

4. INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 This Chapter deals with issues which relate to the coast, in particular, coastal protection, sea defences, areas at risk from tidal flooding, the built environment along the coast, specific sites in need of environmental improvement or redevelopment and access to the coast.
- 4.2 One of the key objectives of the Plan is to encourage sustainable development. This Chapter specifically aims to protect, manage and improve the quality of natural and built environment on the coast. The Plan also aims to maintain and strengthen those factors which give Worthing its particular physical character. This Chapter tries to achieve that objective by encouraging the maintenance and improvement of the seafront, protecting and enhancing areas of townscape value, improving areas with a poor quality environment and promoting a high standard of design in all elements of development.
- 4.3 Worthing is located on the coast near the centre of a large bay between Selsey Bill to the west and Beachy Head to the east. The sea and foreshore are key elements in the historical development of Worthing. They are an essential part of the town's identity and are important for tourism and recreation. The seafront has a dual role as a tourist facility and as a major amenity for the residents of Worthing.
- 4.4 The Local Plan defines a 'Seafront Area', a strip of land bounded to the east and west by the Borough Boundary, and from the low water mark to a line including buildings and land fronting the seafront. The 'Seafront Area' comprises the following: the Goring Gap (that part which falls within the Borough Boundary), properties fronting and land south of Marine Drive, Marine Crescent, Eirene Road, West Parade/The Esplanade, Heene Terrace, Marine Parade; properties fronting The Steyne and Steyne Gardens, Denton Gardens, Beach House and grounds and the Aquarena; properties fronting and land south of Brighton Road. Also included are Marine Gardens, Montague Place, Steyne Gardens and Brooklands Pleasure Park.
- 4.5 The 'Seafront Area' was originally defined within the Worthing Seafront Informal Plan (1983). This included the area between the east and west boundaries of the Borough, the sea to the south and the seafront's immediate hinterland to the north. The exception was the area between South Street and The Steyne which was covered in a separate Warwick Street (South) Informal Plan (1979). The buildings that front Marine Parade between South Street and The Steyne which were previously excluded are now included in the Seafront Area.
- 4.6 It is acknowledged that the area varies considerably in character and the issues relating to individual parts differ in nature. However, it is important that the Seafront Area is covered by a set of co-ordinated policies, relating to both the natural and built environment, providing guidance for the control of future development.
- 4.7 Nearly all the Borough's coastline is built up and any additional development requiring a coastal location should therefore be accommodated within the existing Built Up Area. In considering proposals for the small range of developments which justify a coastal location, nature conservation interests and the risks of erosion and flooding must also be taken into account.
- 4.8 Those parts of the coast which are not built up should be protected from development. In particular, it is important to protect the strategic gaps within the Seafront Area - the Brooklands Pleasure Park to the east and Goring Gap to the west; as well as seafront open spaces such as The Steyne, Marine Crescent, Marine Drive and Beach House Grounds. Policies relating to strategic gaps and open spaces can be found in Chapters 3 (Countryside) and 11 (Leisure and Recreation) respectively.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Government Guidance

- 4.9 Planning Policy Guidance Note 20 - Coastal Planning issued in 1992 sets out the Government's approach to the planning and management of the coastal zone. This advice calls for better co-ordination between existing agencies, emphasising the need for co-operation to ensure that planning policies in neighbouring districts are consistent. It also stresses the need to refer to other relevant PPGs for advice on issues that are not unique to the coast.
- 4.10 The guidance also states that, as a result of the particular constraints that apply to the coastal zone, development plans should not normally make provision for development on the coast which does not require a coastal location. PPG20 states that few developments actually require a coastal location.
- 4.11 In 1995 the Department of the Environment published 'Policy Guidelines for the Coast' which highlighted government policy on key issues affecting the coastal zone. It draws together essential guidance, including information on related administrative procedures and reflects the new emphasis on the integrated management of the coast.

