



East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy Pre-Submission **Sustainability Appraisal Report**

Non-Technical Summary
February 2012



Prepared for

**East Hampshire District Council and South Downs National
Park Authority**

[Blank page]

About the SA/SEA and this Report

URS Scott Wilson was commissioned by East Hampshire District Council to undertake an independent Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Joint Core Strategy. SA seeks to identify the economic, social and environmental impacts of a plan and suggests ways to avoid or minimise negative impacts and maximise positive ones.

This Non-Technical Summary gives an overview of the main findings of the SA. If you want to find out more details, please see the main report.

About the Joint Core Strategy

East Hampshire District Council is in the process of preparing its Joint Core Strategy with the South Downs National Park Authority. The Joint Core Strategy is a planning document that sets out the overall vision and objectives for the District and provides a guide for how this will be achieved.

The Joint Core Strategy includes a Spatial Strategy for the District that sets out how much development there will be and identified broadly the locations where it will go.

In preparing the Joint Core Strategy a number of different options concerned with where development could go have been considered. The options considered have been subject to SA and public consultation. The purpose of this was to identify the best options through considering the environmental, social and economic effects of each one and by listening to the views of different groups. During the consultation exercise statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage had the opportunity to say what they thought about the options available, as did members of the public, interest groups and businesses. The feasibility and practicability of each option was also considered.

Following the consideration of the SA and opinions expressed through public consultation the most favourable options were developed into Preferred Options, which were again subject to SA and public consultation. The Preferred Options were then developed into policies.

The Joint Core Strategy Pre-Submission document is a collection of the policies that were identified as being the most favourable. The SA focuses on examining the Joint Core Strategy policies to identify their effects and to suggest any mitigation and monitoring where this is required.

Policy Context

The East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy sets the overall planning framework for the District. All the other planning documents in the Local Development Framework (LDF) will build upon the principles within it.

The LDF is a 'folder' of local planning documents. The LDF will replace the existing Local Plan. By having a 'folder' rather than one large plan covering everything documents can be updated as required. The Joint Core Strategy is a key document within this 'folder'.

The Joint Core Strategy should generally conform to planning policy at a regional level. In East Hampshire this is the South East Plan.

SA Framework

At the Scoping Stage of the SA process a set of objectives are developed. These are statements about what the plan should be trying to achieve in order to deliver sustainable development in the District.

The 'SA Framework' is the name given to this set of objectives. An SA Framework is developed out of:

- The key messages and objectives of other strategies, plans and programmes;

- Key sustainability and environmental protection objectives established at the international level (e.g. by European law);
- Research into the current social, economic and environmental issues in East Hampshire; and
- Sustainability issues identified as a result of consultation with stakeholders and the public.

During the scoping stage a SA Framework was developed for East Hampshire and this is this SA Framework that was used in the appraisal of the Pre-Submission policies.

About the SA Appraisal

The potential effects of the Joint Core Strategy have been identified by comparing the policies contained in the Joint Core Strategy against the objectives within the SA Framework.

The effects under each of these topics have been summarised in this report below.

Identified effects are divided into those which are significant and those which are minor. This summary discusses those effects that are significant only. If you would like to see more detail on the predicted minor effects please see the main report.

Monitoring of the predicted effects will be undertaken by the Council following adoption of the Joint Core Strategy.

The Spatial Strategy

The provision of new housing through additional allocations of land in the plan period is modest. The majority of the new housing proposed for the District will be provided on land that has already been identified previously for housing. The most significant location of new housing will be at Whitehill Bordon.

It is likely that the provision of housing and affordable housing will have significant benefits in terms of helping residents in the District, including young people, find a decent home that they can afford.

Population

No significant effects were identified with the exception of the significant beneficial effect associated with the delivery of housing and affordable housing explained above in the Spatial Strategy section.

Health

The Joint Core Strategy seeks to increase accessibility to health facilities and other community facilities, particularly in areas of deprivation, while protecting and maintaining an appropriate level of service provision to meet local and specific needs. This is likely to offer significant benefits through resisting the loss of existing facilities and facilitating the provision of additional services to meet the needs of a growing and changing population. This will be particularly beneficial for those living in rural areas where health services are less accessible.

