

Eastbourne Local Plan (Draft)

2022-2042

Sovereign Harbour

Extracts (Unofficial)

SH Development Sites and Neighbourhood Policy

Must be read in conjunction with the whole draft plan

https://planningpolicyconsult.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/ELP_R18_2026

Regulation 18

Consultation February 2026

Land off Harbour Quay, Sovereign Harbour



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- 4.3.208. The land off Harbour Quay in Sovereign Harbour has an area of 7.2 hectares and occupies a prominent position being located alongside Pevensey Bay Road (A259) between the roundabout serving the Sovereign Harbour Retail Park and the Pacific Drive roundabout.
- 4.3.209. The site is bounded by Pevensey Bay Road to the north, residential properties to the south, the access to Sovereign Harbour Retail Park and the Waterfront Car Park to the west and Pacific Drive to the east. A supermarket and older persons housing are currently under construction on the opposite side of Pacific Drive. The area to the north of Pevensey Bay Road opposite the site contains the Langney Sewer which is a Local Wildlife Site. Along the Pevensey Bay Road frontage there is a dense belt of trees that is protected by a Tree Preservation Order.
- 4.3.210. The northern section of the site (known as 'Site 6') has a long-established allocation for employment development. Only part of the site has come forward for office



development. Pacific House, which was constructed in 2015 and provides approximately 3,000 sqm of serviced office space. In 2019, a new community centre was constructed in the south western corner of Site 6, which provides approximately 750 sqm of community use. Recent marketing of the site has demonstrated that there is little interest in the development of the site for employment use only.

- 4.3.211. Vehicular access into the site has been created via Pacific Drive as a left-in left-out arrangement. There is also pedestrian access to the Community Centre via the Waterfront car park in the south western corner.
- 4.3.212. The southern section of the site (known as the Shingle Bank) is a former landfill site that has been capped and covered with shingle, with part of the site being scrub. The landfill site is considered to be inert and is no longer regulated. Part of the site is used informally as open space for activities such as dog walking, although there are no formal access points or footpaths across the area.
- 4.3.213. As the Shingle Bank is no longer a regulated site, there is the potential to remove this landfill, which is likely to predominantly be builders waste from the original development of Sovereign Harbour, to create a developable site.
- 4.3.214. In addition, the update to the Economy and Employment Study suggests that the need for office floorspace has reduced, and therefore the former allocation of Site 6 for 10,000 sqm of employment space is no longer needed. This presents an opportunity to consider 'Site 6' and the 'Shingle Bank' as a single allocation to provide a comprehensive mixed-use development incorporating residential development and a new open space to enhance the amenity of the area. The site should still provide some office space provision of around 2,000 sqm to complement the existing office provision in Pacific House. Considering the use of part of the site for employment use and open space, the capacity of the site for residential use is 231 homes.
- 4.3.215. The site forms the northern edge of Sovereign Harbour adjacent to the A259 Pevensey Bay Road and is a significant part of an important public frontage and entrance to the Harbour. It is also identified as an area that may be suitable for taller buildings. As such it provides an opportunity to improve the presence and access to the Harbour, and has a role to play in creating a gateway to Eastbourne. It is expected that the residential use would be most appropriate in the form of flats, providing a mixture of 1-bed, 2-bed and 3-bed apartments.