West Sussex Structure Plan

- 4.12 The Adopted Structure Plan 1993 and the West Sussex Structure Plan Review contain a number of policies that relate to the coast. Both Plans aim to conserve and enhance the character and resources of the coast and coastal waters.
- 4.13 Both Structure Plans deal with coastal defences and state that new development, including intensification of existing development, will be resisted in areas at risk from flooding or coastal erosion. The 1993 Plan outlines that Planning Authorities will have regard to the need to construct and improve sea or flood defences when considering proposals for development in coastal locations or in floodplains. This approach has been strengthened in the Review Plan, where development will not be permitted if it would require enhanced coastal defences, or where it would inhibit the maintenance of existing coast protection or flood defence works.
- 4.14 The West Sussex Structure Plan Review also deals separately with the built up coastline and states that appropriate development within built up areas will be encouraged. The distinctive character of core seafront areas will be conserved and enhanced taking account of special coastal features. Sea views will be retained and new ones opened up wherever suitable opportunities allow.
- 4.15 Coastal recreation is also addressed by policies in both Plans, where such development is supported in appropriate locations within the built up part of the coast. In addition, encouragement is given to improving access for walkers and cyclists to the coast and it is stated that development (including redevelopment) of coastal sites should make provision for improved access to and along the coast for the public on foot. The Structure Plan Review has also updated this approach by incorporating the overall aim of creating a coastal path and cycle track.
- 4.16 In more general terms, both Plans are concerned with the conservation of the physical environment and seek to ensure the highest standards of air and water quality, pollution control and waste treatment in the countryside, in built up areas and along the coast.

Other strategies

- 4.17 West Sussex County Council has also produced a Coastal Strategy for West Sussex (1994) which draws together the different responsibilities of all relevant bodies involved in planning and managing the County's varied coastal zone.
- 4.18 Worthing Borough Council is a participant in the Standing Conference on Problems Associated with the Coastline (SCOPAC), an organisation which considers coastal management issues on a regional scale. In response to the need for consideration of longer term impacts, the Council has co-operated in the preparation and implementation of the South Downs Coastal Group (Selsey Bill to Beachy Head) Shoreline Management Plan June 1997. This document has been adopted by the Council. It emphasises the need to provide sustainable coastal flood and sea defence measures. The strategy of the Shoreline Management Plan for Worthing is to protect the shoreline in its present position.
- 4.19 The Coastal Defence Strategy – Rivers Arun – Adur prepared by consultants on behalf of the Environment Agency, Arun District Council and Worthing Borough Council was published in March 2000. The Strategy establishes a sustainable coastal defence policy for the management of coastal defences for the area between Rivers Arun to Adur, to be implemented along the coast over the next 50 years. The Strategy reviews the recommendations in the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) for Selsey Bill to Beachy Head and the objectives remain consistent. The future management of the Strategy and the implementation of the works schedule will be carried out by the three sponsoring authorities.

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Coastal protection and sea defences

- 4.20 There is widespread concern over the possibility of a major rise in sea levels as a result of global warming. The gradual rise in global temperature has been attributed to the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.
- 4.21 Sea levels have also been influenced by changes in ground level due to long term structural adjustments of the earth's crust by tilting, folding and faulting. In addition, the effects of loading and unloading on the earth's crust (known as isostatic movements), caused by the build up and melting of ice during the glacial and inter-glacial periods, have caused sea levels to rise in southern parts of Britain.
- 4.22 Current predictions by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) are that sea levels are expected to rise by 6mm per year. A report by the Inter-governmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) forecasts a rise of at least half a metre by 2050. It follows that the impact of wave action upon existing coastal defences would increase as sea levels rise. Without improvement, therefore, coastal defences are more likely to be breached, particularly in the winter months when weather conditions are more extreme.
- 4.23 The Borough Council's strategy remains one of protecting the shoreline in its present position and will not normally permit development which would adversely affect the integrity and continuity of coastal and flood defences. The need to protect the stability and continuity of coastal defences and protect access for their maintenance and improvement is of great importance and will be a consideration when assessing planning applications. Development which would require enhanced coastal defences will not normally be permitted.

POLICY CT1

Applications for development will be refused which would:-

- (i) be detrimental to the integrity and continuity of coastal defences;**
- (ii) inhibit the maintenance of existing coastal protection works;**
- (iii) require enhanced coastal defences, unless adequate coastal defences are provided and maintained as part of the development.**

4.24 If, in exceptional circumstances, development in the vicinity of coastal and flood defences is permitted, the Borough Council, following consultations with the Environment Agency, will require appropriate measures to be incorporated into the scheme in order to ensure that the stability and continuity of the defences is maintained. Developers will be expected to cover the costs of such works, including their long term monitoring and management.

