

REP/9/01

EASTBOURNE EMPLOYMENT LAND LOCAL PLAN

EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC

COMMENCING ON

THURSDAY, 12 MAY 2016

- 1: EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY
2. SOVEREIGN HARBOUR ALLOCATIONS
3. ALTERNATIVE SITES

STATEMENT BY

RICHARD J MAILE BSc FRICS

(Respondent No. PS-ELLP/08 & 09)

1.0 QUALIFICATIONS

- 1.1 I am a Bachelor of Science in Estate Management of the University of London and a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. I have been in private practice in West Sussex for over 53 years as a Chartered Surveyor specialising in Town and Country Planning and Development.
- 1.2 I have been involved in development at Eastbourne since the mid 1960's, having obtained planning permission for the development of Hammonds Drive during the late 1960's and the sale of land to Eastbourne Borough Council to the west of the present site for the erection of a secondary school, which has not been forthcoming.
- 1.3 I also obtained planning permission for the development of the Langney Shopping Centre and adjacent residential development, planning permission being granted in May 1969. The land was subsequently sold by me to the developers.
- 1.4 I now set out my responses to the Inspector's specific questions, as follows:

SESSION 2 – SOVEREIGN HARBOUR ALLOCATIONS

Issue 1B

Question 1.2:

- 1.5 I consider that there has been a lack of consultation necessary for the Plan to be legally compliant. In particular, it would appear that there has been no robust contact with any of the local agents, specifically Messrs Ross and Co, who have acted in respect of this site for many years and who are well known as one of the principal commercial agents in Eastbourne and Hailsham.
- 1.6 I am also unsure as to the level of interaction with the Chamber of Commerce. As the Chamber of Commerce is apparently appearing at the EiP, no doubt it will be able to provide additional evidence on this matter.

Questions 1.3 and 1.4:

- 1.7 The whole emphasis of the Local Plan is towards the provision of offices, with no land allocations to meet the wider needs of industry/business/commercial floorspace. This, to my mind, is a major shortcoming.
- 1.8 In specific response to Question 1.3 Permitted Development rights have now been extended permanently with effect from 06 April 2016, such that there is likely to be a continued loss of office floorspace within the town centre given the relative values attaching to office use/residential use.
- 1.9 In terms of Question 1.4, it is clear from a number of observations contained in the documentation that some office users will decant to established employment sites, particularly where redevelopment takes place. However, any need for out of town

offices would best be met by the allocation of additional sites adjacent to the principal established business parks within Eastbourne. A case in point is Sussex Police, who for several years have made approaches to me for the erection of purpose-built offices on the rear part of my site at Lottbridge Drove adjacent to their Custody Suite in order for them to vacate town centre offices.

- 1.10 The decision by Sussex Police has been influenced by the possibility of direct access onto the A22 at Lottbridge Drove. This would be provided by a new junction in the form of either traffic lights or a roundabout, details of which have been drawn up by my Highway Engineer and agreed in principle with the Highways Department at East Sussex County Council.

Issue 1C

Question 1.5:

- 1.11 The viability of out of centre office development could be dependent upon some special relationship with an existing occupier or occupiers within the industrial estates, such as the scenario detailed above relating to Sussex Police.

Issue 1D

Question 1.13:

- 1.12 It is necessary for the Plan to be flexible enough to provide for the needs of B1C, B2, B8 and other commercial uses, specifically car showrooms that require large areas of space adjacent to the major traffic routes. This has again been highlighted by approaches I have received from three major car franchisees wishing to obtain a presence on Lottbridge Drove.

Question 1.20:

- 1.13 The car dealers who have approached me were referred to Sovereign Harbour. All three, however, rejected such a proposal because of the peripheral location of Sovereign Harbour and the poor transport links to it. Accordingly, Policy EL2 should be clarified to include the possibility of other commercial development such as car dealers and trade counters.

Issue 1E

Question 1.30:

- 1.14 Interestingly, SHL considers office development at Sovereign Harbour to be non-viable without public subsidy, a matter I have been highlighting for probably the last 25 years!

Question 1.31:

- 1.15 It is necessary for the targets to be quantified. They will otherwise be meaningless.

Question 1.32:

- 1.16 The relevant targets should relate to floorspace rather than employment land.

Question 1.33:

- 1.17 There should be an interim target for the purposes of monitoring to see if there is a need for an early review of the Plan.

Question 1.38:

- 1.18 There is a need for the target to clarify whether the target need is a net or a gross figure.

Question 1.40:

- 1.19 It would seem unfair to introduce an Article 4 Direction at this stage bearing in mind that the Government has just decided to extend the Permitted Development rights and that the conversion of offices to residential clearly indicates a need for such premises within the town centre.

SESSION 3 – CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE SITES

- 1.20 I appreciate that no alternative sites will be recommended for allocation if the Local Plan is judged to be unsound. Nevertheless, in such circumstances the Council will need to reassess the ELLP and I would suggest that the land at Lottbridge Drive, which has attracted enormous interest over the last few years, is a prime candidate for allocation.
- 1.21 I have known the land for a period of approximately 50 years. When I was first involved with the development of Hammonds Drive this 4.75 acre site was a pig farm with large areas of hardstanding, ramshackle corrugated iron buildings, etc. The buildings have been removed or have fallen down during the last 50 years and the site is now largely overgrown, although there are still concrete bases within the site and a hard surfaced access across the southern extremity of the land from Lottbridge Drive. Access points were constructed by East Sussex County Council into the site at the time of the construction of the second half of the dual carriageway.
- 1.22 The site is adjacent to the largest of the town's industrial estates. Given its access onto the main A22, which is the principle route into the centre of Eastbourne, it is sustainably located to provide additional employment.
- 1.23 My Highway Engineers, the Russell Giles Partnership, have undertaken numerous discussions with East Sussex County Council as Highway Authority and have produced drawings that have been agreed by Mark Weston of ESCC. Indeed, in an email from Mr Weston to Phillip Russell of RGP, he states as follows:

"With regard to the future provision of the St Anthony's Link you are correct that we would not want any development in this area to prejudice future provision of this link.

Any design would need to take account of the possibility of the link road and associated junction with Lottbridge Drove.”

- 1.24 The discussions that took place between these two Highway Engineers agreed either a roundabout junction or traffic lights to provide the necessary link between Lottbridge Drove, the alternative site and the St Anthony's Link. Copies of plans showing the roundabout junction are included with this statement.
- 1.25 As I have suggested on a number of occasions the construction of the St Anthony's Link is essential for the further development of employment sites at Sovereign Harbour. The land at Sovereign Harbour represents almost half the total allocations made in the Local Plan.
- 1.26 The quantity of employment land to be provided by the Local Authority through their Local Plan is a major feature of the EiP. However, it is important also to undertake a qualitative assessment to enable the Local Plan to meet the needs of a wide cross-section of employment related uses and for those to be deliverable.
- 1.27 The suggested 20,000m² of space to be created by redevelopment ('densification') fails to meet the requirements of national policy. Paragraph 7 of the Framework includes a reference to the provision of infrastructure. In the subject case, this would apply to the St Anthony's Link.
- 1.28 Chapter 2 of the Framework contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Local Plan fails to positively meet the development needs of the area in terms of the provision of a wide cross-section of employment land which is readily available (see paragraph 14 of the Framework).
- 1.29 The allocation of this site for employment purposes would meet the requirements of paragraphs 19-21 of the Framework to support sustainable economic growth. Over a period of several years I have made known to the Planners at Eastbourne that there is considerable interest in the development of my land. This has been particularly noticeable since the original highway blight (the Southbourne Link) was lifted.
- 1.30 A further issue raised by the Council is the question of flooding. The Flood Map produced by The Environment Agency shows virtually the whole of Eastbourne subject to possible flooding. However, more detailed plans indicate that this particular site is within Zone 3A (excluding defences: a 1:200 year annual probability of flooding). This compares with much of the remainder of Eastbourne Park, which is within Flood Zone 3B, i.e. a 1:20 year annual probability of flooding).
- 1.31 The whole of the Hammonds Drive Industrial Estate and the other industrial estates within Lottbridge Drove and Hamden Park are also within Flood Zone 3A and it has been a requirement that the sites be filled to a depth of approximately 1m to enable development to proceed and with a contribution towards flood defences.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS RELATING TO THE REVISED PROPOSED SUBMISSION DATED DECEMBER 2015

Paragraph 1.9:

- 1.32 The document does not conform to the policies set out in the Core Strategy Local Plan in terms of the information contained within the appendices on pages 49 and 50 (Birch Road, Hawthorn and Compton Industrial Estates and Hammonds Drive Industrial Estate). Both of these plans fail to show the location of the St Anthony's Link, which is clearly shown on the Proposals Map to the adopted Core Strategy.

