

COMMITTEE: PLANNING

DATE: 20 May 2010

SUBJECT: Town Centre Area Action Plan – Issues and Options Consultation Report

REPORT OF: Senior Head of Development and Environment

Ward(s): Devonshire, Meads & Upperton

Purpose: To seek Members' views on the report before being considered by Cabinet on 26 May 2010.

Contact: Jefferson Collard, Senior Head of Development & Environment, 1 Grove Road, Eastbourne
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Recommendation: Members are asked for their views on the attached report which will be reported to Cabinet at their meeting on 26 May 2010.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This is a covering report to introduce the Cabinet report attached. The Cabinet report is self explanatory and includes a discussion under the usual implication headings so will not be repeated here.
- 1.2 The Cabinet report recommends that consultation is carried out on the Issues and Options Document in Appendix 1. Planning Committee Members are asked to consider the attached report and any comments will be considered and reported orally to Cabinet when they meet on 26 May.

Jefferson Collard
Senior Head of Development and Environment

Background Papers:

The Background Papers used in compiling this report were:

Cabinet Report dated 26 May 2010 and attached

<u>COMMITTEE</u>	CABINET
DATE	26 May 2010
SUBJECT	Eastbourne Town Centre – Area Action Plan – Issues and Options Consultation
REPORT OF	Senior Head of Development & Environment

Ward(s)	Devonshire, Meads & Upperton
Purpose	For Cabinet to agree public consultation on the issues and potential options for the regeneration of the town centre.
Contact	Jefferson Collard, Senior Head of Development & Environment, 1 Grove Road, Eastbourne Tel no: (01323) 415240 E-mail: jeff.collard@eastbourne.gov.uk
Recommendations	That Cabinet approve the Eastbourne Town Centre Area Action Plan – Issues and Options Report for community consultation during June and September 2010.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Members will recall that at their meeting on 10 November 2008 Cabinet endorsed the preparation of an Area Action Plan to guide the regeneration of the Town Centre. Area Action Plans (AAPs) are prepared under the Local Development Framework (LDF) and are Development Plan Documents (DPDs). This means that their production needs to follow a strict procedure and require government approval before the Council can adopt them as policy.
- 1.2 Part of that procedure is community consultation on the issues and potential options to resolve those issues. This stage of the process is often referred to as a 'Regulation 25 consultation' reflecting the government's procedures. This report is seeking approval of the Issues and Options consultation document (see Appendix 1).
- 1.3 The Council is being advised on the regeneration of the town centre by consultants, David Lock Associates, and they are being guided by the cross-council LDF Steering Group. It has been funded using Housing & Planning Delivery Grant.

2.0 Background to the Issues and Options Document

- 2.1 The last document prepared for the town centre was a planning brief (Eastbourne Town Centre Regeneration). That work attracted significant interest for a major regeneration project to deliver a

retail led, mixed use development in a specific location around the railway station. That interest remains and while the economy improves the Borough Council has embarked on a new Area Action Plan that covers a much wider area than the original Planning Brief to provide even greater regeneration opportunities. The new area extends from the seafront to Upperton Road/The Avenue and from Devonshire Park to Bourne Street. This new plan will also cover a longer time period providing planning guidance up until 2026.

- 2.2 At this stage in the process the purpose of the document is not to show all the answers on how to regenerate the town centre. It is a document that invites comment on whether the Council has identified all the main issues and if there are any other potential solutions the community would like us to explore.
- 2.3 To reach this stage the current document has not been produced in a vacuum, key stakeholders have been invited to discuss the issues and potential options to resolve those issues. Those discussions have informed the current document. Therefore the Issues and Options Report starts to show the direction of travel but is still open to ideas the community might want the Council to consider.
- 2.4 One other important part of producing the final document is to assess its performance against economic, environmental and social sustainability. At this stage in the process a scoping report on the sustainability assessment has been produced, which will also form part of the consultation process and on which we will invite comment.

