



The Planning  
Inspectorate

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# **Report to Worthing Borough Council**

**by Christina Downes BSc DipTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011**

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PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

SECTION 20

**REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION INTO THE WORTHING CORE STRATEGY  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT**

Document submitted for examination on 9 July 2010

Examination hearings held between 16 November and 30 November 2010

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## **ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT**

AA	Appropriate Assessment
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
CS	Core Strategy Development Plan Document
DMDPD	Development Management Development Plan Document
IC	Inspector's Change
IDP	Infrastructure Delivery Plan
LDS	Local Development Scheme
PC	Proposed Change
PFDA	Potential Future Development Area
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement
SFRA	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
SHLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
SO	Strategic Objective
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
The Masterplan	Worthing Evolution Town Centre & Seafront Masterplan

## **Non-Technical Summary**

This report concludes that the Worthing Core Strategy Development Plan Document provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the Borough over the next 15 years. The Council has sufficient evidence to support the strategy and can show that it has a reasonable chance of being delivered.

A limited number of changes are needed to meet legal and statutory requirements. These can be summarised as follows:

- **Changes made to ensure that development opportunities within the Areas of Change and Strategic Allocation are realistic, flexible and capable of delivery.**
- **Changes to ensure that the supply of housing in terms of numbers, type and mix is sufficient to meet the needs of the local population over the next 15 years and flexible enough to respond to change.**
- **Changes to ensure that the Core Strategy is properly justified by a robust evidence base.**
- **Changes to ensure that the Core Strategy provides development that is sustainable.**
- **Changes made in relation to the historic environment to provide better justification for the policy approach, closer alignment with national policy and more effective delivery of policy objectives.**
- **Changes to ensure that the Core Strategy provides for effective monitoring and includes adequate flexibility and contingencies to ensure that the Vision and Strategic Objectives have a reasonable chance of being delivered.**

Most of the changes recommended in this report are based on proposals put forward by the Council in response to points raised and suggestions discussed during the public examination. Neither the Council's changes nor those that I have recommended alter the thrust of the Council's overall strategy.

## Introduction

1. This report contains my assessment of the Worthing Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CS) in terms of Section 20(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It considers whether the CS is compliant in legal terms and whether it is sound. Planning Policy Statement 12: *Local Spatial Planning* (PPS 12) makes clear that to be sound the CS should be justified, effective and consistent with national policy.
2. The starting point for the examination is the assumption that the local authority has submitted what it considers to be a sound plan. The basis for my examination is the submitted draft CS (July 2010) which is the same as the document published for consultation in April 2010.
3. This report deals with the changes that are needed to make the CS sound and they are identified in bold in the report. All but six of these changes have been proposed by the Council (PC2-PC44) and are set out in Appendix A. The changes that I recommend (IC1-IC7) are set out in Appendix C. None of these changes materially alter the substance of the plan and its policies, or undermine the Sustainability Appraisal and participatory processes undertaken.
4. Some of the changes put forward by the Council are factual updates, corrections of minor errors or other minor amendments in the interests of clarity (PMA1- PMA6). As these changes do not relate to soundness they are generally not referred to in this report although I endorse the Council's view that they improve the plan apart from PMA6 which is incorrect and should refer to PPS 5 rather than PPG 15. These are shown in Appendix B. I am content for the Council to make any additional minor changes to page, figure or paragraph numbering and to correct any spelling errors prior to adoption.
5. The Council's soundness changes have been subject to public consultation. One consultation response was received and this has been taken into account in this report. All of the changes, including the minor ones that the Council has put forward have been publicised on the Council's web-site. References in the Report to documentary sources are provided in square brackets and identify the reference number in the Examination Library.

## Assessment of Soundness

### PREAMBLE

6. On 27 May 2010 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government indicated his intention to abolish Regional Strategies, including the South East Plan. Although revocation ensued on 6 July this action was successfully challenged in the High Court. The effect is that Regional Strategies remain as part of the development plan although their abolition continues to be a central policy objective of the Coalition Government. It is expected that this will be given effect by the enactment of the Localism Bill which commenced its passage through Parliament on 13 December 2010. Although the Council may in due course wish to revise the CS to remove references to the South East Plan its abolition is unlikely to affect the plan's soundness. This is because whilst the CS is in conformity with the South East

Plan it is not dependant on it and is supported by its own locally derived evidence base.

7. Whilst the CS does not repeat regional policy the Council is confident that there will be no gaps in strategic policy following the demise of the South East Plan. Matters such as landscape management, renewable energy and heritage are all covered in the CS and any policy vacuums that do arise are likely to be non strategic and covered in a *Development Management Development Plan Document* (DMDPD). This is allowed for in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) [CD54]. The Council indicated that work on the DMDPD is likely to start early in 2011 once the implications of the Government's localism agenda have been more fully understood. The Council takes no issue with the housing target in the South East Plan, which is based on meeting local needs.
8. Following a Ministerial announcement on 9 June 2010, Planning Policy Statement 3: *Housing* (PPS 3) was revised to do away with the national minimum indicative housing density and remove residential gardens from the definition of previously developed land. The Borough's housing land supply does not rely on windfalls and the Council has estimated that only about 100 dwellings in total are likely to be affected by the PPS 3 issue. This is a detailed matter that could be further addressed under the DMDPD if the Council considers necessary. There is no specific density requirement in the saved Local Plan although Policy 7 in the CS does refer to the areas where density will be a specific consideration. Nevertheless, as the plan envisages that development will take place within the existing built up area and taking account of the requirement in PPS 3 to use land in sustainable urban locations efficiently, it seems unlikely that the removal of the national indicative density will have a significant impact on the housing delivery anticipated in the CS.

## **MAIN ISSUES**

9. Taking account of all the representations, written evidence and discussions that took place at the examination hearings eleven Main Issues have been identified upon which the soundness of the plan depends.