Paragraph 2.8:

- 1.33 There is confirmation that there has been a net loss over the last 10 years of all employment use classes other than Class B8.

Paragraph 2.10:

- 1.34 The reference to low reported vacancy levels adds weight to my argument that there are likely to be few opportunities for densification, upon which the Council relies.

Paragraph 2.20:

- 1.35 The requirement for additional employment land acknowledges that the Council need to provide an appropriate and realistic requirement for additional employment land.

Paragraph 2.23:

- 1.36 The whole basis of densification as set out in this paragraph relies upon what I can only describe as waiting to step into dead men's shoes, i.e. providing additional floorspace through redevelopment.

Paragraph 2.24

- 1.37 This paragraph emphasises the fact that employment land is coming under increasing pressure for redevelopment to alternative, higher value uses. These include residential use, which has been discussed earlier in this statement, but also retail uses and other commercial uses.
- 1.38 This paragraph highlights the pressure for additional residential units and makes reference to the constrained nature of the Borough. These constraints include the sea to the south, the South Downs National Park to the north and large areas of the town that are subject to flooding. It concludes by accepting that these losses of employment land have the potential to undermine the B Class nature of these various sites.

Paragraph 2.25:

- 1.39 The constraints are identified in this paragraph. Nevertheless, there remain opportunities to redevelop certain of the sites that adjoin existing industrial estates. The land at Lottbridge Drove has the same physical characteristics as all of the

nearby industrial estates prior to their development, a fact personally known to me over the past 50 years. The site at Lottbridge Drove would appear the most appropriate and sustainable location for any peripheral expansion of industrial estates.

Paragraph 2.27:

- 1.40 The allocation at Sovereign Harbour dates back to at least 1988 (some 28 years) and the only signs of any development taking place there have relied upon public subsidy. Furthermore, the Sovereign Harbour allocations do not provide for industrial or commercial uses.

Paragraph 2.28:

- 1.41 This paragraph ends by acknowledging the challenge facing Eastbourne of providing a broader economic base to enable innovation and entrepreneurship. That cannot be achieved, as the Framework acknowledges, without the provision of suitable sites to enable those objectives to flourish.

Paragraph 2.35:

- 1.42 I am not aware of any available vacant land to meet the wider needs of the B Class uses and those of commerce generally, a factor also referred to in paragraph 2.37 – i.e. the Local Plan as submitted does not allow for any “headroom.”

Paragraph 2.39:

- 1.43 The appearance of built development when approaching the town on the A22 from the north would be enhanced by some bunding and planting along the northwestern boundary of the land at Lottbridge Drove. This could be achieved by a landscaping condition.

Paragraph 2.41:

- 1.44 The objectives set out at bullet points 1 and 3 (Objectives 2 and 4 respectively) will not be met given the lack of available employment space to permit the provision of a strong local economy.

Paragraph 2.42:

- 1.45 The Plan does not stimulate economic growth given the shortage of available employment land. It does not encourage small and start-up businesses; neither does it promote the delivery of employment space in sustainable locations.

Paragraph 3.2:

- 1.46 There is a need for greater flexibility rather than relying upon allocations within the town centre (B1a) and Sovereign Harbour (B1). As I have stressed above, the Plan does not address general business needs.

Paragraph 3.7:

1.47 The possibility of under-utilised sites coming forward for densification does not provide the certainty that is the golden thread running through the National Planning Policy Framework.

Paragraph 4.5:

1.48 Whilst intensification and redevelopment of existing sites will be encouraged, this is a far cry from the provision of employment sites to meet existing demand and need.

