

**East Hampshire District
Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy**

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
Incorporating
Strategic Environmental
Assessment (SEA):**

Adoption Statement

May 2014

East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): Adoption Statement

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This Statement

1. This Sustainability/Environmental Statement for the Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating strategic environmental assessment) of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy has been prepared in accordance with the following requirements:
 - Regulation 36 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004
 - Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004
 - Paragraph 165 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012

For the purpose of this statement that complies with planning and environmental assessment regulations, the integrated appraisal will be referred to as the Sustainability Appraisal (SA).
2. It explains how sustainability considerations have been incorporated into the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy; how the SA has been taken into account; how the results of consultation have been taken into account; the reasons for choosing the adopted Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy, in the lights of other alternatives considered; and how the significant sustainability effects of implementing the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy will be monitored.

Introduction

3. East Hampshire District Council adopted the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy on 8th May 2014. The Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy covers East Hampshire District including the area that now lies in the South Downs National Park (SDNP). The area covered by the SDNP will have its own Local Plan in due course, which will then supersede the part of this Plan covering the National Park.
4. The Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy is the long term strategic plan for development within East Hampshire District, and includes a spatial vision, objectives and the key policies needed to achieve sustainable development in East Hampshire District to 2028. It identifies the amount of development, broad locations for change, growth and protection, including allocating a strategic allocation site at Whitehill & Bordon. The Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy does not allocate smaller sites or set development management policies as these will be agreed through Local Plan Part 2.
5. To get to this stage of the Local Plan, a considerable amount of work and consultation has been carried out, including: Issues and Options; Preferred Options; Pre-Submission and Further Proposed Modifications. The Plan was originally submitted to the Secretary of State in May 2012 and was subject to Examination by an independent Inspector. The Planning Inspector's preliminary note¹, however, raised a number of issues and, as such, the Examination was suspended and re-convened in October 2013. The suspension period enabled East Hampshire District Council and the SDNPA to undertake further work, primarily around the objectively assessed need for housing in the housing market area. Further Proposed Modifications incorporating the changes required to meet the objectively assessed need for housing and complementary policy changes were then published in August 2013 for further consultation.
6. The Examination reconvened with public hearings in October 2013. The Planning Inspector's final report received on 16 April 2014 concluded that the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy is sound, subject to Main Modifications. These Main Modifications were all signalled prior to the examination and had been subject to the iterative sustainability appraisal process. The one Main Modification that the Inspector introduced in his report that had not been the subject of the iterative Sustainability Appraisal process was the change in the individual settlement housing targets from 'about' ...new homes to a 'minimum' ofnew homes. Consideration has been given to this change in respect of the sustainability objectives and because the change has been made to align with the original wording of the overall housing target which has always been expressed as a 'minimum' then this will be unlikely to impact on sustainability.

¹ Available online @

<http://www.easthants.gov.uk/ehdc/planningpolicy.nsf/webpages/Joint+Core+Strategy+Further+Work+2013>

How environmental & sustainability considerations have been integrated into the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy

7. Throughout the plan-making process, SA (incorporating SEA) has been carried out as an iterative and ongoing process to inform decision making for the developing Plan. The SA was undertaken in accordance with government guidance² for a staged approach that integrates appraisal to consider the effects of the emerging Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy on socio-economic as well as environmental factors. Independent specialist consultants were appointed to carry out the SA. They worked closely with the plan-making team in an iterative way such that the findings and recommendations from the SA were integrated into the developing stages of the Plan.
8. The first stage of the SA was to scope the issues for sustainability within the East Hampshire and SDNPA area. Relevant plans and programmes were reviewed; baseline information regarding the character of the area and its likely evolution were collated and analysed; sustainability problems; issues and opportunities were identified; and a framework of 25 sustainability objectives for the SA were produced within a SA Scoping Report. In May 2007, this Scoping Report was subject to public consultation and the SA framework was refined as a result of the responses received, this also resulted in an additional 2 SA objectives. The framework established the basis against which the emerging Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy would be appraised for sustainability.
9. Issues and Options for the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy were developed during 2008 and subject to SA. The Issues and Options document considered the strategic spatial direction for housing, employment and associated infrastructure through a number of options for strategic locations in Central Hampshire, South Hampshire and Whitehill & Bordon. It also considered themes for strategic policy including options for a settlement hierarchy, the environment, housing, economy, transport, healthy living, Whitehill & Bordon, where new development should go and making things happen. The SA Report was published at the same time as the Issues & Options planning document and it set out how the SA had informed the plan-making, including SA of the alternative options for strategic direction.
10. As a result of consultation, the Preferred Option for the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy was developed. The options put forward for the strategic spatial direction in locations within Central Hampshire, South Hampshire and Whitehill & Bordon were refined and subject to SA. Core Strategy

² The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 established a requirement for a process of Sustainability Appraisal to be carried out alongside plan-making. The centrality of SA to Local Plan making is emphasised in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012). It is a requirement (established in the NPPF) that SA is undertaken in-line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which were prepared in order to transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.