3.0 The Issues and Options Document

3.1 The document is being prepared against a background where:-

- The town's natural catchment area is expanding with significant housing growth, and Eastbourne needs to positively plan to be ready to take advantage of that nearby growth;
- The structure of the town centre has been maturing with different use types naturally gravitating to certain areas and this could be more easily understood by the community and visitors including knowing when the 'town centre area' is being entered;
- The town has a significant secondary retail offer but it is spread over a wide area so fragments and dissipates its potential when it could play a much bigger part in the economy of the town;
- The main town centre retail area has a predominance of shops, as it should do, but this is not balanced with enough other uses that would help to create night time vitality for a range of age groups, which in turn would increase its use and make it more attractive to the community;
- Bus penetration into the core of the town centre is highly beneficial in terms of accessibility, but the dominance of buses

in part of the primary town centre area currently has a negative impact on enjoyment of the environment. A balance needs to be found that retains patronage of sustainable travel while improving the environment for the pedestrians.

- The town centre has a significant number of heritage buildings that play an important part in the area's distinctiveness and these should be woven into any development solutions.
- The Council wants to see Eastbourne continue to make progress in lowering its carbon footprint and the town centre must play its part to meet that goal.

3.2 The consultation document (see Appendix 1) looks at potential policy directions and options to resolve the identified issues. It divides these into 8 main themes.

3.3 **Vision** – it is important to be clear what we want the town centre to look like in 2026 – the timeframe for the document. It is also important that the community want the same vision for their town centre.

3.4 Structure and identity – **the document identifies 7 distinct character areas or districts within the town centre boundary. It also proposes expansion areas of the town centre boundary to take in key gateway sites at the Wish Tower and the Post Office site in Upperton Road.**

3.5 Supporting a viable mix of uses – **ensuring the uses in the town centre meet the demand and the supporting infrastructure is in place. The document specifically identifies:-**

- **4 immediate potential areas for development:-**
 - **Western extension to the Arndale Centre close to the railway station;**
 - Network Rail car park area;
 - Post office site area in Upperton Road;
 - Area adjoining Marks and Spencer.
- 2 areas of transition which are changing in their character:-
 - Seaside Road;
 - Mark Lane/Station Street;
- 1 area of potential change that is not currently under threat but may need considering in the period up to 2026:-
 - The Tennis Centre in Devonshire Park

3.6 **Under this theme the document also considers:-**

- **how the primary and secondary retail areas can be reinforced to be more economically viable;**
- **how the amount of housing can be increased successfully in what is the most sustainable location in Eastbourne. This includes asking the community their views about the height of buildings in the town centre.**

3.7 Public realm – **considers a set of principles to guide the improvement to public spaces so that the experience for the pedestrian is improved. It also asks the community where the Council should prioritise its public realm work.**

- 3.8 Access and connectivity – **this area of the document looks at the options for the buses that are currently using part of Terminus Road as an 'interchange'. It also seeks to encourage debate on the role and location of the ring road; how it should be altered to the benefit of pedestrians and if there is support for considering making it a two way route.**
- 3.9 Tourism, leisure and the arts – **looks at how to better integrate Devonshire Park into the town centre and in particular build on opportunities with the new Towner. Also covers aspects to strengthen the evening economy and broaden the appeal of the town centre and how the interface of different activities can be properly managed.**
- 3.10 Design quality – **confirms the retention of the historic fabric; suggests urban design policy and principles for new buildings and looks to achieve best practice in sustainability principles.**
- 3.11 Delivery – **it is critical that the document is based on practical ideas that can be realistically delivered. This section offers a range of potential mechanisms to assist delivery of the final plan.**
- 3.12 **It should be understood that the document has to fulfil the legal obligation of the planning legislation, which is quite prescriptive but at the same time reach a wide range of different audiences. The Council will therefore also be preparing a summary that will be more accessible to the general community. (see Appendix 2).**