## **ISSUE ONE: WHETHER THE OVERALL SPATIAL STRATEGY IS SOUND HAVING REGARD TO THE CONTEXT AND NEEDS OF THE BOROUGH**

10. The characteristics of the Borough and the main issues that it faces are set out in the first section of the plan. These are underpinned by an extensive evidence base which includes studies and assessments at both the sub regional and local levels on socio economic issues, housing, transport and the environment. They reveal that for Worthing a key challenge is the regeneration of the local economy to stimulate inward investment and job creation. There are also social issues with areas of deprivation and a need for more affordable and family housing to meet local needs. These challenges have to be faced within the context of accessibility, sustainability and energy efficiency whilst protecting the historic and natural environment that defines the Borough's sense of place.
11. There is a clear Vision at the heart of the CS of a thriving, prosperous and healthy town that plays a central role in the wider sub region. This has evolved over a considerable period of time through extensive consultation and engagement with key stakeholders and the local community with a thorough assessment of alternative development scenarios and Sustainability Appraisal.

The final outcome aligns with, and closely reflects, the aspirations of the *Interim Worthing Sustainable Community Strategy* [CD13] and the *Sustainable Community Strategy for Worthing and Adur: Waves Ahead* [CD14]. It also conforms to the regional strategy in the South East Plan [CD59] although its reliance on an extensive local evidence base means that it is locally distinctive and not overly dependant on the regional plan. This makes it robust in the event that Regional Strategies may cease to exist in the future. The CS is sensitive to cross-boundary issues and has been prepared in consultation with West Sussex County Council. Parts of the evidence base have also been jointly prepared with other Authorities in the Sussex Coast sub region and Adur and Worthing Councils share a joint working partnership for the delivery of local services. The CS refers to cross-boundary issues, including the Shoreham Harbour Growth Point.

12. In order to carry the Vision forward the CS sets out seven Strategic Objectives. These are to be delivered by a spatial strategy that centres on one Strategic Housing Allocation and 12 Areas of Change as the most sustainable locations for development and change. These provide clear spatial choices about where development is intended to go and have been informed by a variety of studies including a *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* (SFRA) and the *Worthing and Adur Strategic Transport Model* [CD38; CD47]. Although there has been some local concern that the Strategic Allocation at West Durrington involves building on greenfield land this is the only way that a large housing development can be accommodated due to the tight geographical constraints of the sea and high quality countryside, including the South Downs National Park. A number of alternative greenfield options were discounted for various reasons, including landscape impact [CD32].
13. West Durrington is allocated for development in the saved Local Plan and is shown to be inside the boundary of the built up area. The CS has sought to resolve a number of environmental concerns including the impact of this development on ecological and landscape resources. The evidence demonstrates that there are, in addition, issues of social deprivation in this part of the Borough which the CS seeks to address through the development allocation. The integration of this development with the existing community will be of key importance along with its provision of community and education facilities, and a wide choice of housing, including much needed affordable and family homes. These are provided for in Policy 1 and the change made by **PC5**, which is endorsed. The site is identified on the Inset Map at Appendix 8 and is a key component of the spatial strategy. **PC6** and **PC7** are also supported as they address the impact of development on historic assets, including the Grade I listed Castle Goring, and the South Downs National Park.
14. The Areas of Change are not intended to be allocations but rather targeted areas for investment and change that the Council believes provide the best opportunities to deliver the mix of development needed in the Borough. Although two maps in the CS identify their broad locations most have easily identifiable boundaries on the ground and all include brownfield sites within the built up boundary of the town. It is envisaged that the Council will play a pro-active part in driving forward the development of these areas, several of which include land that it owns. However it is recognised that some are subject to significant constraints and are not likely to be carried out until later on in the plan period. Inevitably some will therefore be subject to a greater level of uncertainty than others and this is not helped by the current economic

situation. Several carry forward the objective of regenerating and connecting the town centre and seafront, which is a key objective supported by a number of local strategies. Perhaps the most important is the *Worthing Evolution Town Centre & Seafront Masterplan* (the Masterplan) [CD8], which provides a shared vision for the town following extensive consultation with key stakeholders and the local community. Other non central Areas of Change focus on particular areas that the Council considers have the potential to deliver the regeneration needed to meet the Vision and Strategic Objectives.

15. The success of the spatial strategy will depend on whether it can be effectively delivered over the next 15 years. The Council has introduced a number of changes that strengthen the monitoring and delivery process and these are considered under Issue Eleven. The CS is also supported by an *Infrastructure Delivery Plan* (IDP) [CD56], and this is further considered in Issue Ten. Whilst it identifies a number of infrastructure and funding challenges there is no major strategic infrastructure deficit to prevent the delivery of the spatial strategy.
16. **Taking account of the Council's proposed changes it is concluded that the overall spatial strategy is sound having regard to the context and needs of the Borough.**

## **ISSUE TWO: WHETHER THE AREAS OF CHANGE ARE A SOUND VEHICLE FOR THE DELIVERY OF REGENERATION AND CHANGE**

17. The Areas of Change are a key component of the spatial strategy. However several of them are allocations from the 2003 Local Plan on which no development has materialised to date. Although the Council does not consider the Areas of Change to be "allocations" it is important that there is sufficient certainty and commitment to ensure that these major regeneration opportunities come forward for development during the next 15 years rather than remaining as aspirations. The Council is confident in this regard and recognises that it must take the lead and adopt a much more pro-active approach than it has in the past in order for there to be a realistic chance of delivery. In several of the Areas of Change the Council is also the landowner and this should help in bringing the land forward for development and reflect its corporate priorities.
18. There have been discussions with landowners and potential development partners and it is acknowledged that compulsory purchase powers may be necessary to aid land assembly. It is also intended to provide a template to record the progress towards the implementation of development and the effectiveness against Strategic Objectives following delivery, with links to the IDP [CD163]. PC8 which confirms this approach in Paragraph 6.21 is supported. A new post has also been created within the Council with the task of assisting in bringing forward these regeneration sites.
19. For each Area of Change the CS sets out a set of development principles along with objectives, challenges and solutions. Key infrastructure requirements are identified in the IDP and in Appendix 2 of the CS there is a strategic risk appraisal and contingency measures in the event that delivery does not occur as the CS anticipates. The success of the strategy will depend in large part on an effective monitoring regime and a willingness by the Council to respond flexibly to difficulties that may arise. The development principles afforded to

each Area of Change allows for such an approach by seeking to avoid undue rigidity in terms of the development requirements and mix of uses.