Development in flood risk areas

4.25 The risk of flooding must be taken into account in considering development proposals. Government advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 'Development in Flood Risk Areas' highlights the need to guide development away from potential flood risk areas and to restrict development which is likely to increase the risk of flooding. In Worthing, potential problems of flooding may arise from both the sea and from inland watercourses. This section deals with issues relating to tidal flooding. Chapter 2 (Conservation of Resources and Pollution Control) addresses problems associated with existing watercourses and surface water run-off.

4.26 Where the Borough Council receives planning applications for development proposals which lie in areas at risk of flooding, it will consult with the Environment Agency in relation to the degree of risk and the standards of protection required. Planning permission will only be granted for developments where the Borough Council, having consulted with the Environment Agency, is satisfied that appropriate flood protection and mitigation measures have been provided, which suitably addresses flood risk issues in accordance with Policy CT2 and also meet the environmental requirements of Policy CT3.

POLICY CT2

In areas identified to be at risk from tidal flooding, planning permission will only be granted where Worthing Borough Council, in

consultation with the Environment Agency, is satisfied that adequate flood protection and mitigation measures have been provided such that the proposed development and any existing development in the area will not be exposed to an unacceptable risk of flooding.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- 4.27 It is important to maintain and enhance the built environment along the coast. Much of Worthing's coastal development is of high quality, especially within the Marine Parade and Hinterland Conservation Area. This section deals with the Seafront Area as defined on the proposals map. Policies relating to conservation areas are dealt with in Chapter 5 (Built Environment).
- 4.28 Until the Regency era and growth of seaside resorts, Worthing was a small fishing hamlet. Worthing first flourished as a resort in the period up to the 1830's when the central area of the seafront first developed. The major periods of growth and changes in architectural fashion can be seen along the length of the seafront, ranging from 19th and early 20th Century buildings, to detached properties of the inter-war period and large blocks of high rise flats dating from the 1960s.
- 4.29 Much of the urban fabric to the west comprises inter and post war residential development, and is not particularly characteristic of seafront locations. The built environment within the central part of the Seafront Area is quite different, comprising older buildings mostly within the Marine Parade and Hinterland Conservation Area. This part is typified by 19th century terraces, stuccoed and colour washed, presenting a local seafront vernacular. Some buildings have been replaced with modern ones which have introduced a different scale and style.

Protecting and enhancing the seafront environment

- 4.30 Within the Seafront Area care is needed to ensure that new development is in sympathy, with the appearance and character of the local environment. Favourable consideration will therefore be given to development proposals which reflect or complement the character of the locality, including schemes which enhance the area. In areas which are currently poor or mediocre in quality, the Borough Council will encourage proposals which bring about improvements in the quality of the seafront environment. Proposals should be appropriate in density, scale, height, massing, orientation, layout and siting, both in itself and in relation to adjoining buildings, spaces and views to the sea. The use of materials and colour is also important to ensure that the residential and seaside character of the built environment is retained.

POLICY CT3

Development will be permitted provided that it:

- (i) respects and, where possible, enhances the appearance and character of the seafront environment;**
- (ii) has regard to existing sea views;**

(iii) **is appropriate to its location in terms of density, scale, height, massing, appearance, orientation, layout and siting, both in itself and in relation to adjoining buildings, spaces and views to the sea.**

- 4.31 Although much of the seafront is residential in nature, there is scope for appropriate commercial uses to be accommodated within the central area between Montague Place and Warwick Road. Within this area, certain tourism associated facilities may be acceptable, including hotels, guest houses, restaurants, and appropriate leisure facilities. This will help to improve the vitality and viability of this part of the seafront and will encourage the retention and development of a range of attractions and amenities.
- 4.32 Amusement arcades are not considered to be appropriate leisure uses within the Central Seafront Area as defined by Policy CT4. If any proposals for amusement arcades are put forward for elsewhere in the town centre, they will be stringently considered against the criteria set out in all other relevant policies in this Plan. The key policy considerations will include: appropriate shopping centre policies, depending upon location (S7 – S14), impact on residential amenity (H18), noise pollution (RES7), plus any site specific details such as impact on a Conservation Area.