- 4.3.216. Landscaping should form an integrated part of any design proposals to create a setting along the Pevensey Bay Road as part of the Harbour character and gateway to Eastbourne. The existing tree belt, which is protected by a Tree Preservation Order, should be retained.
- 4.3.217. The Biodiversity Study identifies that the site contains a mosaic of shingle and scrub habitats, including NERC S41 habitat: Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land, and the presence of protected and notable species. It is not anticipated that the presence of any of these species would pose deliverability issues with regard to the site, however, their presence will require significant consideration in the masterplanning and ecological avoidance and mitigation strategy.
- 4.3.218. The site is located adjacent to a part of the A259 where there could be capacity issues and transport modelling will inform where mitigation is likely to be required, and junctions would need to be reviewed in terms of design and upgraded if necessary. Contributions towards active travel and public transport improvements would be sought, particularly as the site is located on a key bus route.
- 4.3.219. Due to the close proximity of the site to the Sovereign Harbour retail park and The Waterfront, there is a need to provide pedestrian and cycle routes to link The Waterfront and the retail park to other areas of Sovereign Harbour. Adequate car and secure cycle parking to serve the development should also be provided on site.
- 4.3.220. Parts of the site are identified as being within Flood Zone 3a, particularly to the north, although the southern part of the site is in Flood Zone 1. The flood risk is predominantly associated with tidal flood risk; however, this would be mitigated through upgrades to the coastal flood defences. The site is not shown to be at risk of fluvial flooding, although there are some isolated areas with some surface water flood risk. A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required, including a drainage strategy that should help inform site layout and design to ensure runoff rates do not exceed greenfield rates.
- 4.3.221. The site has been the subject of historic mineral extraction and landfilling activities, and it is possible that contamination may still be present either as impacted soils and groundwater or unidentified landfilling. Contamination and remediation measures would need to be investigated prior to development. In addition, the former uses of the site and the underlying geology may mean that infiltration SuDS may not be appropriate in this location. There is also a high-pressure gas main running along Pevensey Bay Road to the north of the site, appropriate buffers to this will be required.





Policy SA24: Land at Harbour Quay

Land at Harbour Quay in Sovereign Harbour (as identified on the Policies Map) is allocated for a mixed-use development incorporating residential and commercial uses.

The development mix should be based on the following uses and broad quantum of development:

- A minimum of 231 residential units
- 2,000 sqm of Class E(g) (office) floorspace, subject to market needs and general viability
- 1 hectare of public open space
- Other uses that could be considered acceptable would include class E, class F1 and class F2 uses (in addition to the delivery of the residential and employment uses identified above).

The development of the site for the uses outlined above will be permitted subject to compliance with other policies in the plan and the following criteria:

- Appropriate mix of 1-bed, 2-bed and 3-bed flats and houses to meet need identified in Local Housing Needs Assessment.
- Provision of affordable housing in accordance with Policy HO1, and self-build and custom-build housing in accordance with Policy HO4.
- Proposals must reflect the site's gateway location and prominent frontage along Pevensey Bay Road.
- Taller buildings may be appropriate, subject to design quality and visual impact assessments.
- Landscaping must be integral to the design, incorporating and retaining the existing tree belt protected by a Tree Preservation Order.
- Provision of safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes through the site, linking to surrounding areas and measures to promote sustainable travel.
- Contributions will be required towards public transport improvements and active travel infrastructure, including enhanced pedestrian and cycle links to