20. There are already a number of supporting documents providing guidance for development and change. These include the Masterplan [**CD8**] and Development Briefs for Aquarena [**CD49**], the Retail Core [**CD23**] and the Grafton Site [**CD99**], although some may need updating. The LDS envisages that other Development Briefs will be produced and the British Gas Site and Martletts Way are specifically mentioned. The LDS also indicates that if required subsequent Development Plan Documents will be produced for the Areas of Change to provide more formal guidance, such as an Area Action Plan. These measures will help to provide more focused guidance that will further assist in reducing the level of risk and providing greater certainty for potential investors.
21. The evidence suggests that **Aquarena** and **Teville Gate** are the Areas of Change most likely to be redeveloped within the short term. Teville Gate in particular is adjoined by a wider area which itself has the capacity for regeneration and change. **PC12** is endorsed as it makes it clear that proposals within the wider area should not be prejudiced by redevelopment proposals within the Area of Change. The **Newland Street Superstore** has recently been refurbished and upgraded and comprises a foodstore and its car park. The Council see it as an important location at the entrance to the town opposite Teville Gate and the railway station. Whilst its credentials as an Area of Change may seem questionable it is acknowledged that the redevelopment of Teville Gate will alter the dynamics of this part of the town especially as it is likely to include a retail element. On balance there is justification for inclusion of Newland Street as an Area of Change although the position will need to be carefully monitored and kept under review.
22. **The Marine Parade: Stagecoach** site offers an important regeneration opportunity in the town centre. However in order to unlock its development potential it relies on the relocation of the bus station. This has been a problem that extends back for many years and the CS seeks to provide a solution by identifying a potential site at Decoy Farm through **PC18**. This site is under consideration by the bus company and I endorse the proposed change which addresses the main problem that has prevented this land from coming forward in the past.
23. Both the **British Gas Site** and the land adjacent to **Martletts Way** suffer from constraints relating to access and contamination and the latter is also subject to ownership difficulties. However the Council is confident that these matters are capable of resolution. It is recognised that a pro-active approach will be needed and the LDS envisages that early Development Briefs will be produced for both sites. It is understood that there is developer interest in the British Gas land albeit that this is for fewer dwellings than the Council envisages in its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). Whilst the Martletts Way site is an unfulfilled Local Plan allocation the Council has been in discussion with the various land owners. There appears to be more than one solution to access and there is a reasonable chance that the mix of uses anticipated will provide sufficient incentive to develop the site. Although these may be longer term projects that require a higher level of intervention there is a reasonable chance that they will be built out within the CS period.

24. **Union Place South** has many complexities arising from the multitude of land ownerships and interests. However its development is crucial to the Council's retail strategy and ultimately to the achievement of its Vision. One of the CS requirements is for a comprehensive development by the Council and a future development partner although it does not rule out a phased approach. Whilst the preference would be for redevelopment in the totality the Development Brief [**CD23**] includes a degree of flexibility and realism by allowing for the retention of the existing Guildbourne Centre as an alternative scenario.
25. The vacant land in the north eastern section of this Area of Change, which previously housed the Police Station, is available for development immediately and there is strong developer interest in bringing it forward independently. However this would not accord with the comprehensive approach envisaged and could prejudice the wider objectives for the Area of Change, including ensuring an appropriate spread of uses, providing the necessary linkages across the larger site and successfully integrating the new retail core with the wider town centre. Even if a stand alone development of the Police Station land could accommodate these physical requirements its early release is likely to make it much more difficult to attract a suitable development partner to take on the regeneration of the more challenging parts of the remaining site. The evidence base firmly demonstrates that there is sound reasoning behind the need for a comprehensive approach and that this is the best way of achieving the successful regeneration of the Area of Change.
26. **The Strand** Area of Change includes Worthing College. Planning permission has been granted for 124 dwellings which together with government funding was to have financed the provision of a new college facility. As the required element of public funding is no longer available it is understood that the college is re-thinking its plans and considering a less ambitious project. Nevertheless it is understood that 124 units would be insufficient as enabling development although no detailed viability evidence was provided to the examination. However from its discussions with Worthing College the Council is confident that a higher density residential scheme would be achievable. Although Worthing College is not centrally located and is in an area where housing is generally low rise it is also close to Durrington-on-Sea railway station and The Strand Local Centre. Taking account of its accessibility there therefore seems no reason why a larger number of dwellings would necessarily be objectionable in principle. In the circumstances **PC24** is endorsed as it allows the flexibility to increase housing numbers beyond 124 dwellings if required.
27. The other part of The Strand Area of Change includes the former Lloyds TSB building and tower block, which is currently vacant. The Council recognises that there are viability issues and that redevelopment may be more appropriate than refurbishment. **PC16** adds a degree of flexibility with a high density mix of uses, which would include residential. Both **PC24** and **PC16** are necessary pragmatic responses and are supported. The re-wording of PC16 suggested in the representations on behalf of the owners of this building is unnecessary in terms of soundness. It is noted that they would like this site to be included within the Local Centre boundary but there is no evidence to suggest that the matter would impact on the deliverability of the Area of Change itself. The retail boundaries are further considered under Issue Six.