4.0 Consultation

- 4.1 **The current document has already been the subject of significant discussion with a range of key people to get to this stage. It has involved the following:-**
- Face to face interviews with a range of key stakeholders involved in the town centre. This has mainly been key land owners, organisations and bodies associated with the town centre;
 - Review of the evidence provided by a number of specialist consultants;
 - Regular meetings with the Steering Group;
 - Stakeholder event.
- 4.2 **The Council has adopted a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which sets out how the Council will engage with the community when formally consulting on planning documents. The SCI will therefore form the basis of the consultation techniques to be employed on this consultation. However in light of the significant importance of the regeneration of the town centre to the whole town, the consultation will exceed the requirements of the SCI. The consultation will also last for 12 weeks in line with the Compact Agreement.**
- 4.3 **Appendix 3 lays out the detailed consultation programme but in**

summary the following is proposed:-

- Door drop summary leaflet to all people within the Town Centre AAP boundary;
- Letter and summary leaflet – to all consultees and key stakeholders on the LDF mailing list;
- Letter and summary leaflet – to members of the public/organisations that have previously made representation and/or have attended other consultation events;
- Dedicated page on Council website – to include key information on the consultation, details of exhibitions and staffing times and ability to submit comments online;
- External media – press releases, advertisements and public notice in local newspapers, television and radio. Articles in local youth magazine 'East' and a poster to be displayed on buses;
- Permanent exhibition – in the Central Library;
- Roving exhibition – in various locations in the town centre and across the Borough;
- Displays in libraries across the town – with summary leaflets and comment slips available;
- Meetings, presentations and public surgeries – to be arranged with local organisations, schools and hard to reach groups

4.4 Internally the document has been guided by the cross party Local Development Steering Group. The document will also be taken to the Planning Committee on 20 May and a verbal update on their comments will be given at the meeting.

5.0 Next Steps

5.1 As mentioned, the process of putting in place formal planning policy is highly prescriptive and it is necessary to follow the process carefully to avoid the document being found 'unsound' by the government and failing to be approved. Therefore the next steps may seem quite tortuous and lengthy but they are necessary. They are in accordance with the Local Development Scheme agreed with the Portfolio Holder and currently awaiting approval by the government office. Nevertheless officers will continue to encourage proposals to come forward that are aligned to the principles and priorities already in place in the approved Sustainable Community Strategy and Council's Corporate Plan.

5.2 The consultation is programmed to run from 14 June to 6 September. Following the completion of the consultation, officers will analyse the results and then work on the final document taking into account the communities responses. There is a prescribed procedure to follow with the final document and a timetable has been laid out in Appendix 3. In summary the document goes through a further consultation process, a public examination overseen by a government Inspector and they will prepare a final binding report allowing the Borough Council to adopt as formal policy. The adoption of the document is likely to

be in September 2012.

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 At the meeting of Cabinet on 22 October 2008, Members agreed to assign funds from the government's Housing & Planning Delivery Grant award to progress LDF documents. That finance was ring fenced for this work and there is no other impact on the Council's budget.

7.0 Human Resource Implications

- 7.1 The work of the town centre has involved cross-council working, led by a small project team of key officers guided by a cross party Steering Committee. This has worked very effectively and will continue. The proposed consultation work has been programmed into the policy team workload and with help from others in the Department can be met within existing resources.

8.0 Other Implications

- 8.1 There are no adverse implications on the community safety, youth, anti poverty or human rights as a direct result of this report. In fact the outcome is designed to have a positive impact on all these aspects. With regard to the environmental implications, these will be fully considered as part of the sustainability assessment on the final document.

9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 This report is the culmination of much work to put the regeneration of the town centre back on track with a new policy direction. This is the first stage of the formal public consultation on the issues and potential solutions to those issues and is a required part of the legislative process.
- 8.2 Cabinet are requested to approve the Issues and Option Report as contained in Appendix 1 for consultation which is proposed to be carried out using a range of consultation techniques that will exceed the minimum requirements of the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement policy.

