is responsible for the provision of a range of social services throughout the District.

EDUCATION

12.15 The County Council is the Local Education Authority responsible for the maintained education service in the District. The County Council is aware of the planned housing developments across the District and the likely increases in population and school aged children arising from such developments. Its programme for school places into the next century takes account of these and other factors.

12.16 The dual use of educational buildings and playing fields for community purposes can make a valuable contribution to providing for additional community use and recreational provision. It is therefore considered appropriate that, whenever possible, land and buildings in the ownership of educational bodies be made available for community use. Indeed, in relation to playing fields, their availability for public use is the policy and practice of the Local Education Authority, and other educational institutions often make a significant contribution to meeting the recreational needs of local communities.

12.17 It is also the policy of the County Council, as the Local Education Authority, that new local authority buildings should normally be designed to facilitate community use. The Council will work closely with the County Council to apply this policy to the proposed primary schools in the District.

MAGISTRATES COURTS

12.18 In 1993 the East Sussex Magistrates' Courts Committee carried out a review of the provision of services within the District. In response to the Courts Committee's consultation, the Council expressed its concern over the rationalisation of courthouse provision within the District which could result in a reduction of services and the closure of the existing courthouses in Hailsham, Mark Cross and Uckfield. It emphasised the importance of retaining a permanent courthouse within the District as an essential public facility. The Courts Committee took the decision to close all three Courts with effect from October 1993 for Hailsham and April 1994 in the case of Mark Cross and Uckfield, thereby leaving Wealden without a Court in its area.

12.19 The Magistrates' Courts Committee is committed in principle to a courthouse in the north Wealden area and considers that Crowborough is the best location.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

12.20 The emergency services - police, ambulance and fire - have been advised of the Plan's housing and commercial proposals. They will consider their future services in the light of these developments and population increases.

UTILITIES

General

12.21 Developers and property owners are advised to contact the respective utility service authorities at an early stage regarding water supply, foul drainage, surface water drainage, electricity, gas or telephones. This will help ascertain particular site requirements, and costings where appropriate. Consideration should also be given to the implications for development of services crossing a site, both for the built form and landscaping. Principal services affecting land allocations in the Plan are discussed in the relevant chapter.

12.22 In general terms, there are no significant constraints on the provision of water, gas, electricity and telephones. Particular issues in relation to water supply, foul and surface drainage are discussed below.

12.23 The Water Industry Act 1991 provides for infrastructure charges to be collected by Statutory Sewerage and Water Undertakers. In cases where development is conditional on a particular utility service being completed, occupation may be restricted until such provision is available.

Water Supply

12.24 South East Water Ltd incorporates the previous Eastbourne, Mid Sussex and West Kent Water Companies and is responsible for the supply of water throughout the District. In terms of existing water resources, although there is currently greater capacity in some parts of the Plan area than others, there is not considered to be an overall shortage of supply across the Plan area to meet planned development and hence meet its obligation to provide supplies to all new development. The Environment Agency is responsible for the overall management of water sources. Abstractions from both ground and surface waters require a licence from the Agency.

12.25 In order to provide for the projected increases in water demand, South East Water's resource strategy is aimed at developing a number of sources which are able to supplement supply. Water supplies, although currently adequate to meet existing demands, will become critical during the Plan period and therefore, developers are advised to contact the Water Company as soon as possible to ensure that a water supply can be provided.

Drainage

12.26 The Council will expect that wherever possible new development is connected to the foul sewerage systems and that surface water is able to be disposed of efficiently and adequately.

CS2 Planning applications will be permitted only where adequate provision is made for

surface and foul water drainage to meet Local Authority standards, taking into consideration the adequacy or otherwise of the existing systems it will feed, to avoid increasing the risk of flooding by surcharging mains or increasing surface water run-off to watercourses.

Foul Drainage

12.27 Southern Water Services Ltd. is the statutory sewerage undertaker for the District. The majority of the settlements in the District are served by sewers and several inland wastewater treatment works. Pevensey, Westham, Pevensey Bay and part of Stone Cross are served by the Pevensey Bay Sea Outfall. The flows to this outfall are to be transferred to a new outfall at Langney Point as part of the Eastbourne Wastewater Treatment Scheme. The works that are being carried out are part of Southern Water Services Ltd. Operation Seaclean in order to comply with the European Union's Bathing Water Directive.

Surface Water Drainage

12.28 The Environment Agency is responsible for safeguarding the quality of all water resources. It controls the discharge of any effluent, which includes surface water from any commercial development or new road into any surface or groundwater source. The Agency is also concerned with protecting such water resources from the contamination of land and physical disturbance.

12.29 Under the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Land Drainage Act 1991, the Environment Agency has a statutory duty to exercise general supervision over all matters relating to flood defence. Both the Environment Agency and the Council have permissive powers relating to ordinary watercourses, other than those lying within the Upper Medway Floodplain. This comes under the jurisdiction of the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board. The Environment Agency also has permissive powers to undertake work on main river and sea defences.

12.30 In many parts of the District, particularly the rural areas, there are no public surface water sewers available and surface water disposal must be achieved by discharge to private surface water sewers, watercourses or soakaways. Where appropriate, the provision of new private surface water sewers will be encouraged.