28. The CS also includes several other Areas of Change that have not been referred to specifically above. However the evidence base provides a reasonable level of confidence that these are soundly based and will achieve what is expected of them within the next 15 years, including the housing provision envisaged.
29. It has been pointed out in representations that **Montague Place** is identified in the Masterplan as providing a significant opportunity to enhance north-south linkages between the town centre and the seafront. The document also identifies potential for improvement to the streetscape including some small scale mixed use development to address the existing unattractive three storey blank wall on its eastern side. There is undoubtedly capacity for beneficial change and it is noted that this would be deliverable in the short term. Nevertheless there is no reason why this could not take place through the normal development control process. There is a planning history to this land and no doubt its inclusion as an Area of Change would give the owners some comfort in terms of future investment. However the Council does not consider that it is either necessary or appropriate for Montague Place to become an Area of Change and its omission does not make the CS unsound.
30. **Taking account of the Council's proposed changes it is concluded that the Areas of Change are a sound vehicle for the delivery of regeneration and change.**

### **ISSUE THREE: WHETHER THE CS MAKES SOUND PROVISION FOR HOUSING IN TERMS OF NUMBERS AND DISTRIBUTION**

#### *Housing Provision*

31. The requirement for 4,000 dwellings to be built by 2026 is derived from the South East Plan but the Council itself put forward this as its "Option 1" figure. Whilst it is lower than some other parts of the Sussex Coast sub region, the Regional Strategy recognises that Worthing suffers from capacity constraints due to its geography and needs particularly to focus on regeneration of the economy and the creation of more jobs. The requirement, which equates to about 200 dwellings per year, is based on meeting locally generated needs and it will be regularly monitored to ensure that it continues to meet this objective. The Council intends to review the requirement in due course to take account of new census material and also any implications of the new localism agenda.
32. PPS 3 requires the Council to demonstrate that it has a 5 year supply of deliverable sites followed by a 10 year supply of developable sites. **PC21** is supported as it updates the position to April 2010 showing a total supply of 3,046 dwellings. This would result in a surplus supply of 204 dwellings over the whole CS period. This assessment, which is set out in **PC22**, relies on two other changes. Through **PC9** and **PC23** the number of dwellings associated with the Grafton Site has been reduced. The reduction in the housing number advances a more realistic scenario given that there is no longer an expectation that the multi storey car park will be redeveloped. Through **PC13** no residential development is now expected on the Newland Street Superstore Site, which seems likely for the reasons given in the preceding section. These changes are therefore all supported.

33. Nine of the eleven Areas of Change would provide an element of housing. As was concluded in the preceding section there is a reasonable prospect of implementation and delivery within the CS period. The contribution anticipated from the other SHLAA sites is not unrealistic [**CD147**]. The largest of these is 106 units on the land at Stoke Abbott Road, which includes the Council's offices. This is in a number of mainly public ownerships and the evidence suggests that uses such as the Law Courts and Library are unlikely to move. There are also listed buildings on the Chapel Road frontage. On the other hand there are large areas of surface car parking and Worthing and Adur Councils have already combined many of their key services. Although the CS does not identify this as an Area of Change it is a highly sustainable location and it is not unreasonable to conclude that there is a good probability that existing uses will be rationalised and that there is potential in the longer term for some higher density housing development.

#### *The Housing Trajectory*

34. The evidence base shows that there is a surplus of deliverable sites to meet the 5 year housing land supply requirement of some 898 dwellings. Although my assessment is not quite as optimistic as the Council's in terms of when sites will come forward there is, even on the gloomiest view, more than enough deliverable land to meet short term needs. This will be kept under review through annual monitoring and will be rolled forwards each year.
35. The Housing Trajectory has been revised in **PC43** to reflect the Council's belief that some sites will deliver later than initially anticipated and this change is supported. It is not unusual to see an unbalanced picture in the later years of a 15 year plan and in this case the number of completions is shown to substantially reduce after 2018. Whilst PPS 3 requires plans to enable a continuous delivery of housing for at least 15 years the Trajectory merely represents a snapshot at a single point in time. The later years will inevitably be subject to a greater level of uncertainty and a greater degree of balance is likely to occur over the passage of time. An effective monitoring regime will allow the necessary checks and balances to be made and interventions to take place if and when they are needed. The important point is that overall the CS can demonstrate that there is sufficient housing land to meet the needs of the local population both in the short term and further ahead.

#### *Windfalls*

36. It is the case that historically the vast majority of housing within Worthing has been built on windfall sites within the urban area. However many sites that may previously have come forward as windfalls have now been included in the SHLAA, which addresses all sites capable of accommodating 6 dwellings or more. Undoubtedly unidentified small sites will continue to emerge but there is no way of knowing the extent of their contribution and due to this lack of certainty it is unwise to rely on them in the housing strategy. PPS 3 indicates that windfalls should not be included in the first 10 years of supply unless there are genuine local circumstances that prevent sites being identified. In the case of Worthing sites can and have been identified for the full 15 years of the CS as has been detailed above. There is thus no reason why any reliance should be placed on windfalls over the plan period. It is important to recognise that although the Council has adopted the 4,000 dwelling figure as

its housing requirement this is not a ceiling on the number of houses that may be built [**CD155**].

37. There is no evidence that windfall development is likely to deter investment in the Areas of Change especially as the residential element is only part of a larger mixed use scheme in many cases. Windfalls will undoubtedly continue to come forward, albeit at a lower rate than was the case in the past, and will be considered on their merits. However they are unpredictable and are unable to support a properly planned approach to the development of the Borough which includes regeneration and change in accordance with the Council's long term Vision for its area. In addition as they will comprise the smaller sites they are unlikely to contribute to the pressing affordable housing needs of the Borough or other infrastructure requirements that are required. This situation may change to some extent if a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) regime is introduced.