Background Papers:

- Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 November 2008
- Issues and Options Report prepared by David Lock Associates (April 2010)

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

1. Eastbourne Town Centre Area Action Plan – Issues and Options Report
2. Area Action Plan – Summary Leaflet
3. Future Timetable to Adoption of the Area Action Plan

Appendix 1 - Copy of Full Issues and Options Report.

Note : the Appendix is a separate document due to its size.

Appendix 2 - Area Action Plan – Summary Leaflet

Please note - this text will be presented in a glossy, illustrated fold-out leaflet with key diagrams and photographs.

Eastbourne Town Centre Area Action Plan

Introducing the Area Action Plan

Eastbourne Borough Council is preparing an Area Action Plan (the Plan) for Eastbourne Town Centre. The Plan is an important planning policy document that will set out a strategy and proposals for the town centre up until 2026.

The Council is at an early stage in the process of preparing the Plan and is currently considering the issues and options that will shape the final document. An Issues and Options Report has been prepared and the Council is now seeking feedback, suggestions and comments from anyone who visits, lives or works in the town, before moving on to draft the Plan.

This leaflet provides a brief summary of the Issues and Options Report and provides guidance on where you can view the full document, find out more information and make your views known.

A Vision for the town centre

An important part of the Plan will be to set out a clear Vision for Eastbourne town centre. The proposed vision summarises the sort of place Eastbourne town centre will be:

VISION

By 2026, Eastbourne Town Centre will be a place that attracts more shoppers, workers, residents and visitors to spend more time enjoying a vibrant and varied offer and mix of uses in a well connected series of attractive streets and public spaces. Increasing investment in the town will bring wide ranging benefits and will allow Eastbourne to respond positively to climate change.

What are the Main Issues?

In order to inform the Plan a range of issues have been identified. In understanding the issues it is easy to overlook the qualities of the town centre and focus on the problems. Although there is considerable scope for improvement, Eastbourne town centre is strong, vibrant and attractive with lots of assets to exploit.

Improve the experience of arriving in Eastbourne town centre. As first impressions greatly inform a person's view of the town, it will be important to enhance this experience when arriving in the town centre.

A stronger, cohesive town centre structure is required. Although the town centre has a number of key attractions it can be difficult for visitors and users to find their way around. A clearer structure should therefore be promoted looking at important locations and the connections between them.

The ring road and the bus interchange need examining to ensure they are right for the town. The ring road currently separates the railway station from the main shopping street, which is further divided by the 10 bus stops in Terminus Road.

Ensure a wide mix of uses in the town centre. The town centre must continue to support a broad mix of uses including shops, homes, employment opportunities, education and leisure.

Make sure there is a balance between chain store retailers and independent shops. There is a good range of major high street and independent retailers present within the town centre. It will be important to maintain and increase the quality and range of shopping.

Support tourism as a strong economic driver. The role of tourism will continue to play a key part in the overall economic success and identity of Eastbourne, including the town centre.

Identify and explore selective development opportunities. In order to improve the overall mix of uses within the town centre opportunities for new development must be identified and promoted.

Enhance the quality of the town centre's streets and spaces. Make sure the streets and spaces within the town centre are attractive, safe to use and well maintained.

Respect townscape and heritage. Eastbourne's historic environment is an important part of the overall character of the town centre. Protecting the best of the historic environment is therefore important.

Themes for the Area Action Plan

On the basis of the issues, seven key themes have been identified:

- **Town Centre structure and identity.** Defining the extent of the town centre area and identifying character areas and a structure of key approaches, gateways, streets and spaces.
- **Public Realm.** Improving the quality of Eastbourne's public spaces.
- **Supporting a good mix of uses.** Making sure that opportunities for new uses are identified within the town centre including appropriate development sites.

- **Access and connectivity.** Improving the ways people get to and move around the town centre.
- **Tourism, leisure and the arts.** Supporting a range of opportunities to strengthen the local economy.
- **Design quality.** Raising design standards and the environmental performance of new development.
- **Delivery.** Bringing forward beneficial change within the town centre.

What are the Choices and Options?

