

Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Statement

Introduction

- 1.1 The East Staffordshire Local Plan 2012 – 2031 was adopted by Full Council on 15th October 2015.

- 2.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced the requirement to carry out Sustainability Appraisals as an integral part of the preparation of new plans. The National Planning Policy Framework states that a Sustainability Appraisal should incorporate the requirements of the European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (European Directive 2001/42/EC) requires that local planning authorities undertake an ‘environmental assessment’ of any plans they prepare that are likely to have a significant effect upon the environment.

- 3.1 The Borough Council has produced this statement in accordance with Regulation 16 (4) (a) to (f) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which incorporates European Directive 2001/42/EC into UK legislation.

- 4.1 As required by regulation 16 (4), this statement sets out:-
 - a) how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
 - b) how the environmental report has been taken into account;
 - c) how opinions expressed in response to the public consultations have been taken into account;
 - d) how the results of any consultations involving other Member States have been taken into account;
 - e) the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
 - f) the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

a) how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;

- 5.1 The first stage of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) was to identify its scope – i.e. the sustainability issues and problems facing the area; other policies, plans or programmes that were relevant to the Local Plan; and baseline information.

- 6.1 A Sustainability Appraisal Framework which contains a list of sustainability appraisal objectives covering environmental, social and economic issues was

prepared. The Borough Council published its Scoping Report for consultation in June 2007.

7.1 It was necessary to refresh the Scoping Report in 2012 due to the time elapsed between 2007 and 2012, to take into account plans, programmes, strategies and initiatives published and updated since 2007 particularly the change in national and regional planning policy as well as those identified by stakeholders during consultation on the draft Scoping Report. It was also felt that additional/up-to-date baseline information need to be included to take into account comments on the baseline received during consultation on the draft Scoping Report and the emerging Local Plan evidence base.

8.1 The SA objectives were amended in light of comments received from consultees at the Scoping Stage.

9.1 The purpose of SA is to promote sustainable development through better integration of sustainability considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans. SA is an integral and important part of good plan making and should not be seen as a separate activity. It has been an iterative process which means that the SA informed the plan and as the Local Plan evolved it informs the SA. This process has continued through the preparation of the plan until adoption.

10.1 The following SA documents have been produced:

<p>Scoping Report (June 2007)</p>	<p>A Scoping Stage is required as part of the SA which involves setting the context for the appraisal by considering environmental, social and economic baseline information, and relevant plans and programmes. This includes indentifying key sustainability issues and characteristics, and outlining the SA framework which will be used to carry out the appraisal. The SA framework consists of 16 objectives which cover a number of topics including a range of social, environmental and economic issues. The SA objectives are listed below.</p>
<p>Revised Scoping Report (February 2012 – March 2013)</p>	<p>It was necessary to refresh the Scoping Report in 2012 due to the time elapsed between 2007 and 2012, to take into account plans, programmes, strategies and initiatives published and updated since 2007 particularly the change in national and regional planning policy as well as those identified by stakeholders during consultation on the draft Scoping Report. It was also felt that additional/up-to-date baseline information need to be included to take into account comments on the baseline received during consultation on the draft Scoping Report and the emerging Local Plan</p>

	evidence base.
Interim Sustainability Appraisal (July - September 2012)	This document used the SA framework to appraise the spatial objectives, strategic and detailed planning policies as well as development strategy and detailed site options
Sustainability Appraisal Report (October – November 2013)	This document used the SA Framework to appraise the spatial objectives, strategic and detailed planning policies as well as the development strategy and detailed site allocations set out in the Pre-Submission Local Plan. The two documents were consulted on simultaneously.
Revised Sustainability Appraisal Report (March – May 2014)	This document was an update to the SA Report with changes specifically addressing issues of clarity and the inclusion of an appraisal of one site promoted in a representation on the Pre-Submission consultation

b) how the environmental report has been taken into account;

- 11.1 At each stage of preparation of the Local Plan, the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal were taken into account to inform the development of policies and proposals.
- 12.1 Policy development and appraisal has been an iterative process. The SA assessment highlighted to the Council where there were individual or groups of policies that do not pick up the issues expressed in the SA objectives.
- 13.1 It was also apparent that in appraising policies certain outcomes were assumed and not explicit in the policy text. As a consequence amendments were made which would result in a more sustainable policy appraisal. Policy delivery and implementation was assumed rather explicit and the SA process has tested this.
- 14.1 The process has therefore provided an initial check on the sustainability of the Local Plan as envisaged by government guidance. The assessment identified likely effects, which will require further investigation in response to planning applications (i.e. on a site-by-site basis) and regular monitoring of likely significant effects
- 15.1 An additional benefit of the process is that lessons learned during the SA of the Local Plan can inform the SA of other planning documents such as Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans.

16.1 The ultimate effectiveness of the Local Plan from the point of view of sustainable development will depend on an effective partnership between East Staffordshire Borough Council, prospective developers, stakeholders and infrastructure delivery partners and the community at large.