Employment and Economy

The redevelopment of Whitehill Bordon will help broaden the types of jobs available in the District with new modern office and high-tech business accommodation planned. Potentially this could assist in addressing the current imbalance between the types of jobs in the District and the skills and the qualifications of residents.

Significant beneficial effects on the town of Whitehill Bordon are anticipated from the planned redevelopment, which will provide new jobs to replace those lost as the army relocates away from the town.

Transport and Accessibility

There are likely to be significant benefits in the longer term in relation to increasing accessibility to social and community services. This will likely have greater effects for those people living in rural parts of the District as it is generally the case that rural areas suffer with poor accessibility to services and facilities.

Crime and Safety

It is not thought likely that the Joint Core Strategy will have significant effects on Crime and Safety.

Housing

No significant effects were identified with the exception of the significant beneficial effect associated with the delivery of housing and affordable housing explained above in the Spatial Strategy section.

Cultural Heritage

The Joint Core Strategy will seek to conserve, enhance, maintain and manage the historic environment through the policy on the Historic Environment. The policy requires the production of Conservation Area Appraisals to identify areas of environmental improvement and enhancement. Landmark historic buildings at Whitehill Bordon will be preserved by finding new uses for them.

Climate

The Joint Core Strategy contains policies relating specifically to development at Whitehill Bordon. One such policy relates to sustainable construction and requires all new development to contribute to the aim of achieving carbon neutrality by 2036. Significant beneficial effects are anticipated in the longer term from this approach, although the caveat that the technology to achieve this is not yet available this could affect deliverability in the short term.

Air

It is not thought likely that the Joint Core Strategy will have a significant effect on Air Quality in the District.

Soil

It was judged that the Joint Core Strategy is unlikely to have significant effects, either adverse or beneficial on Soil.

Water

The policy for sustainable water management in Whitehill Bordon includes measures that are likely to increase water efficiency in the new town.

Biodiversity

The Joint Core Strategy requires that proposed new development must demonstrate that there will be no adverse effects on the ecological integrity of the Wealden Heaths SPA. This is likely to offer significant benefits in the longer term.

Landscape

The Joint Core Strategy acknowledges the importance of the South Downs National and seeks to ensure that National Park purposes and duty are delivered. The policy relating to the Historic Environment seeks to conserve, enhance, maintain and manage the historic environment of the District and as such is likely to have a beneficial effect. The policy requires the production of conservation area appraisals to identify areas for environmental improvement and enhancement. Landmark historic buildings at Whitehill Bordon will be preserved by finding new uses for them.

Waste

It is likely that the policy on Waste for Whitehill Bordon will result in significantly more sustainable waste management in the new town.

Cumulative Effects

As well as identifying individual effects of the Joint Core Strategy against the SA Objectives an important part of the SA process is to assess how individual effects interact with one another to identify whether there are any cumulative effects that relate to the implementation of different policies in the Core Strategy.

It is anticipated that there will be significant cumulative effects on landscape and public open spaces.

In combination the effects of the policies and Spatial Strategy are likely to result in a beneficial effect on the protection of the landscape. Policies in the Joint Core Strategy will ensure that a robust approach to the protection of the landscape is taken and that new development is planned in a way that protects the historic environment and its settings. The Spatial Strategy will locate development in existing settlements, which should limit the impact of development on the landscape, as development will be located in areas that are already dominated by the built environment.

Policies in the Joint Core Strategy on Tourism, Biodiversity, Access to Community Facilities and Open Space and Recreation are likely to work in conjunction with each other to produce a cumulative beneficial effect on the provision and access to public open space.

What Happens Next & How to Comment

Any comments on this document must be made no later than 5 pm on 16th March 2012. If you would like to comment on the SA please contact:

Planning Policy Team
East Hampshire District Council
Penns Place
Petersfield
GU31 4EX

01730 234219

ldf@easthants.gov.uk