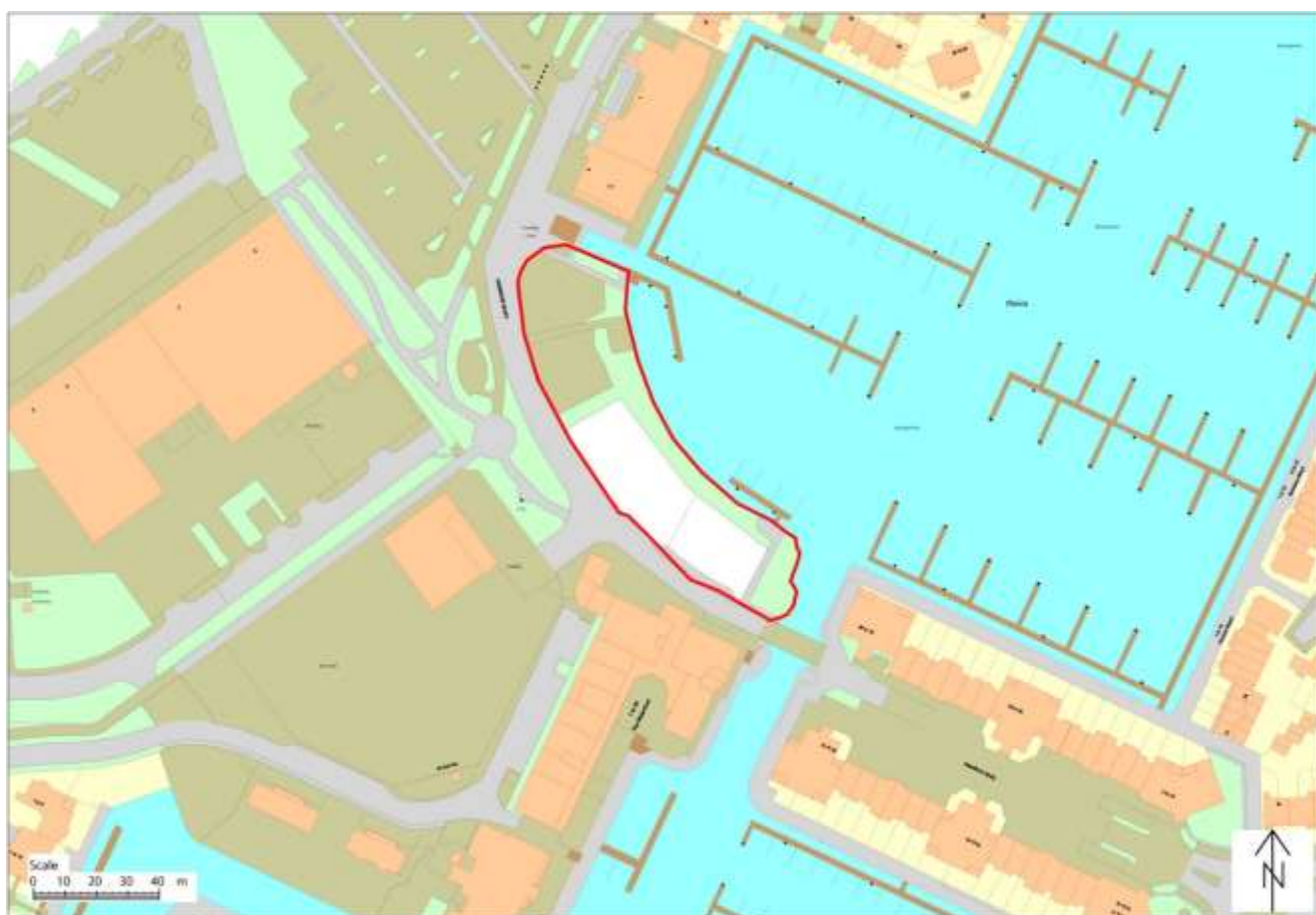
connect the site with Sovereign Harbour Retail Park, The Waterfront, and surrounding areas.

- Adequate car parking and secure cycle storage must be provided on site.
- Development makes contributions towards off-site infrastructure improvements arising from, and related to, the development.
- Proposals must demonstrate that there is adequate capacity in local utilities and infrastructure to support the development, or that necessary upgrades will be delivered.
- Development is subject to an ecological impact assessment and appropriate measures are undertaken to avoid or minimise impacts on biodiversity before mitigation or compensation.
- A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment is undertaken to demonstrate safe access and egress during flood events and that the development will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and an appropriate surface water drainage strategy that ensures runoff rates do not exceed greenfield rates as advised by the appropriate body and implemented as agreed.
- A contamination assessment must be undertaken, including investigation of historic landfill and mineral extraction, and appropriate remediation measures must be implemented prior to development.
- Appropriate buffers to the adjacent high pressure gas main are retained.

Where a planning application is submitted that only relates to part of the site, it should be accompanied by evidence of a masterplanning approach that demonstrates that the development would not prejudice the delivery of the full requirements of the allocation.



Land adjacent to The Waterfront, Sovereign Harbour



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- 4.3.222. Land adjacent to The Waterfront at Sovereign Harbour (formerly known as Site 4) has an area of approximately 0.4 hectares and is located to the north of The Waterfront on Harbour Quay. The site occupies a prominent position and is centrally located within Sovereign Harbour. It is in close proximity to the existing Waterfront facilities and the public car park, and is located within the designated District Shopping Centre.
- 4.3.223. The site comprises a 'banana' shaped plot of land which is currently used as a temporary dry land boat storage facility and boat sales area. It is bounded by the Harbour to the east, providing views across the water, the boat hoist and Yacht Club to the north, and Harbour Quay to the south and west. The Yacht Club is three storeys in height, and the adjacent apartment block is a six-storey building with penthouse accommodation.