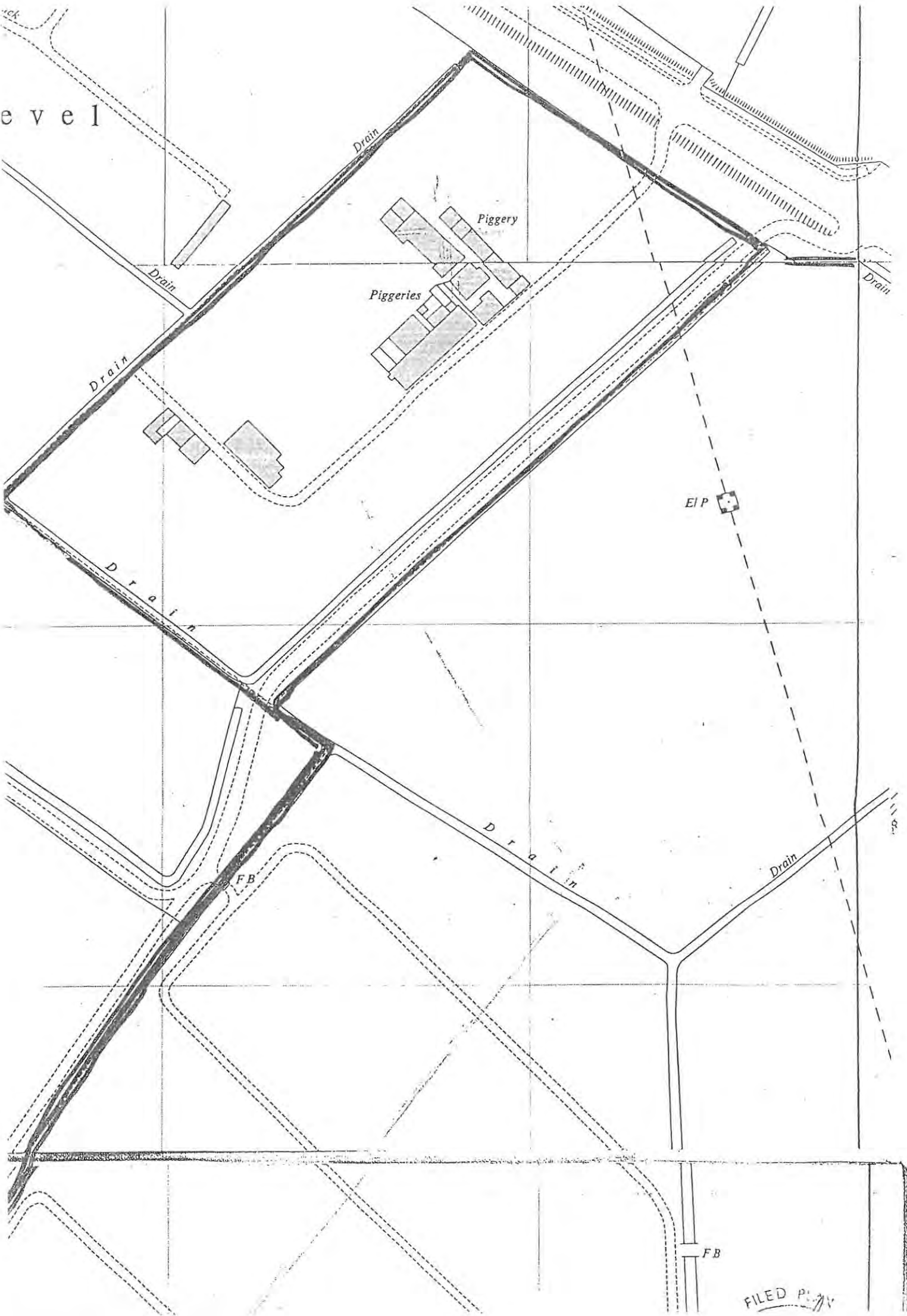
Paragraph 4.10:

1.49 The Council acknowledges the increasing pressure for redevelopment to alternative uses, which has been confirmed by the recent information provided by the Council to the Examination.

CONCLUSION

1.50 The Employment Land Local Plan fails the test of soundness and does not meet the policies of the Framework to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy.

1.51 Reliance upon windfall sites (densification) does not provide the flexibility that the Framework requires. Neither does it, in the case of the site at Lottbridge Drove, allow for improvements to infrastructure in the form of the St Anthony's Link.



