

LSP Update Report on the Ore Valley

History

Whilst this is understood by many of the parties in the LSP, it is worth setting out a brief history of the project.

In 2002 Hastings Borough Council was awarded one of seven Millennium Communities Projects with an initial £2m contribution towards the project from the sponsors, English Partnerships. Project management was delegated to Sea Space as the development company established by the Hastings and Bexhill Task Force in 2003.

Sea Space undertook a master planning exercise for the Ore valley and was due to undertake public consultation when the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister imposed an Urban Design Coding exercise on the project which effectively delayed the start of development by 2 years and imposed a high density development programme which the council was required to formally adopt. An outline planning permission was granted under the terms of the Urban Design Code in March 2008.

Achievements

In 2007 a CPO was confirmed following a Public Inquiry held in January 2008 which enabled, amongst other things, the development of the South Coast College Ore campus.

The first residential development was formally signed up in 2011 and in 2012 phase 1A of the development was handed over to Bellway Homes with the completion of 51 homes, a retail unit and offices on the land bordered by Hughenden Road and Parker Road.

A site on phase 1A was retained for the development of a health centre, in 2013 a planning application was approved and in early 2014 the land was transferred to a medical group for the development of a doctor's surgery and associated pharmacy. This development has yet to be undertaken.

Following the withdrawal of Bellway Homes from the Principal Development Agreement for the development of phases 2 and 3 of the Millennium Community sites, Orbit declined to take up their option to step in to undertake the development of phase 2 on the ex-power station site.

With no further development taking place, the formal Millennium Communities Agreement between the Homes and Communities Agency and Sea Space was terminated in September 2011.

Present position

HBC Planning [Core Strategy] retains designation of the Millennium Community sites in the Ore Valley sites for housing.

It was decided to market phase 4 (ex-Mount Pleasant Hospital site) in 2014/15 as it was considered the most likely site to produce commercial interest. The marketing promotion produced limited interest from commercial house builders, seeking to work in conjunction with social landlords; however the major players were 'put off' by potentially low sales price of completed units due to the location of the site. The one offer received was low and perceived to be a 'fishing' investment by an individual for later development or onward sale.

Sea Space has limited funds and is essentially a core company with no sources of income and it does not undertake any development work, it is left as the owner of three major sites in the area, namely the Mount Pleasant Hospital site, the old power station site and the ex-Stills site.

Green Space

Sea Space is presently transferring the Adventure Play Area presently occupied under licence to Hastings Borough Council. It is also undertaking the remediation works required under the purchase agreement with the British Rail Residuary Board land adjacent to the play area but there are no further funds to undertake any further work to the green space.

Future actions/options

Discussions have been undertaken with officers of the council but these have not been brought to any conclusions to date but will continue to seek suitable outcomes.