- 4.3.224. Vehicular access to the site is from the Harbour Quay service road, and the site is accessible on foot from Harbour Quay, Atlantic Drive, the Sovereign Harbour Retail Park, The Waterfront and Hamilton Quay via the North Harbour Bridge.
- 4.3.225. The site was subject to an outline planning permission in 2014 for commercial and employment uses, but this has not been implemented.
- 4.3.226. The site occupies an important part of the Harbour where a number of existing and proposed routes, activities and connections come together, and therefore represents a unique opportunity for mixed use development in a prominent, accessible and sustainable location within a designated town centre. There is an opportunity to provide a mixed-use development on the site incorporating bars, restaurants and retail units on the ground floor, with residential uses above. This will enhance the offer that already exists at The Waterfront for both residents and visitors and will maximise the opportunities associated with this centrally located, prime waterfront site. This site is also one of the few that could incorporate an area of public open space so that visitors and the community can enjoy space close to the water.
- 4.3.227. It is considered that the site should accommodate 1,300 sqm of retail, food & beverage and commercial leisure floorspace, and a minimum of 30 homes in the form of 1-bed, 2-bed and 3-bed flats.
- 4.3.228. This site is extremely accessible, being adjacent to The Waterfront car park. It is also well served by footpath and cycle path links and will be immediately adjacent to the proposed bus route that will link the North and South Harbour areas. Development on this site will also be expected to be integrated with the pedestrian link across Harbour Quay towards the Sovereign Harbour Retail Park in the area currently comprising paths and hard landscaping.
- 4.3.229. It is considered that development should be of a height that is appropriate in scale to surrounding buildings. In addition, the development should have regard to the curved shape of the site and reflect this element in the design.
- 4.3.230. There is a foul sewer and a pumped foul main under the site and associated 3-metre-wide easement strips (required for maintenance purposes) in the south eastern corner of the site within which no building can take place. The public open space provision should be located in this part of the site.
- 4.3.231. The site is identified as being within Flood Zone 3a. The flood risk is predominantly associated with tidal flood risk; however, this would be mitigated through upgrades to



the coastal flood defences. The site is not shown to be at risk of fluvial or surface water flooding.

- 4.3.232. Another important consideration relating to this site is the need to ensure that the operational requirements associated with running a Harbour, namely the boat hoist and access to the boatyard and boat storage area are not disrupted.



Policy SA25: Land adjacent to the Waterfront

Land adjacent to the Waterfront at Sovereign Harbour (as identified on the Policies Map) is allocated for a mixed-use development incorporating residential and commercial uses.

The development mix should be based on the following uses and broad quantum of development:

- **A minimum of 30 residential units;**
- **1,300 sqm of retail, food and beverage and commercial leisure uses; and**
- **Public open space.**

The development of the site for the uses outlined above will be permitted subject to compliance with other policies in the plan and the following criteria:

- **An appropriate mix of 1-bed, 2-bed and 3-bed flats to meet need identified in the Local Housing Needs Assessment.**
- **Provision of affordable housing in accordance with Policy HO1.**
- **Development does not compromise the operation requirements associated with running a harbour.**
- **The development incorporates noise mitigation measures to protect the residential amenity of future occupiers.**
- **Contributions will be required towards public transport improvements and active travel infrastructure, including enhanced pedestrian and cycle links to connect the site with Sovereign Harbour Retail Park, The Waterfront, and surrounding areas.**
- **Development makes contributions towards off-site infrastructure improvements arising from, and related to, the development.**