POLICY CT4

Hotels, guest houses, restaurants and appropriate leisure uses will be permitted within the central seafront area between Montague Place and Warwick Road, subject to compliance with all other relevant policies in the Plan. Proposals for amusement arcades/centres will not be permitted within this area.

Seafront Improvement Sites

- 4.33 Ensuring a high quality environment requires the enhancement of some parts of Worthing's seafront. Specific sites are identified below and discussed in detail in either this or other relevant chapters of this Plan.

Sea Place/Eirene Road Area

- 4.34 There is significant existing and potential interest in water sports in Worthing. The Worthing Yacht Club are based at Sea Place/Eirene Road. There are, however, some problems associated with this area. Its general environment has become run-down, with properties in poor condition and there is some conflict between different land uses.
- 4.35 The Borough Council continues to be committed to improving the environmental quality of this area through its management and future redevelopment. Hence, within the period of this Plan, a detailed management plan will be produced by the Borough Council for this site.
- 4.36 Originally, redevelopment proposed for this site consisted of two phases to include recreational activities, new housing, parking and some ancillary commercial uses. Following the consideration in 1998 of a flooding study undertaken by an independent consultant and the fact that a number of privately owned properties would need to be

acquired to ensure comprehensive redevelopment, the Borough Council resolved that Phase II of the scheme (which was for residential units) be deleted.

- 4.37 A detailed design brief was produced in 1994 for Phase 1, and this included recreational uses, nine houses, parking, ancillary commercial uses and the retention of the existing restaurant and yacht club. Outline planning permission was granted for the Phase 1 site in 1994, but this has since expired.
- 4.38 Although the Phase 1 area was also identified as being at risk from flooding arising from seepage through the existing shingle bank, remedial works to the shingle bank in due course may enable the implementation of redevelopment of this site. As such remedial works may be undertaken in the period of this Plan, the Phase 1 area remains identified for redevelopment in line with the principles of the 1994 Brief.
- 4.39 Any ancillary uses should support and relate to other uses in the area, and should not form attractions in their own right. Hence redevelopment proposals which include a public house would not be acceptable. It is important to ensure that new development is confined to the Phase 1 area and is of a scale and type compatible with nearby residential development to the east and the north. It will also be important that any redevelopment scheme includes adequate parking in accordance with Policy TR9, and safe and adequate facilities for pedestrians and cyclists in accordance with Policy TR6.

POLICY CT5

Subject to the resolution of any flooding problems in the area, redevelopment of land at Sea Place/Eirene Road, as shown on the Proposals Map, for housing of not more than three storeys and for marine recreation and training with related and ancillary uses and car parking will be permitted. Ancillary uses should support and relate to other uses in the area.

- 4.40 A number of other coastal sites are identified elsewhere in this Plan as being suitable for various types of redevelopment, either in association with other land uses or as one of several options. The sites are:

Warnes Hotel Site, Marine Parade/Steine Gardens – Housing Chapter (Policy H7)

Aquarena, Beach Parade – Leisure Chapter (Policy LR10)

Stagecoach Site, Marine Parade – Shopping Chapter (Policy S3)

Grafton Site, Marine Parade – Mixed Sites Chapter (Policy MS4)

COASTAL RECREATION

- 4.41 The seafront and coastal waters are also important for a wide range of recreation activities, especially water sports. It is not considered, however, that there will be any particular coastal recreation proposals, requiring a planning framework, that would be likely to come forward within the period up to 2006.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE COAST

- 4.42 PPG20 stresses the importance of providing and improving public access to and along all parts of the coast, where this is possible. Both Structure Plans contain policies that provide strategic support for this aim.
- 4.43 West Sussex County Council is seeking to develop a South Coast Cycle Route. Worthing Borough Council is committed to working with the County Council and Sustrans, a national cycling charity, to improve the route making it safer and more attractive for cyclists. The Borough Council will require any relevant proposals for development to facilitate improvements to the South Coast Cycle Route.
- 4.44 Developers will be encouraged to consider the need to improve public access in all relevant development proposals. The objective is to secure better access to the coastline and beaches, wherever this is possible. There may, however, be some circumstances, such as issues of sea defence, which will need to take priority over access provision.

POLICY CT6

Proposals for development or redevelopment along the coast will be required to establish or improve access to the public on foot and by cycle, unless it can be demonstrated that this would be damaging to nature conservation or impracticable.

COASTAL