Policies were further developed to guide development and these were subject to SA. The findings and recommendations of the SA were incorporated into the Preferred Options document. Both documents were subject to public consultation in November 2009.

11. Plan making during 2010-2011 resulted in significant changes to the planning system, including the Localism Act 2011 and the intended revocation of regional strategies including the South East Plan. These changes were reflected into the formal stage of the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy Pre-Submission Document. The findings and recommendations of the SA were incorporated into the Pre-Submission document. Both documents were subject to public consultation in February 2012.
12. Further refinements were made as a result of the consultation and the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy was Submitted to Government on 25th May 2012 along with a Schedule of Proposed Modifications. A SA of the Schedule of Proposed Modifications was carried out³. A further public consultation took place in July 2012 following the implementation of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
13. The Examination of the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy took place in October 2012. The Inspector suspended the Examination until October 2013 so that East Hampshire District Council and the SDNPA could undertake further work. This resulted in 'Further Proposed Modifications' accompanied by a SA Addendum. Both documents were subject to public consultation in August 2013. Following the reconvened Examination, the Planning Inspector found the SA to be adequate and that the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy was sound subject to the inclusion of his main modifications⁴. As explained in paragraph 6 above the only Main Modification recommended by the Inspector concerned the word 'minimum' for settlement housing targets and that this is not likely to impact the sustainability of the plan.

How the Sustainability/Environmental Report has been taken into account

14. **SA Scoping Report & Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy Issues & Options:** The SA Scoping Report established the baseline, the key sustainability issues, the policy framework for the SA and set the context for the SA - all of which informed the early draft of issues and possible options to resolve the issues through a JCS for the area.
15. **Choices for the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy & Preferred Options:** The subsequent stages of the SA were undertaken at the same time as the equivalent stages of the plan-making process so that the findings and recommendations of the SA could be integrated at each stage. The

³ Available online @ <http://www.easthants.gov.uk/ehdc/planningpolicy.nsf/webpages/Sustainability+Appraisal>

⁴ Available online @ <http://www.easthants.gov.uk/ehdc/planningpolicy.nsf/webpages/Examination+Oct+2013>

choices regarding spatial strategic locations and themes for strategic policies were subject to SA using the framework of 27 SA objectives. Mitigation for negative effects identified was suggested through changes to policy wording to strengthen sustainable development. A SA Report was published at the same time as the Preferred Options and it recorded the findings of the SA and the way in which it had influenced the choices available to the plan-making.

16. **Pre-Submission and Submission Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy:** As SA had been incorporated into the plan-making process at an early stage, only minor changes were carried out at this stage of plan-making. Again, the findings of the SA and the way in which it had influenced to the plan-making were set out in the SA Report.
17. **Examination suspension and additional work:** Following the Examination suspension in October 2012, EHDC and SDNPA carried out further work to meet the objectively assessed need for housing; this being central to getting a sound Joint Core Strategy. Whilst this work was being undertaken, a process of SA was carried out alongside. The SA Addendum involved the appraisal of 'reasonable alternatives' which informed the preparation of a Schedule of Proposed Further Modifications. The SA also appraised the proposed modifications, to inform plan finalisation.

How the results of consultation have been taken into account

18. At each stage of the consultations from SA scoping through to 'Further Proposed Modifications' (August 2013) of the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy and its accompanying SA Reports, responses received and the Council's response has been provided on the EHDC website for public viewing. Throughout the SA process the key environmental bodies – Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage have been consulted and their views taken into account.

Reasons for choosing the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy as adopted

19. The SA examined and appraised the vision and strategic objectives; it appraised the overall levels of housing, employment and associated infrastructure and the strategic allocation at Whitehill & Bordon. It appraised some 30 themed policies to protect and enhance the assets of the area. The potential positive sustainability effects of the proposed development, and the mitigation of potential negative effects, are dependent upon the implementation of the core strategic policies as adopted. The plan-making and the SA processes established that the adopted Joint Core Strategy was the most sustainable approach for implementing the development need that had been locally-derived for the Plan period.

Measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant sustainability/environmental effects of the implementation of the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy

20. The Joint Core Strategy will be subject to an ongoing programme of monitoring as part of the Councils' Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR). This includes a broad range of indicators and targets set out in Appendix 4 to the Joint Core Strategy that incorporates the needs of the Joint Core Strategy and the SA. This will demonstrate the effectiveness of the strategic policies in the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy and enable any unforeseen effects arising from its implementation to be identified. Monitoring will also provide information as to whether the predicted effects of the SA were accurate; and this information will be considered in the next round of plan-making and the accompanying SA. Monitoring Reports for the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy will be available for review on the Council's website.

For further information please refer to the Council's website:

<http://www.easthants.gov.uk/ehdc/planningpolicy.nsf/webpages/Joint+Core+Strategy>