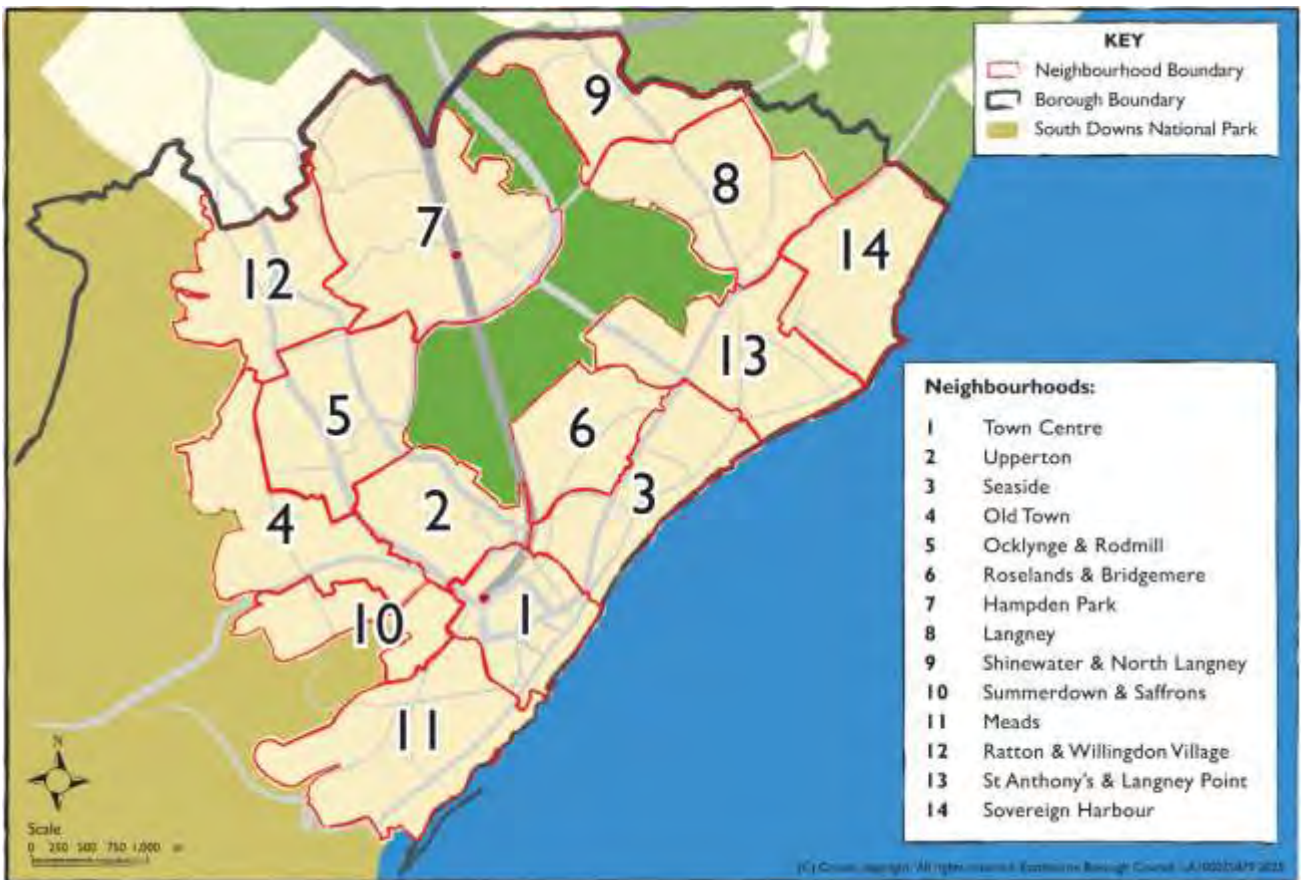
- **Proposals must demonstrate that there is adequate capacity in local utilities and infrastructure to support the development, or that necessary upgrades will be delivered.**
- **Layout ensures future access to the existing sewerage and water supply infrastructure for maintenance and upsizing purposes.**
- **A site-specific flood risk assessment is undertaken to demonstrate that the development will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and an appropriate surface water drainage strategy as advised by the appropriate body and implemented as agreed.**



