

Waterlines

The newsletter of the
Sovereign Harbour Residents Association



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Eastbourne Plan Special

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Don't let them stitch us up again!

Eastbourne Borough Council Local Development Framework Core Spatial Strategy until 2027

Public Consultation

**Haven School, Atlantic Drive
Saturday 22nd January 2011**

Drop-in any time from 10:00am to 2:00pm

Do you agree that Sovereign Harbour has already shouldered much more than its fair share of the burden of the Borough's housing requirements, and that any further residential development at Sovereign Harbour would be totally unsustainable?

If the proposed development strategy is accepted, the opportunity to create a sustainable community at Sovereign Harbour will be lost forever, and the future will be very bleak.

Unless we go to this event in large numbers and voice our serious concerns, the Borough Council will continue, to sacrifice Sovereign Harbour to further its own political agenda.

Surely, the future of our community is worth an hour of your time.

Following the refusal of the recent applications for the remaining five development sites in Sovereign Harbour, this council recognises that the Humberts report has now been superseded. The Council therefore requests a high level meeting with the landowner, council members, planning officers, and representatives of local residents, to develop a strategy for the remaining development sites.

Such a strategy should acknowledge Sovereign Harbour Ltd's commercial demands, but shouldn't include further residential development. The strategy should address much needed community facilities, such as open space, play areas, a community centre, a medical centre, schools, facilities for the boating community and potential business opportunities, in keeping with the area, including a quality hotel.

The council recognises that the available land for development is limited and should be considered as a whole to effectively provide for a sustainable community.

The motion above was unanimously accepted by the members of Eastbourne Borough Council at their meeting on 20th September 2006.

At a public meeting at the Winter Gardens in the run-up to the 2007 Borough Council elections, Council Opposition Leader, Cllr. David Tutt, in response to a question from the floor, confirmed his support for this policy which, he said, would be adopted by an incoming administration led by him.

Back then, Cllr. Tutt said: *"I am delighted that the September meeting of the Borough Council unanimously approved a motion submitted jointly by Cllr Lucas and myself seeking to support the wishes of the residents of Sovereign Harbour and calling for a high level meeting of all interested parties to develop a fresh strategy for the remaining sites.*

I believe that this strategy must include vitally needed local amenities such as: open space, play areas, community and medical facilities, a school and improved facilities for

the boating community. I am also firmly of the view that any further commercial facilities must be in keeping with the area.

In moving this agenda forward the SHRA will have the support of both political parties on the Council in seeking improvements for the Harbour community."

How times change. Now in control, Cllr Tutt's administration no longer supports this policy. The draft Local Development Framework, (also called 'the Eastbourne Plan') which is the blueprint for the development of the Borough until 2027, now proposes that a further 150 homes should be built at Sovereign Harbour.

Why? Because the council through incompetence, has squandered our hard earned Council Tax payments. With no resources, it has absolutely no idea how to solve the problems caused by its abject failure to exercise any control of the harbour development.

It is also just not credible that consent for the suggested 150 homes, would not be used as a

precedent for change of land use that would open the floodgates to even more, unsustainable, residential development.

The council hopes that by caving in to the developers' demands, they will be persuaded to provide the social infrastructure that they should already have given, but which the council allowed them to wriggle out of providing.

Given that a third of any homes built must now be 'affordable units' there is very little scope for planning gain on the scale that is necessary. This makes it a very risky strategy. There is absolutely no guarantee that any facilities would ever be provided.

Unfortunately, the developers have clearly demonstrated how easily they are able to manipulate the planning process, and the planning officers have demonstrated how little resistance they are prepared to mount.

It is significant that the appeal against the refusal of consent for housing development on the site at Kings Drive failed because the council had previously designated the site for residential development. By refusing consent, the Planning Committee had actively opposed the council's own housing policy, leaving the Inspector no option but to allow the appeal.

Concerted action by residents has in the past led to successful campaigns against residential development. Acceptance of this policy will mean that further housing development at Sovereign Harbour will become council policy, giving the developers a cast iron case for appeal against any future refusal of planning consent.

The Local Development Framework: Core Spatial Development Strategy' report, was produced from data collected from the series of public consultation events that were held across the town.

It was very obvious throughout the process that visitors to the local events were being pushed towards 'Option Two' (which recommended further housing at Sovereign Harbour) as the preferred option. It was also very obvious that the authors had started with the conclusions, and then tried, unsuccessfully, to write a report to substantiate them.

It was no surprise, therefore, that the report concluded that 'Option Two' was the preferred option.

Apart from our very serious concerns about the way the earlier consultation events were organised, we are also very concerned about the validity of the evidence used to support the report's recommendations. Planning Policy PPS12, which is quoted frequently in support of the report's recommendation states: "*Spatial planning underpins the wider corporate strategy of the council and LSP in that it ensures that strategies can be based on the community's views and obtain community buy-in*". But then the report totally ignores the views expressed by Sovereign Harbour residents.

As an example, it contains the outrageous statement: "*Discounting the responses received at the 'Neighbourhood 14 - Sovereign' consultation event significantly reduces the level of opposition to Option 2, making it the most supported and least opposed option by the rest of the Borough*", which makes a nonsense of PPS12.

That's about the same as saying,

Houses built in Eastbourne 2002/2009

Year	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	Total
Devonshire	23	105	45	108	96	81	182	640
Hampden Park	0	3	2	23	12	3	1	44
Langney	7	14	4	2	0	4	0	31
Meads	50	39	72	91	29	75	138	494
Old Town	0	3	2	3	18	4	5	35
Ratton	0	1	5	21	9	12	6	54
St Anthony's	2	41	12	35	7	21	10	128
Sovereign	538	381	572	239	181	27	0	1938
Upperton	116	39	42	23	37	53	45	355
Total	736	626	756	545	389	280	387	3719

"If you ignore the votes cast for the Liberal Democrats, the Conservatives were the most supported party in the 2007 Borough Council elections", and just as crass; so much for democracy!

However the evidence is manipulated the report acknowledges that the Sovereign Harbour community is unsustainable, and then goes on to recommend 'housing led development' as the solution.

An audit of all the social infrastructure available in each area was used to create a 'sustainability index'. Shamefully, for such a modern development, Sovereign Harbour was second to bottom of the list. However, examination of the data showed that the harbour boundary had been altered to include the Kingsmere Estate. This manipulation meant that including the community centre, playing fields and public open space in Kingsmere had actually prevented the harbour from being bottom of the list.

Sovereign Harbour has been used by the Borough Council to bear the burden of Central Government's housing requirements for far too long. The table above shows that over half (52%) of the new homes built in Eastbourne since 2002 have

been foisted on Sovereign Ward, an average of 277 per year. Compare that to the five or six per year in Hampden Park, Langney, Old Town and Ratton and the disparity becomes very obvious.

We are constantly accused of being NIMBYs for opposing further development, but examine the table and you will have little trouble discerning where the NIMBYs really live.

It isn't easy, but we urge you to please read the report that can be downloaded from the SHRA website www.shra.co.uk or the Borough Council website www.eastbourne.gov.uk We believe you will agree with us that the report is badly drafted and very seriously flawed.

We really hope that you will be able to make the time to attend the Haven School event but, even if you can't make it, you can still register your concerns online on the EBC website.

Above all, please don't rely on others to make the effort.

This strategy is a total sell-out and, if it is accepted, there is little future for Sovereign Harbour, or for Eastbourne in general.