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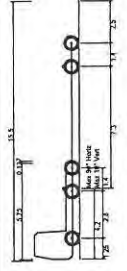
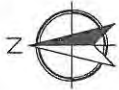
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FILED PLAN



Car Transporter (Artic Type)
 Overall Length 15.500m
 Overall Width 2.500m
 Overall Body Height 2.500m
 Overall Body Ground Clearance 0.427m
 Track Width 2.500m
 Lock to Lock Time 6.900s
 Turn to Turn Turning Radius 6.900m




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Client		Mr R Maile	
Project		Lottbridge Drive, Eastbourne	
Drawing Title Development Access Swept Path			
Scale	Drawn By	Checked By	Approved By
1:1000	GSE	PJB	PMR
Drawing No.	Date	Rev.	
2013/1342/008	June 2013	-	

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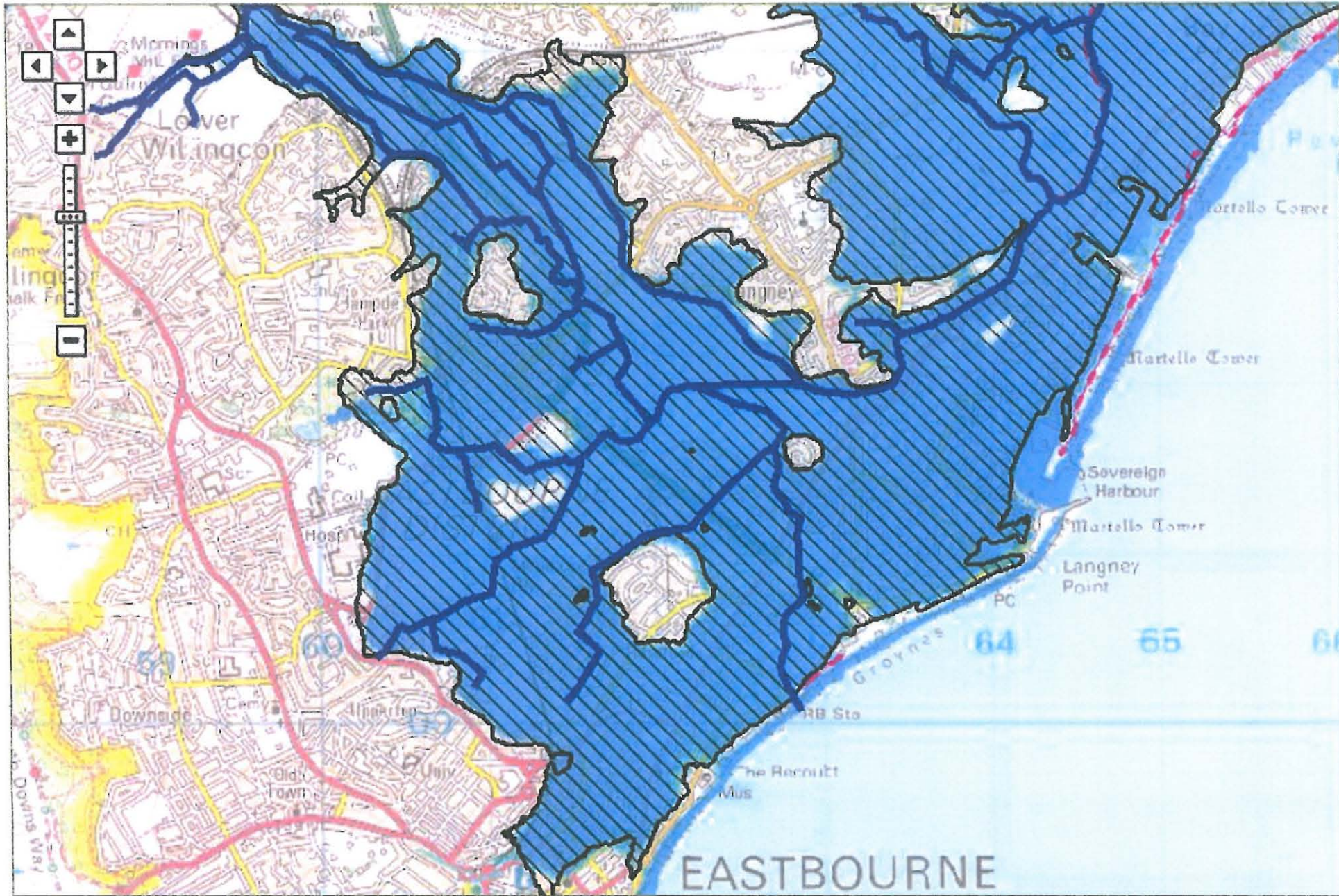
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Eastbourne, East Sussex at scale 1:40,000