#### *West Durrington*

38. Although West Durrington is a greenfield site it is within the built up boundary and is an important element of the spatial strategy for the reasons given under Issue One. It is also an essential component of the Borough's housing land supply as a clearly deliverable site that will provide homes within the next 5 years and beyond.
39. The Inset Map in Appendix 8 shows a "*potential future development area*" (PFDA) to the north of the main allocation for about 375 dwellings, which is also in the built up area boundary. For the reasons given above it is not considered that this land needs to be included within the strategic allocation either now or later in the plan period. Even though this would provide the developer with a greater level of certainty and may make for easier Masterplanning these are not good enough reasons for allocating more greenfield land than is necessary. There is no evidence that the exclusion of the PFDA would prejudice the development of the allocated dwellings or that its inclusion is necessary to make the strategic development viable. The Council recognises that there would be greater benefits in terms of affordable housing provision and community infrastructure but for the reasons given, Policy 1 is sound as it stands.
40. Nevertheless, the CS makes clear that if, as a result of monitoring, a sustained shortfall of housing land is identified then housing options will be reviewed, including the PFDA. When the Council considered the various greenfield alternatives the PFDA was identified as having potential for future release. However the Caravan Club site is also a greenfield site, albeit outside the built up area boundary, which the Council considers has potential as indicated in Paragraph 9.10 of the CS. The strategic risk appraisal in Appendix 2 includes contingencies in the event of a failure in housing delivery. This mentions the PFDA and other housing sites and this is also reiterated in Paragraph 6.10. Whilst the preferred changes of the West Durrington Consortium are noted the approach in the CS is not unsound.
41. **Taking account of the Council's proposed changes it is concluded that the CS does make sound provision for housing in terms of numbers and distribution.**

## **ISSUE FOUR: WHETHER THE PLAN MAKES SOUND PROVISION FOR A RANGE OF HOUSING TO MEET LOCAL NEEDS IN TERMS OF MIX, TYPE AND AFFORDABILITY**

42. Although the South East Plan provides a general guideline of 40% provision of affordable housing for the Sussex Coast sub region it makes clear that the level should be determined by local circumstances. The *Coastal West Sussex Strategic Housing Market Assessment* (2009) (SHMA) [CD33] indicates a considerable level of affordable housing need in Worthing that will be well above what can realistically be expected to be delivered. The Adams Integra *Study of Economic Viability of Affordable Housing Options* (2007) [CD31] tested a range of development scenarios with different levels of affordable housing provision. It supported a policy level of 30% on sites of 15 or more dwellings as well as the tapered contribution from sites of 6-14 dwellings set out in Policy 10. The policy however allows for flexibility so that the level and mix of affordable housing provided on individual developments takes account of unique considerations such as viability. I endorse **PC26** because it makes clear that these considerations also apply to the provision arising from financial contributions. The Adams Integra work does indicate that on some sites there may be scope for 40% affordable housing provision in the future. Whilst the 30% provision in the CS is soundly based the Council will wish to keep the situation under review as sites are delivered and economic conditions improve.
43. A recent note prepared by Adams Integra for the Examination [CD123] reiterates support for the policy levels in the CS in terms of viability. It also makes the point that a settled policy approach is needed to provide certainty for developers and that reacting to market changes is unlikely to provide this. The Council is concerned that a higher requirement may compromise regeneration of the larger sites which is fundamental to its Vision. Nevertheless, the CS does look ahead to the next 15 years and in view of the levels of need identified in the SHMA and the potential for higher levels of contribution from some sites in the future a review mechanism needs to be built into the plan. Whilst Paragraph 7.24 does go some way towards this there is no specific provision for a review of the targets. I recommend that further text is added to ensure that the CS is justified through a proper alignment with its evidence base in this respect (**IC1**).
44. West Durrington is an example of a strategic site where a higher level of affordable housing provision may be appropriate. However this land adjoins a deprived area where levels of social housing are much higher than in other parts of the borough and the Council is understandably keen to avoid a disproportionate concentration of lower income households in one place. The 30% level of provision is thus justifiable but I support **PC5** which replaces the reference to social housing and low cost housing with the term "affordable housing". Whilst the low cost element is intended to be subsidised and remain so in perpetuity the term is confusing and appears to conflict with the definition given in PPS 3.
45. Paragraph 7.23 refers to the assessment of affordable housing tenure mix in the SHMA. However taking account of the significant changes in funding that are currently taking place and the varied nature of the larger sites it is understandable that the Council wish to retain flexibility. Although PPS 3 advises that separate targets for social rented and intermediate affordable

housing should be set where appropriate in this case the lack of a specific tenure mix in Policy 10 is considered justifiable.

46. The SHMA refers to the high proportion of flats and small dwellings in Worthing and the need to bring forward a more balanced provision that includes more family homes. West Durrington in particular is expected to make a significant contribution in this respect and I support **PC5** which inserts a specific reference to the provision of family housing in Policy 1. Whilst the general principle of directing smaller homes to the town centre and family homes to more spacious locations elsewhere is a good one it is unlikely to be applicable in all circumstances. For example there is no reason why a higher density town centre scheme should not include homes suitable for families and conversely in some places outside the centre there may be circumstances where smaller units are appropriate. Policies 7 and 8 include elements of contradiction in this regard and so in the interests of consistency and flexibility **PC24** and **PC25** are endorsed.
47. The West Sussex Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment (2007) [**CD34**] and the West Sussex Travelling Showpeople Study (2008) [**CD67**] recommended no requirement for additional pitches in Worthing to 2011. The Council knows of no unauthorised encampments or proposals for pitches over the last few years. The Partial Review of the South East Plan undertook further work in relation to these population groups. Although it was never published its evidence base suggests a very low requirement to 2016 in Worthing Borough of about two permanent pitches for gypsies and travellers and one for showpeople.
48. The CS does not include a criteria based policy and therefore does not accord with advice in ODPM Circular 01/2006: *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites*. This is because in view of the very small numbers involved the Council is relying on a cross-boundary approach with other local authorities in Coastal West Sussex. In addition the LDS refers to a possible future Site Allocations DPD which could include any site provision if required following the on-going sub regional work. The LDS also refers to the forthcoming DMDPD and the Council intends to include a policy that will guide any planning applications for sites that may be received. It will be necessary to keep the matter under review to ensure that future needs are met, especially later in the plan period. However the lack of policy provision for gypsies and travellers in the CS is justified at this time for the reasons given.
49. **Taking account of the Council's proposed changes I conclude that the CS does make sound provision for a range of housing to meet local needs in terms of mix, type and affordability, subject to my change IC1.**