17.1 The SA has contributed to plan development by providing an independent assessment of sustainability as set out below:

Stage	Difference made by Sustainability Process
Scoping Report 2007	Set out baseline data, key sustainability issues and the methodology which would be used to assess the new Local Plan
Revised Scoping Report 2012	Updated the baseline data, key sustainability issues and methodology which would be used to assess the new Local Plan
Interim SA 2012	This document appraised the various strategy options, individual sites and draft policies. The SA made recommendations on how objectives and policies could be improved and highlighted which strategy option would be the most sustainable.
SA Report 2013	This document appraised the development strategy, strategic site allocations and strategic and detailed policies. The appraisal set out where positive and negative effects are predicted, set out mitigation measures and set out a monitoring framework to evaluate future environmental effects.
Revised SA Report March 2014	This document was an update to the SA Report with changes specifically addressing issues of clarity and appraisal of one site promoted in a representation on the Pre-Submission consultation

c) how opinions expressed in response to the public consultations have been taken into account;

18.1 Each Sustainability Appraisal document has been subject to consultation. A full schedule of responses to each stage and description of how these responses have been taken into account is contained in Appendix K-N in the Revised Sustainability Appraisal appendices.

d) how the results of any consultations involving other Member States have been taken into account;

19.1 There are no European trans-boundary issues associated with the Local Plan

e) the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and

20.1 During the preparation of the Local Plan, a variety of options have been considered and tested using the SA framework. The rationale for selecting options came from the availability of sites for development and possible constraints to their delivery. The results of the options appraisal were presented in each report and have informed the development of the Local Plan including the development strategy and policies for inclusion in the Local Plan. The sustainability of the different options was considered in choosing which options to take forward.

Spatial Options

Option 1	Urban extensions	Development in just Burton and Uttoxeter, no village development
Option 2	Urban extensions plus villages	Development in Burton and Uttoxeter plus two or more strategic villages
Option 3	Equal distribution	Development distributed equally across villages and towns
Option 4	Single urban focus	All development to be in just Burton upon Trent or Uttoxeter
Option 5	New Settlement	Create a brand new settlement in the rural areas

21.1 The SA identified Option 2 as the most sustainable option. Option 2 provided a more balanced approach to growth, addressing some rural needs whilst placing the majority of growth in the main urban centres providing opportunities to enhance the role and quality of the two main towns. This related positively to economic objectives in the rural and urban areas. Some negative effects were associated with this option in relation to greenfield development and the potential impact on the countryside, landscape and biodiversity. It was acknowledged that all Options would have these impacts. It was also important to acknowledge that mitigation would be required to meet the demands of some sustainability measures.

22.1 Having identified Option 2 as the most sustainable option a further four strategic options were considered which looked in more detail at how growth would be distributed around Burton upon Trent, Uttoxeter and the villages.

Strategic Options

Options	Description
2a	Concentrating growth to the West and North in Burton and some

	growth to the West of Uttoxeter and the strategic villages
2b	Concentrating most growth in the Outwoods and Stretton areas of Burton and some development to the South of Uttoxeter and the strategic villages
2c	More dispersed growth surrounding Burton and some development to the South of Uttoxeter and the strategic villages
2d	Concentrating growth in the South of Burton and some development to the West of Uttoxeter and in strategic villages.

23.1 The SA identified Strategic Option 2d as the most sustainable Strategic Option, although Option 2c also scored well. Option 2d represented the most sustainable Strategic Option by providing larger sustainable mixed-use urban extensions in both Burton and Uttoxeter, which as well as providing a broad range of housing types and mix, would also provide additional services and facilities for the towns, and more employment land. In addition, this option proposed more development on brownfield sites in the towns which would increase the vitality and viability of the town centres. Development is also directed to the re-use of brownfield sites in the urban areas. Some negative effects were associated with this option in relation to greenfield development and the potential impact on the countryside, landscape and biodiversity. It is acknowledged that all Options would have these impacts, however the delivery of a growth strategy based upon the development of sustainable urban extensions would mitigate the impacts the most. It is also important to acknowledge that mitigation would be required to meet the demands of some sustainability measures. Option 2d formed the basis of the Council's Preferred Strategic Option.

24.1 Having decided on the broad distribution of development the Council appraised a large number of strategic development sites, those capable of delivering over 100 residential units, to determine which sites were the most sustainable, and could therefore form part of the development strategy. A threshold of 100 was decided because this would allow for strategic sites in both urban and rural areas.

25.1 Following refreshed evidence on the housing requirement and the granting of planning permission on a number of development sites, a development strategy based on a hybrid of previous options was presented in the plan and subject to appraisal in the SA Report.

26.1 Through consultation other sites and strategies have been put forward. Where these have been considered reasonable alternatives they have been assessed against the SA framework.

f) the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

27.1 The adopted Local Plan contains monitoring arrangements which set out targets, indicators and delivery requirements for each policy.

28.1 Chapter 12 of the (Local Plan (Examination) Revised Sustainability Appraisal Report (December 2014) sets out a monitoring framework which will be reported on annually alongside the Councils Monitoring report.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

29.1 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening exercise was undertaken in 2012 by the Borough Council. The screening report was updated and available alongside the Pre-Submission Local Plan.

30.1 A HRA identifies likely significant impacts of the possible effects of the Local Plans policies on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network of sites which includes Special Areas of Conservation (important habitats), Special Protection Areas (bird populations) and Offshore Marine Sites. The screening report also identifies likely significant impacts on potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

31.1 There are no Natura 2000 sites within East Staffordshire Borough, however the HRA applied a precautionary principle and considered possible impacts on sites within 15km of the Borough boundary.

32.1 East Staffordshire Borough Council has worked in partnership with neighbouring authorities and Natural England to investigate possible recreational impacts on Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as a result of new housing development. Evidence to date demonstrates that combination with other plans and projects, new development will have a possible negative impact on Cannock Chase SAC. Therefore a policy to mitigate this impact has been included in the Local Plan, in order to ensure the plan meets national and European legislation.

33.1 The overall conclusion of the updated screening process is that the Local Plan, which includes a dedicated policy on European sites and Cannock Chase SAC, will not have any likely significant effects upon the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites.