

14th June 2010

Our Ref: R00221

RE: Freedom of Information request - Betteshanger and Fowlmead

Introduction

Thank you for your request dated 15th May 2010, made under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Your request is:

General but all inclusive: I have a number of alternative projects for my area. However I am especially interested in Betteshanger Business Part and Fowlmead. Under the Freedom of Information Act I require.

- *Proposed use and options at Betteshanger.*
- *Proposed use and options at Fowlmead and potential use expansion.*
- *Details regarding present management and authorisation.*
- *Present investment plans for Betteshanger and Fowlmead.*
- *Options for new enterprise at both sites.*
- *Break down of overall investment to present day, both sites.*

I also wish to take over the operational management of both sites, especially as little progress has been made to date.

Information requested

Proposed use and options at Betteshanger:

From April 1998 onwards SEEDA became jointly responsible with English Partnerships for the East Kent Coalfield Regeneration Programme, which involved the reclamation of land on four former colliery sites. The programme aimed to improve the physical environment and infrastructure of the sites, to assist local business expansion and attract new businesses into East Kent.

Following acquisition of the Betteshanger site, SEEDA and English Partnerships were requested by central government to undertake an economic appraisal related to a range of selected options, to provide costs, and to evaluate each option against costs and benefits. The following options were selected for detailed appraisal with option 3 being selected overall.

Option	Description	Entails
1 - do minimum	works required to reach standard enabling disposal without further liabilities; alternatively public access provided to all or part of the site.	- fencing and making safe contaminated areas.
2 - small-scale employment (colliery); do minimum (spoil tip)	reclaim entire colliery site to minimal standard; prepare 10 ha to standard suitable for employment-related development; minimal treatment (fencing and making safe) for spoil tip site.	- new service road from A258 and roundabout required; - 23,200 sq ms of employment space provided; this is an appropriate balance between employment generation and environmental/amenity constraints.
3 - small-scale employment (colliery); enhanced recreation (spoil tip)	Employment as in option 2 above; Country Park and multi-use cycling facilities.	- new service road and car park for 500 cars; - employment space as 2 in above; - 1-mile closed circuit road; - multi-purpose pavilion/offices/meeting rooms; - system of marked mountain bike trails; - overnight camping - 40 caravans (for events); - signage, interpretation, picnic site.
4 - large-scale employment (colliery site); enhanced recreation (spoil tip)	entire colliery site reclaimed for employment; Country Park developed on spoil tip site.	- 15 ha reclaimed to developable standard for employment; - 3,325 sq ms of employment space provided; - full onsite servicing provided for 12 ha but local property market could not support this level of floorspace provision; local community would not accept traffic generation and loss of amenity.

The proposed usage for the final option selected is described in detail in planning application reference DOV/02/905 which was submitted by SEEDA to Dover District Council in June 2002. This can be made available for you to view at Dover District Council's offices should you wish to contact Jean Lahane by telephone on (01304) 872 483.

Alternatively we can make this information available for you to view at our Chatham Office. However as there is a substantial amount of information contained in the application and it is currently stored off-site we would require 14 days notice in order to make the necessary arrangements. Please contact Daniel Lo Russo, Head of Information, on (01483) 501 330 should you wish to proceed with this option.

Proposed use and options at Fowlmead and potential use expansion:

The redevelopment of the Fowlmead site was an element of the larger scheme at Betteshanger. Public consultation resulted in the case for a Country Park being put forward. The Fowlmead Country Park opened in May 2007 and current facilities provided include walking and rambling trails, horse riding paths, cycling tracks, bird-watching facilities and a Visitor Centre.

Further proposed uses and options for Fowlmead are described in detail in planning applications submitted to Dover District Council and which may be viewed on the Council website, http://www.doverdc.co.uk/planning/Search_net/search.aspx.

- Construction of two play areas for children – reference DOV/09/01165
- Infilling to form a cyclist training area – reference DOV/09/01168

Details regarding present management and authorisation:

Betteshanger Business Park is managed by SEEDA. Fowlmead is managed by Intercrop Ltd, on behalf of SEEDA. Fowlmead is managed as a Country Park with related leisure and sporting activities.

Present investment plans for Betteshanger and Fowlmead:

SEEDA presently has no plans for further investment at the Betteshanger site.

Options for new enterprise at both sites:

The serviced development sites at Betteshanger are available for purchase on the open market. Options for new enterprises at Fowlmead are currently restricted to the uses contained in the planning applications referred to above.

Breakdown of overall investment to present day, both sites:

Funding for the purchase and development of the site was provided by English Partnerships from the National Coalfields Programme. The total investment to comprehensively reclaim and service the overall site for the range of new uses is £19.75 million and is broken down as follows:

- Site purchase £3.00m
- Infrastructure costs £5.50m
- Business park £6.30m
- Country park £3.25m
- Community park £1.70m

Disclosure Log

This information will also be made available on SEEDA's Freedom of Information Disclosure Log on the SEEDA website:

[http://www.seeda.org.uk/About SEEDA/Freedom of Information disclosure log/](http://www.seeda.org.uk/About_SEEDA/Freedom_of_Information_disclosure_log/)

Personal details and other information that could identify requesters are redacted (removed) from the disclosure log version.

Conclusion

If you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your request, or if you are unhappy with our response, you can appeal using our Complaints Procedure as follows:

A request for a review should be addressed to Oona Muirhead, Group Executive Director: Strategy & Resources, and sent by email to: oonamuirhead@seeda.co.uk or by post to SEEDA, Cross Lanes, Guildford, GU1 1YA. You will be notified of the outcome within 20 working days.

If you are still dissatisfied after pursuing our Complaints Procedure, then under Section 50 of the Act, you are entitled to appeal to the Information Commissioner (Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF, telephone: 01625 545700, fax: 01625 524510

Please contact me if you have any other queries.