

Wealden District Council
Local Development Framework
(incorporating part of the South Downs National Park)

Core Strategy

Examination in Public

Written Response to 'Matters Issues and Questions'

BY
EASTBOURNE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Matter 8: Polegate and Willingdon and Stone Cross Area Strategy (Tuesday 24th January 2012)

Whether the strategy for the Polegate and Willingdon and Stone Cross area, including the Strategic Development Areas, is soundly based and deliverable?

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REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

A. Have reasonable alternatives to the strategy been considered?

Eastbourne Borough Council [hereafter referred to as EBC] has played an active role in Wealden's consultation stages on its Core Strategy. The Core Strategy sets out a clear vision for growth and having considered a range of different options now represents an appropriate approach to the future of Wealden. EBC wishes to continue to work constructively in partnership with Wealden District Council as a number of policies and strategies are likely to have a significant direct or indirect affect on Eastbourne.

The Polegate and Willingdon and Stone Cross Area Strategy proposes 1350 new homes (700 at Polegate and East Willingdon [SD4], 430 north of Stone Cross [SD6 & 7], and 220 east and south east of Stone Cross [SD6]) on the edge of Eastbourne's administrative boundaries. The Strategy coupled with a further 42 new homes to be built at Pevensey and Westham, brings the total to 1392 new homes to be built on the green fields (that are not liable to flood risk), along the urban fringes of Eastbourne Town. A further 16,840 sq metres of employment land have also been earmarked.

It is appreciated that this growth will bring important and much needed investment into the Eastbourne – Hailsham regeneration area. However it is essential that a green gap is retained so that the individual identity of settlements such as Pevensey and Westham are kept. EBC is concerned about SD6 'Urban Extension land east and south east of Stone Cross, where the growth area extends south of the railway line. EBC believes it would not be appropriate to extend south of the railway line.

AUDIT TRAIL

B. Is there a clear audit trail showing how and why the preferred strategy was arrived at?

N/ A

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLICATIONS

C. Have the infrastructure implications of the strategy clearly been identified and supported by the evidence base? Is it clear who is going to deliver the required infrastructure and by when?

The importance of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan has not been underestimated. Failure to provide sufficient delivery of infrastructure to support housing and employment development has the potential to cause serious problems both within Wealden and in other neighbouring authorities such as Eastbourne. This issue is particularly acute where serious infrastructure deficiencies have already been identified and where a large number of new homes and employment sites have been proposed. The communities in Polegate, Willingdon and Stone Cross rely heavily upon Eastbourne for a large number of services yet continue to require local facilities to continue to ensure their role as a service centre.

Eastbourne and Wealden are working with closely with the other authorities in the County to ensure that the growth is delivered in an effective way that does not have a detrimental impact on existing residents and businesses and helps support the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods. Across the County the Infrastructure Plans have now been redrafted to consistently identify the 'critical', 'important' and 'desirable' services and facilities required to facilitate the planned growth. Work has also begun in earnest to draw together the

'gaps' and test the level of viable contributions that can be realistically funded from new developments. Wealden and Eastbourne will be developing complimentary charging schedules to apply the new Community Infrastructure Levy at the earliest opportunity.

Related to this, it will be critical that the proposed developments in the Polegate, Willingdon and Stone Cross Area Strategy provide additional Sewage Treatment facilities. Whilst there is 'headroom' in Eastbourne STW for Eastbourne's additional housing growth, new Treatment Works will be required at Hailsham to accommodate growth in the South Wealden Housing Market area.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

D. Has the impact of the strategy on the strategic road network been adequately assessed and is there a reasonable prospect that the transport infrastructure required is deliverable?

Eastbourne and Wealden worked jointly on the preparation of a thorough and comprehensive Strategic Transport Assessment for Eastbourne and South Wealden (SWETS) completed and signed off in November 2010. Background Papers BP 1 and BP11: provide further clarification on the type of infrastructure required.

EBC supports the inclusion of an additional policy in the Core Strategy relating to sustainable travel specifically the inclusion of a new railway station at Stone Cross.

E. Is the strategy sufficiently flexible to respond to an unexpected change in circumstances?

N / A

F. Is SD4 justified and deliverable?

N / A

G. Is SD5 justified and deliverable?

N / A

H. Is SD6 justified and deliverable?

N/ A

I. Is SD7 justified and deliverable?

N/ A

J. Is there appropriate justification for the phasing of housing at SD4 from 2019?

N/ A

OMISSION SITES

K. Have reasonable alternatives to SD4 SD5 SD6 and SD7 been considered – omission sites?

See above. A reduced figure at SD6 Land to the East and South of Stone Cross to take account of retaining the gap south of the railway line, could be achieved through a review of the Brownfield opportunities in the market towns and rural settlements.