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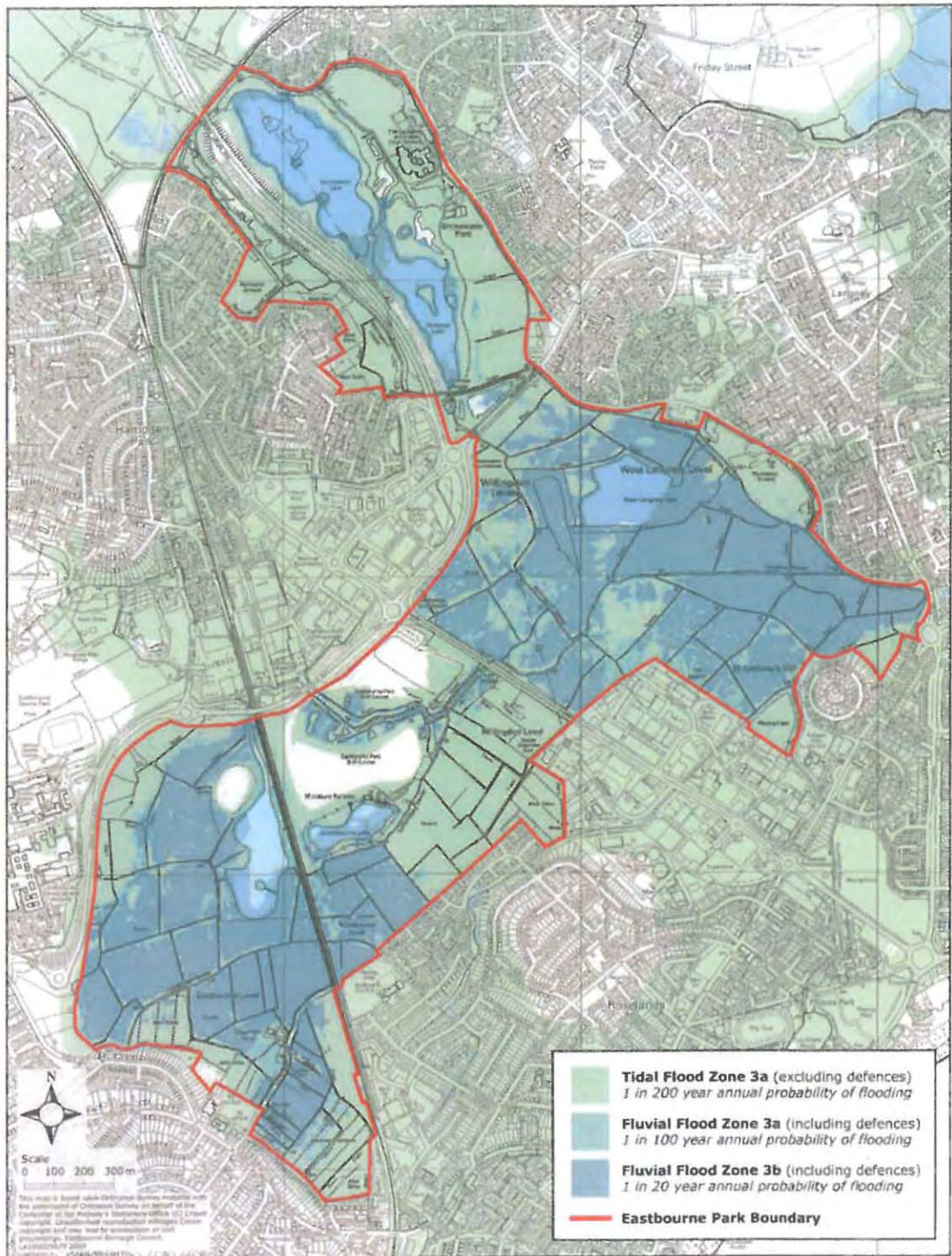


Figure 5 : Flood Risk Map for Eastbourne Park showing Tidal and Fluvial Flood Zones

3.2.4 The Flood Risk Map set out in Figure 4 shows the Tidal and Fluvial Flood zones that affect Eastbourne Park. These are Tidal Flood Zone 3a, Fluvial Flood Zone 3a and Fluvial Flood Zone 3b (also known as the functional flood plain). The flood zones will affect the types of development that