12.31 Surface and groundwater resources require protection from pollution and disturbance arising from new development. Damage can occur due to the physical disturbance of groundwater by quarrying, road construction and new mineral workings, or through contamination by waste disposal, industrial processes and disturbance of contaminated land. Surface water from major new developments will generally discharge

into existing watercourses. However, where these watercourses are considered inadequate to accept the increased run-off, or where it is considered that the development may cause flooding, the developers will be required to provide adequate on-site surface water attenuation facilities or improve the watercourse where appropriate, all to the satisfaction of the Council and the Environment Agency, if necessary following appropriate investigations.

12.32 There is a need to ensure harmonisation in the activities of the four agencies which have responsibility for drainage. The Environment Agency and Wealden District Council are Land Drainage Authorities with responsibilities for land drainage, Southern Water Services is responsible for public surface water sewerage and East Sussex County Council is the Highway Authority responsible for highway drainage. Such accord may best be achieved through the preparation of detailed development and maintenance plans.

Willingdon Levels Catchment Area

12.33 Eastbourne Borough Council has proposed a major drainage and flood mitigation scheme in the Eastbourne Park area, comprising a series of artificially created storage lakes, as well as an improved drainage outfall to the sea via the Crumbles Sewer. This will allow future development within parts of the Willingdon Levels Catchment Area lying within Eastbourne Borough to be implemented without creating flooding and surface water run-off problems. Figure 8 indicates the general extent of the Catchment Area. The area within Wealden District is fully defined on the Proposals Map.

12.34 Development proposals within or discharging into the Willingdon Levels Catchment Area will receive particular attention in order to ensure the maintenance of an efficient drainage system within the whole of the Catchment Area and the proper protection of the Levels. The Council will continue to liaise closely with Eastbourne Borough Council and the Environment Agency on all developments with surface water drainage implications proposed within the Willingdon Levels Catchment Area.

CS3 All development within the Willingdon Levels Drainage Catchment Area shown on the Proposals Map will be required to make adequate provision for drainage. Such provision should accord with the level of development proposed and with surrounding developments, in order to ensure that no overall reduction in flood storage capacity or increased surface water run-off occurs without adequate compensatory measures.

WASTE DISPOSAL

12.35 East Sussex County Council, as Waste Planning Authority, has reviewed its policies for waste in the County Structure Plan and is preparing a Waste Local Plan for the whole County, jointly with Brighton and Hove Council, which will identify sites and set out planning criteria for waste developments. This Plan will set out in more detail how waste should be dealt with in East Sussex within the context of Structure Plan policies and the East Sussex Waste Strategy discussed in Chapter 4. The County Council is also responsible for deciding planning applications for waste operations and enforcing controls over waste developments.

12.36 As Waste Disposal Authority, the County Council is responsible for arranging for the disposal of household and other waste collected by Borough and District Councils, through contracts with private waste companies who actually provide or operate the disposal facilities. The County Council also provides Household Waste (or Civic Amenity) Sites, which include recycling centres, and supports recycling schemes operated by Borough and District Councils and others. The County Council's current policies and proposals for waste disposal, together with operational matters, are contained in the "Waste Disposal Plan 1988-98".

12.37 As Waste Regulation Authority, the Environment Agency's responsibilities include issuing and enforcing management licences to operators of waste facilities, regulating the handling and transport of waste.

12.38 Borough and District Councils have sole responsibility for collecting the County's household waste and are responsible for the majority of household waste recycling. Most commercial and