#### **ISSUE FIVE: WHETHER THE PLAN PROVIDES FOR A FLEXIBLE MIX OF OFFICE AND INDUSTRIAL UNITS TO STIMULATE EMPLOYMENT GROWTH AND STRENGTHEN THE PROSPERITY AND VITALITY OF THE TOWN AND THE WIDER AREA**

50. Worthing in common with other neighbouring local authorities suffers from significant economic and social disparity with a relatively low level of inward investment and an above average representation of poor quality employment floorspace. There is also a high reliance on public sector employment

although much of this is in health and education which are likely to suffer less from government cutbacks than some other sectors. Delivering a sustainable economy and reducing social and economic disparities are two of the Strategic Objectives of the CS. Their achievement will require the provision of the right amount and type of employment floorspace in sustainable locations. As well as addressing local needs, the creation of new employment will help contribute to the regional job growth target in the South East Plan. The work of the recently approved Local Economic Partnership, which includes West Sussex, will provide a wider context to the delivery of investment and enterprise.

51. The need for further office, industrial and warehousing floorspace and how it can be provided is derived from the local evidence base comprising the 2005 *Employment Land Review* and its 2009 *Update* by Knight Frank [**CD18; CD20**]. This recognises that the economic downturn and shifts in the type of business demand will require land releases to be carefully monitored over the CS period. There may also be benefits to the Worthing economy from sub regional developments, such as at Shoreham Harbour, for example [**CD77**]. Much of the industrial and warehousing requirement will be met through renewal of poor quality stock on existing industrial estates. The remainder will be provided through new floorspace in the Areas of Change. In particular the CS identifies Martletts Way, Northbrook College and Decoy Farm as offering the potential for this type of development.
52. PPS 4 encourages a sequential approach to the provision of offices and Policy 6 includes a general provision to this effect. However the Knight Frank work acknowledges that much of the existing stock is of low quality and that issues such as car parking and congestion can make out-of-town locations more attractive. Viability may also be a deterrent to the provision of new offices in the town centre and the recommendation is that the best opportunity would be through major mixed use development schemes, which include higher value land uses. Policy 3 includes a provision that town centre office space will be promoted in this way. The delivery of such schemes is likely to be through the Areas of Change. However apart from at the Newland Street Superstore site offices are not mentioned within the potential mix of appropriate uses in any of the town centre Areas of Change.
53. The most likely opportunity for the provision of new town centre floorspace would be at Union Place South. Furthermore the Chatsworth Road area, which is within this Area of Change is one of the key office locations where office uses should be protected through Policy 4. The Retail Core Development Brief [**CD23**] mentions offices as an element of the provision. In order for the CS to align properly with its evidence base I recommend that a more specific reference to office floorspace is needed in this Area of Change (**IC2**).
54. The Knight Frank Update recognises that the bulk of new office floorspace will come from the refurbishment or redevelopment of existing buildings and the Lloyds TSB Building and The Warren, which are both designated as Areas of Change, are mentioned as key opportunities in this respect. Whilst these sites are outside the town centre the evidence base considers them to be important to the delivery of the required new floorspace in view of the constraints on town centre provision. The Knight Frank work also informs Policy 4 in terms of the identification of key office locations where existing office floorspace should be protected in order to ensure that existing levels of floorspace are

not unduly diminished. These are mainly in the town centre and also include Railway Approach which is within the Teville Gate Area of Change.

55. Policy 4 contains a presumption that employment land outside the key industrial and office areas will be retained unless it can be demonstrated to be redundant and unlikely to be re-used for industrial or commercial purposes. The policy indicates a number of factors that will be taken into account but these are not intended as a comprehensive list of restrictive criteria and the policy is thus soundly based as it stands. Furthermore, the CS indicates that more detailed guidance will be provided by a subsequent Local Development Document and the LDS indicates that an SPD on the *Sustainable Economy* is to commence preparation early in 2011.
56. The supporting text to Policy 4 indicates that "employment uses" may be more widely defined than the "B" Use Class. It is appreciated that Planning Policy Statement 4: *Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth* gives a fairly broad based definition of "economic development". As well as offices, industry and warehousing it includes such uses as tourism, retail and leisure. However, the supporting evidence base to Policy 4 is the Knight Frank work and this primarily restricts itself to "B" type uses and concludes that there is justification for their protection. Whilst a flexible approach is laudable it needs to be properly justified and more work will need to be done to assess whether a broader reaching policy would impact on the supply of "B" Class employment land. That is not to say that other employment generating uses would not be acceptable, subject to the considerations in the policy. In the circumstances I recommend that the text is changed to make clear that Policy 4 relates specifically to employment uses B1, B2 and B8 (**IC3**).
57. A broader perspective is also provided by Policy 3, which addresses sustainable economic growth generally and includes reference to the importance of supporting tourism, leisure and the creative industries. I support **PC19** which adds "sporting" uses to this list but the provision is not restricted to the town centre and seafront and so there is no need to add a further reference to out-of-centre locations. This policy also refers to the need for start-up units, a business incubator and ICT supported sites, which are all local requirements identified by Knight Frank.
58. Other employment generating uses such as tourism, retail and leisure are dealt with separately through Policies 5, 6 and 11. Retail issues are considered in the next section under Issue Six. Policy 5 recognises the importance of the visitor economy to a seaside town such as Worthing. Whilst the focus of new tourist facilities is likely to be in the town centre and seafront areas the policy does not prevent suitable facilities elsewhere. The 2006 *Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study* and its 2009 *Update* [**CD35**; **CD36**] supports the protection and enhancement of existing facilities that are important to the community. The inclusion of sporting facilities is also relevant to Policy 11 and **PC27** is thus endorsed.
59. **Taking account of the Council's proposed changes it is concluded that the CS does make sound provision for a flexible mix of office and industrial units to stimulate employment growth and strengthen the prosperity and vitality of the town and the wider area, subject to my changes IC2 and IC3.**