Within each theme there are a number of ideas, outlined below, that will form the basis of the Plan. There are also choices and options about the different ways in which key issues should be addressed. Your views will help set the priorities included in the Plan.

Town Centre structure and identity.

- Enlarging the size of the town centre to include some additional areas.
- Defining character areas to help make different parts of the town centre more distinctive.
- Identifying the key approaches into the town centre, gateways, streets and spaces.

Public Realm.

- Setting out design principles for new development and improvements to existing streets and spaces.
- Determining priorities for improvements in the streets and spaces.
- Giving priority to the experience of cyclists and pedestrians in the town centre by, for example, improving crossings.

Supporting a mix of uses.

- Clearly defining the main shopping areas.
- Providing new homes and the community uses, such as schools and health facilities, that will meet the needs of a growing town centre population.
- Identifying potential development sites that can accommodate new uses including shopping, employment and housing: at Upperton Road/Post Office; on land next to the railway station; by extending the Arndale Centre at Ashford Road and Langney Road.
- Enhancing the future role and function of Seaside Road and the Station Street/Mark Lane area.

Access and connectivity.

- Maintaining the role of the ring road and considering options for new and improved pedestrian crossings; potential rerouting away from Ashford Road to facilitate development; narrowing the carriageway in Terminus Road; and two way operation to enhance access into the town centre.
- Improving public transport interchange between buses and the railway station, including environmental improvements to Terminus Road and possible relocation of bus stops.

- Ensuring that taxi rank provision is adequate and in the best locations to serve customers and minimise the potential for noise and disturbance.

Tourism, leisure and the arts.

- Maintaining and supporting the range and quality of tourist accommodation and facilities.
- Identifying ways in which the evening and night time economy can be strengthened, broadening its appeal and managing key locations to minimise disturbance and keep the town centre safe.
- Introduce an Arts Trail and examine ways in which artists can become involved in major projects coming forward in the town centre.

Design quality.

- Ensuring high quality architectural and urban design standards.
- Increasing energy and resource efficiency.
- Considering how new housing development can be accommodated including the potential for taller buildings.

Delivery.

- Support a range of delivery mechanisms to make sure that development is viable and comes forward in a timely way.

Getting involved

The Issues and Options Report is published for a twelve week consultation period. The period for making comments commences on **14 June** and will close on **6 September**.

Visit the exhibition at XXXXXXXX on X date.

View the exhibition and download the Issues and Options Report on-line at www.eastbourne.gov.uk

Complete the on-line questionnaire. Representations can be made electronically at www.eastbourne.gov.uk

Comments (positive or negative) can be made on any aspect of the emerging Plan. There are specific questions asked in the Issues and Options Report, responses to which would be particularly helpful. All comments received will be posted on the Council website.

Next steps

The responses received during the consultation period will be an important source of information which will be used to formulate the Plan during 2010. A completed draft of the Plan is expected to be completed by the end of 2011. The final draft will be published for further consultation.

Appendix 3 – Proposed Future Timetable to Adoption of the Area Action Plan

Sept 2010	Consultation closes
Nov 2010	Analysis of representations completed
Nov 2010	Consultation results report to the LDF Steering Group
Nov 2010	Build in representations in the preparation of the Area Action Plan (AAP)
Dec 2010	Complete internal consultation on the draft AAP including seeking the views of the LDF Steering Group
Dec 2010	Member briefing session on the draft AAP
Dec 2010	Cabinet approve the Submission Version of the AAP for public consultation (Regulation 27)
April 2011	Consultation closes
May 2011	Summary of representations completed
June 2011	Consultation results report to the LDF Steering Group with consideration of any 'minor' adjustments
July 2011	Amend the Area Action Plan (AAP) as necessary taking into account the representations
Sept 2011	Cabinet approve the final Submission Version of the AAP to the government
Oct 2011	Submission of AAP to government
Feb 2012	Start of examination into the AAP by government inspector
June 2012	Inspectors Report on the AAP
Sept 2012	Council adopts AAP as policy