Willingdon Levels Drainage Catchment Area

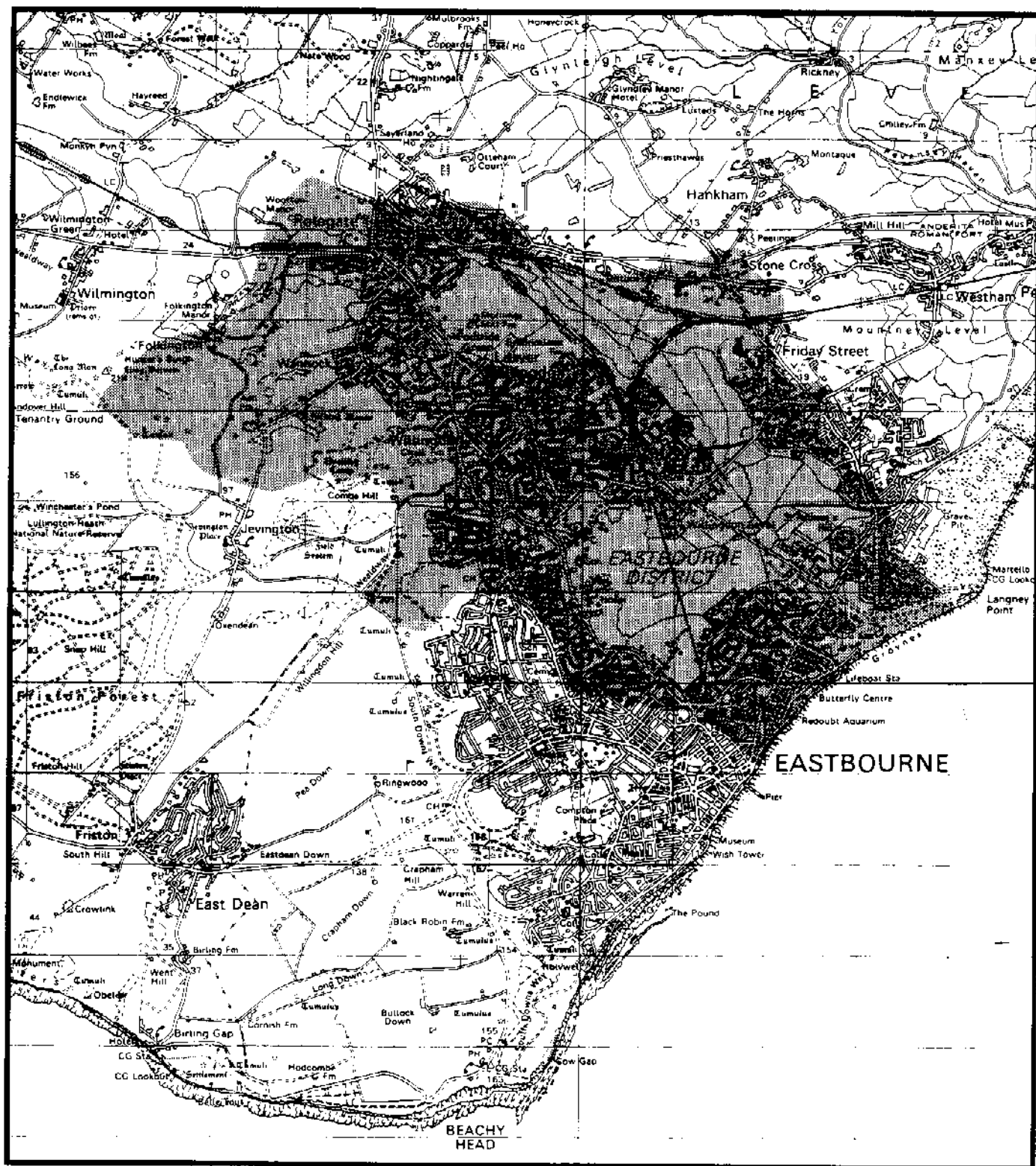


Figure 7

This plan is for illustrative purposes only and does not form part of the Proposals Map.

0 10 20 30 kilometres
Not to scale

industrial waste is collected and disposed of entirely within the private sector.

12.39 It is a policy of the County Council's Waste Disposal Plan that a new landfill facility be sought in or near the northern part of the District.

12.40 The District Council is responsible for the collection of domestic waste throughout Wealden, while the provision of household waste facilities is the responsibility of the County Council as the Waste Disposal Authority.

Recycling

12.41 The District Council has a commitment to the recycling of waste, not only to assist the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources but also to reduce the demand for landfill and waste incineration sites. In response to the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Council updates its Recycling Plan on an annual basis, demonstrating how it proposes to achieve the Government's target of recycling 25% of all household waste materials by the year 2000.

12.42 Sixty-seven recycling centres have been provided by the Council in Wealden, some of which have been specially constructed. These centres comprise newspaper, rag, can and bottle banks and, in one case, a plastic bottle bank. In addition a considerable number of bottle banks are located on private sites. Neighbourhood Recycling Points are being introduced in accordance with the Council's Recycling Plan.

12.43 Subject to the Council's policy on neighbourhood recycling points within new housing areas, within new housing developments over 40 dwellings, when appropriate, a purpose built enclosure should normally be provided to accommodate recycling containers for use by local residents. Screen walls and a roof should be provided to minimise the environmental impact of the facility both in terms of appearance and noise containment. The recycling area should be suitably located to avoid excessive disturbance to residents but should be adjacent to an access road for convenient emptying of the containers. On safety grounds, facilities should not be placed near to children's play areas. The management and maintenance of these neighbourhood recycling centres will be the responsibility of the District Council.

CS4 Within new housing developments over 40 dwellings, when appropriate, the Council will seek the provision of a purpose built enclosure for the containment of recycling facilities which should be located where it can be used safely and conveniently, without causing nuisance or excessive disturbance to residential amenities, and be accessed directly from the main estate road.

12.44 In addition, the Council will seek the provision of recycling areas in association with various commercial and community uses, e.g. supermarkets, hotels, community halls, household waste sites and public car parks. Recycling areas should be conveniently located, accessible by vehicles and should normally be screened. The management and maintenance of these recycling areas will be the responsibility of the District Council.

CS5 Within new commercial and community development, where appropriate, an area for recycling facilities should be provided which should be conveniently located, accessible by vehicles and should normally be screened.

Implementation

12.45 Policies CS1 - CS5 will be implemented by the Council primarily through the use of its development control functions.

Monitoring

12.46 The key areas to monitor will be the ability of the community service providers to meet the demands placed on them and the progress in meeting the stated objectives of both this Plan and their own plans and programmes.