5. Neighbourhoods

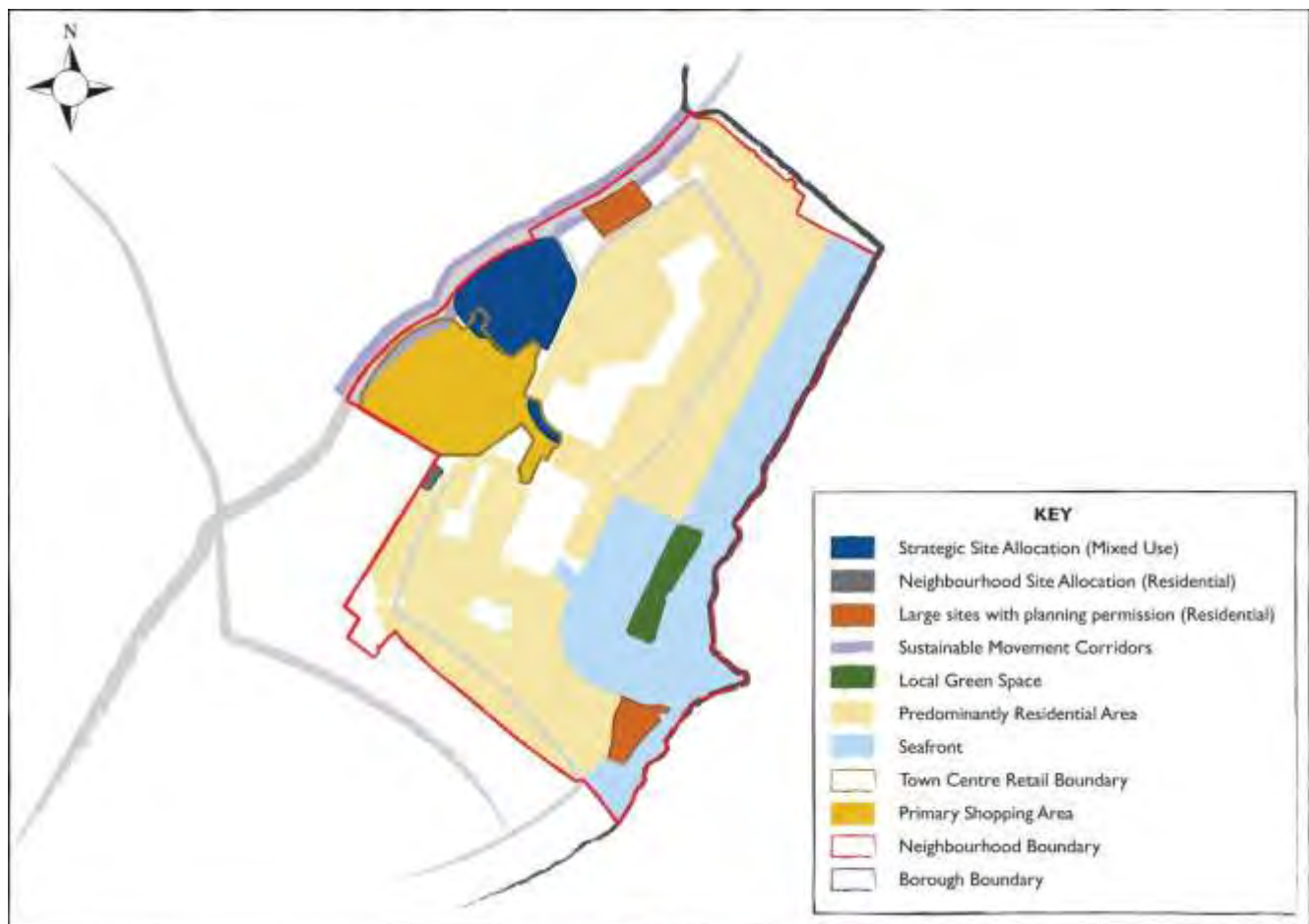
- 5.0.1. The evolution of Eastbourne over the last 200 years from small fishing hamlets to a town with a population of over 100,000 people has resulted in the diverse pattern of communities that exist today. Eastbourne's neighbourhoods have been defined on the basis of an analysis of built character and resident's perceptions about the community that they belong to, and as such, do not necessarily align with administrative boundaries.
- 5.0.2. Each neighbourhood has its individual strengths, opportunities and identities, but each also faces a variety of specific challenges. This section sets out planning policies tailored to the distinct characteristics, opportunities and challenges of each of Eastbourne's 14 neighbourhoods. While the strategic policies of the Local Plan apply across the whole town, certain issues within neighbourhoods require more detailed or bespoke approaches to ensure that development responds appropriately to neighbourhood-specific constraints and opportunities.