## **ISSUE SIX: WHETHER THE PLAN ADVANCES A SOUND RETAIL STRATEGY**

60. Policy 6 establishes the retail strategy for the hierarchy of centres in the Borough. In accordance with PPS 4 this adopts a "town centre first" approach with provision in the lower order centres limited to meeting local needs. The retail strategy is underpinned by a robust evidence base. The future capacity for comparison and convenience goods floorspace was assessed in the DTZ 2005 *Retail Study* and its recent 2010 *Retail Study Update* [CD21; CD22]. **PC20** is supported as it brings the plan up to date by including a table of the more recent forecasts. This includes capacity forecasts for comparison and convenience floorspace in the town centre, district/ local centres and non central locations. It shows that there will be limited capacity for further convenience floorspace in the district and local centres and this will occur later on in the plan period. However it is interesting to note that the consultants classed the West Durrington district centre in the "non central" category where capacity is less constrained even taking account of the recently built Tesco superstore.
61. The South East Plan designates Worthing as a Primary Regional Centre within the Sussex Coast sub region. However the DTZ work suggests that it is currently underperforming in relation to competing towns such as Brighton, Guildford and Portsmouth due to the quality and range of its retail offer. One of the key objectives in the retail strategy is to attract major new investment by providing comparison goods floorspace that meets the requirements of modern retailers. The strategy is supported by the local evidence base including the 2006 Masterplan [CD8]. A comprehensive assessment of the town centre and its potential to absorb change was undertaken in the recent GVA Grimley Report: *Supporting the Retail Sector in Worthing Town Centre* (2009) [CD24]. Encouraging people to shop more locally and reducing car travel is a sustainable outcome that accords with the Vision and Strategic Objectives of the CS as well as national policy in PPS 4 and Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: *Transport*.
62. Although Areas of Change such as the Grafton Site and the Marine Parade: Stagecoach Site will provide new comparison goods floorspace in their mix of uses it is the Union Place South Area of Change where the most significant provision is envisaged. This is intended to provide a new "Retail Heart" for the town which will be integrated into the existing shopping centre. The Retail Core Development Brief [CD23] establishes a number of design principles and concludes that a viable and commercially attractive retail-led scheme of up to 34,000 m<sup>2</sup> could be accommodated.
63. Taking account of the recent economic downturn and shopping trends such as the growth of online purchasing it is not surprising that the more recent DTZ capacity forecasts are less optimistic. The consultants concluded that without an improvement in market share support for the scale of new floorspace envisaged for the town centre would be weak. However, they considered that it would not be unreasonable to expect that a substantial new retail development would in itself attract shoppers who currently visit better provided centres and that in such circumstances market share would increase. It is on this basis that the anticipated new floorspace is justified. Forward planning inevitably relies on forecasting and any modelling exercise requires assumptions to be made. However, the DTZ modelling work has been

undertaken by reputable and experienced retail consultants and the work provides a robust and credible evidence base for the retail strategy. The CS includes provision for monitoring and the interventions that may be required if the anticipated outcomes are not being achieved.

64. Teville Gate is envisaged as one of the main entrance points to the town centre even though it is outside of the town centre boundary. The CS indicates that retail development will be among the mix of uses in this Area of Change but that it should not compete with the retail offer of the main shopping area in the town centre. This is supported by the GVA Grimley work which envisages supporting ancillary retail uses at Teville Gate rather than destination floorspace which could detract from the vitality and viability of the town centre. The consultants do not recommend any changes to the 2003 Local Plan town centre boundary and Appendix 8 to the CS makes clear that no such change is envisaged for the time being. However quite rightly the Council will wish to review the situation once the new shopping floorspace has been provided within and adjoining the town centre.
65. The DTZ Update indicates that there is further capacity, mainly for a limited amount of comparison goods floorspace, in the district and local centres. This is allowed for in Policy 6. The CS does not envisage changes to the boundaries of these smaller centres at this stage apart from at West Durrington. Here the 2003 Local Plan Proposals Map is not consistent with the West Durrington Development Brief [**CD65**] which shows an extended area for the district centre. **PC44** aligns the CS to the Development Brief and is thus supported.
66. Even though a discount store has been approved to the south of the Strand Local Centre it is outside of the centre's boundary. It is understood that this was permitted as enabling development in association with the refurbishment of the office tower in the Lloyds TSB Building. The failure of the CS to show a revised boundary for this centre to include the discount store and Lloyds TSB building does not make the plan unsound. The CS and the amendment through **PC16** provide sufficient flexibility to assist in the delivery of development within this part of the Area of Change. In any event the LDS indicates that in the near future a new *Retail* SPD is to be produced which will not only provide up to date and detailed guidance on retail matters to support Policy 6 but also look again at the boundaries of the district and local centres.
67. **Taking account of the Council's proposed changes it is concluded that the CS does advance a sound retail strategy.**

#### **ISSUE SEVEN: WHETHER THE PLAN PROVIDES A SUFFICIENTLY POSITIVE AND PRO-ACTIVE STRATEGY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT**

68. Policy HE3 in PPS 5: *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS 5) encourages plan making to adopt a positive and proactive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. The South East Plan has similar objectives. The CS in its Vision and Strategic Objectives recognises the importance of the historic environment in contributing to the character and distinctiveness of the Borough. One of the key outcomes of Strategic Objective 6 is the conservation and, where appropriate, enhancement of the Borough's built heritage and historic assets. **PC4** is supported as it aligns the

spatial strategy in Paragraph 5.13 with these principles. **PC2** is also endorsed because it includes reference to sites of archaeological importance as part of the historic environment.