Figure 5 - Eastbourne's Neighbourhoods



5.14. Sovereign Harbour

- 5.14.1. Sovereign Harbour has experienced a high level of development over the last ten years. The neighbourhood has a population of approximately 6,400. Sovereign Harbour includes approximately 3,600 dwellings around a marina with berths for up to 1,300 vessels, and has a distinctive coastal character due to its strong link with the sea. It is the largest man-made marina in Europe and is an important tourist attraction.
- 5.14.2. Sovereign Harbour has experienced an overall decrease in population between 2011 and 2021. The neighbourhood has higher proportions of people aged between 50 and 75 compared to the rest of the town, with significant numbers of households made up of couples without children.



- 5.14.3. The housing in the neighbourhood is mainly in the form of flats with some detached and terraced housing. The residential areas have a contemporary appearance and sense of place. There is little by way of affordable housing, and a higher-than-



average proportion of private rented properties. Between 2006 and 2025, 302 new homes were delivered in the neighbourhood.

- 5.14.4. Sovereign Harbour benefits from a range of services and facilities including a large superstore, retail park, restaurants, bars, cafes and a yacht club. However, aside from retail, there are few other employment opportunities. Land on the north boundary of Sovereign Harbour has long been identified as a location for employment development. Whilst one office building has been developed, there has been little interest in developing stand-alone employment space and some of these sites have already been committed for other uses, including a supermarket and older persons housing. In response to community concerns, a Community Centre was delivered in 2019 via contributions from residential development that has been built over the last 10 years.

Sovereign Harbour Neighbourhood Policy

Sovereign Harbour Vision

Sovereign Harbour will further enhance the important role that it plays for the town's leisure and tourism offer, and accessibility through active travel and sustainable transport will be enhanced. It will make a contribution to delivering new homes for the town in a high-quality environment, whilst ensuring that the functioning of the marina is not compromised.



Policy N14-A: Sovereign Harbour Neighbourhood Policy

The vision for Sovereign Harbour neighbourhood will be promoted by:

- **Delivering a minimum of 466 new homes over the plan period.**
- **Increasing the provision of affordable housing.**
- **Increasing the importance of The Waterfront as a leisure and tourist destination.**
- **Enhancing the functioning of the Marina through appropriate measures including the provision of additional berths and associated boat storage facilities.**



- **Preventing the use of the marina for houseboats.**
- **Increasing the amount of appropriately landscaped, usable public open space.**
- **Encouraging active travel through the provision of infrastructure improvements to create safe walking and cycling routes.**
- **Enhancing the quality of public transport provision through infrastructure improvements including a bus gate that connects the North Harbour and the South Harbour.**
- **Restricting the use of residential properties as short-term holiday lets or second homes where possible.**
- **Encouraging the retrofit of SuDS to store surface water runoff.**

- 5.14.5. Sovereign Harbour plays a multi-faceted role in Eastbourne as a large marina for leisure boating, a major retail and dining destination, a residential area, and a local economic hub. Further development in the neighbourhood can enhance the role that this area plays for the town, but it is important that any development does not compromise the functioning of the marina. Opportunities for enhancing the function of the marina, including through additional berths and marine-related facilities will be supported. However, the use of the marina for house boats will be resisted due to the potential adverse impacts on the functioning of the marina and the residential amenity of people living adjacent to the marina.
- 5.14.6. The Waterfront is an important centre within the neighbourhood and there is an opportunity to enhance the leisure and tourism offer through refurbishment and development of new well-planned business and retail space.
- 5.14.7. Although Sovereign already has a good cycle network, there are opportunities to increase accessibility for cyclists and improve connections within the neighbourhood. Part of the national cycle network route 21 runs through the neighbourhood from the seafront via Atlantic Drive and Harbour Quay to the off-road path along the A259 towards Pevensey Bay. The residential roads around Sovereign Harbour are generally relatively quiet and appropriate for cycling, although additional infrastructure such as safe cycle crossing at key junctions may be appropriate.
- 5.14.8. The quality of public transport in Sovereign Harbour could be increased through the provision of improved bus routes connecting different parts of the neighbourhood. Funding from the Bus Service Improvement Plan has been used to enhance the bus services that links Sovereign Harbour with the Town Centre, and further



opportunities to provide additional infrastructure to support bus patronage in the neighbourhood will be supported. In particular, the introduction of a bus gate at Sovereign Harbour to enable buses to travel between the North Harbour (Pacific Drive) and South Harbour (Atlantic Drive) could double the frequency of services and would be strongly supported.

- 5.14.9. Although new open space has recently been delivered as part of a residential development, Sovereign Harbour is considered to be lacking in open spaces and children's play areas, so opportunities to increase provision will be encouraged.
- 5.14.10. Policy SS4 designates the Outer Harbour open space within the Sovereign Harbour neighbourhood as a Local Green Space for its value and significance to the local community. The site forms part of the harbour edge and the flood defences for Sovereign Harbour. The site is designated as a Local Wildlife Site for its nature value as a priority habitat, including vegetated shingle. The site also holds historical significance providing a setting to Martello Tower No.64 and is publicly accessible providing recreational value. The site is designated for its richness of wildlife, recreational value and beauty and is demonstrably special to the community.
- 5.14.11. Sovereign Harbour is dependent on the presence of flood defences to reduce flood risk. These are primarily the lock gates that are managed by Premier Marina, as well as the shingle beaches, the management of which is due to be taken over by the Environment Agency. There are areas of the neighbourhood with surface water flood risk, although they do not tend to cover significant areas.
- 5.14.12. There may be opportunities for flood attenuation under large surface areas such as the Sovereign Harbour Retail Park car park, which could be utilised as flood storage in the area. In addition, vegetated filter strips in areas of impermeable land, such as the Retail Park, could reduce the velocity and volume of surface water flow.
- 5.14.13. A significant number of properties in Sovereign Harbour are not primary residences and instead are used as short-term holiday accommodation or second homes, and this has grown significantly over the last ten years. Continued growth in this type of use could have adverse impacts on the local community through reducing the housing stock available and resulting in some homes being left empty for parts of the year, and increased amenity issues relating to short-term lets. The use of new homes for short-term holiday lets and second homes will be discouraged.



5.14.14. Approximately 6% of the homes in the neighbourhood are affordable homes, and new developments should be used to increase the provision of affordable housing in the neighbourhood to help develop mixed and balanced communities.

Neighbourhood Growth

5.14.15. Sovereign Harbour is expected to deliver a minimum of 466 new homes over the plan period between 2022 and 2042. 26 homes have already been completed within the plan period, and a further 163 homes are subject to extant planning permission.

5.14.16. There are two strategic site allocations at Land off Harbour Quay and Land adjacent to the Waterfront that would deliver 261 homes, and one additional site has been identified for a neighbourhood site allocation of 16 homes.

5.14.17. The prevailing urban characteristics, such as existing building heights and contemporary nature of the architecture present, mean that parts of the neighbourhood would be suitable for taller buildings. These should be located nearer to the Harbour and along the seafront.

Sovereign Harbour	Expected housing delivery 2022-2042
Completions	26
Commitments	163
Strategic allocations	261
Non-strategic allocations	16
Windfall	0
Total (2022-2042)	466



Policy N14-B: Sovereign Harbour Neighbourhood Site Allocations

The following site in the Sovereign Harbour neighbourhood (as identified on the Policies Map) is allocated for residential development:

- **Berth Holders Car Park, Atlantic Drive – 16 homes**