69. A number of the Areas of Change are close to conservation areas and listed buildings and this is reflected in the challenges, solutions and development principles of the individual regeneration sites. The strategic allocation at West Durrington adjoins the Grade I listed Castle Goring and its conservation area as noted in the supporting text. **PC6** is endorsed as it refers to the "at risk" status of the building in Paragraph 6.14 and adds an additional bullet point to Policy 1 which relates specifically to the impact on these historic assets.
70. The delivery strategy for achieving the objectives that relate to the historic environment is provided by Policy 16. Although this policy also deals with wider issues concerning design and the built environment the part covering historic assets does not reflect the importance of their protection. This has been remedied by **PC31**, which provides a more positive approach as advised in PPS 5 and advocated by English Heritage. It makes clear that all historic assets will be protected and enhanced, whether local or otherwise.
71. In order for the plan to be sound it must be justified and this relies on the support of a robust and credible evidence base. The CS gives little indication of how it has been informed in relation to the historic environment. This is remedied to some degree by **PC30**, which adds reference to local evidence at Paragraph 8.29 and by **PC41**, which adds various documents to the evidence base in Appendix 4. Both of these are endorsed but the Council in its Statement on this issue [**WBC Statement C7**] refers to other relevant documents that are not included in the proposed changes. It is therefore recommended that in order to strengthen the justification for the policy approach these documents also need to be included in the evidence base (**IC4**). It is also noted in passing that in Appendix 1 (Page 121) there is a reference to Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: *Archaeology and Planning*, which has now been superseded by PPS 5.
72. The Council is re-appraising its 26 conservation areas and this work is expected to be complete within the next 5 years. The LDS also refers to the production of a *Conservation and Heritage* Technical Note which will collate information on heritage issues and provide further detailed advice on development management issues. This is expected to be completed by 2012 and provides further evidence of how the Council intends to be pro-active in its approach to issues relating to the historic environment.
73. **Taking account of the Council's proposed changes it is concluded that the CS does advance a sufficiently positive and pro-active strategy for the conservation of the historic environment, subject to my change IC4.**

**ISSUE EIGHT: WHETHER THE CS PROVIDES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN TERMS OF MITIGATING AND ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH ENERGY EFFICIENCY, CAREFUL USE OF WATER RESOURCES, REDUCING THE NEED FOR TRAVEL AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION**

74. The achievement of a sustainable future through adapting to and mitigating against the adverse impacts of climate change is established through Strategic Objective 1. The CS does not seek to adopt local targets that are more ambitious than those in national and regional policy. This is despite some support from the local evidence base for such an approach. *The West Sussex Sustainable Energy Study* (2009) [CD42] for example concluded that the additional costs of higher standards or faster timescales for energy efficiency and carbon compliance in residential developments would be relatively small. The CS also refers to problems of water scarcity due to limitations on groundwater resources in the South Downs.
75. However the Council's concern that adopting more onerous local targets at this stage could constrain development is not unreasonable, especially as there has been little viability testing in terms of feasibility. In addition national policy on the subject is evolving with the PPS consultation document on *Planning for a Low Carbon Future in a Changing Climate*. Nevertheless, the CS makes clear that mitigating and adapting to the adverse impacts of climate change is a key challenge. Strategic Objective 6 requires that new development maximises energy efficiency and minimises pollution and waste. The addition of water efficiency to this list through PC3 is necessary and is supported. Even though there are no specific local standards Policies 17 and 18 expect sustainability improvements to be achieved where it is viable to do so. Indeed major sites such as the Areas of Change and the West Durrington Strategic Allocation are examples of where this could happen as mentioned in Paragraph 8.51.
76. In order to further strengthen the local evidence base the Council has commissioned consultants to undertake a *Sustainability Strategy* jointly with Adur [WBC Statement C8]. This will address a number of sustainability topics and will underpin a further Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on *Climate Change*. This will provide detailed guidance on the implementation of the sustainability policies and may in due course support local targets and standards if appropriate when the CS is reviewed. PC32 refers to the commitment to provide this guidance specifically and thus improves the effectiveness of Policy 17. The LDS indicates that this SPD will be completed by March 2012.
77. As mentioned under Issue One, the spatial strategy is also underpinned by a SFRA, which has informed the main locations where change is envisaged and also the types of development that are deemed appropriate [CD38]. The Areas of Change and Strategic Allocation are mainly in Flood Zone 1 although a small part of Northbrook College (Durrington Campus) is subject to higher flood risk. Parts of Decoy Farm are also at higher risk of flooding and this is reflected in the types of non residential uses envisaged. The protection of Teville Stream against any future impacts of development is introduced as a development principle for that Area of Change through PC17. This

requirement is endorsed as it highlights a further constraint that will inform the future development of this land.

78. Although the SFRA has undertaken a strategic assessment of flood risk, individual developments may be subject to a site specific Flood Risk Assessment which requires all sources, including groundwater flooding, to be taken into account. The Environment Agency has pointed out that the most up to date flood risk mapping should be used and **PC29** is therefore endorsed. Policy 15 establishes the risk based approach to development in areas at risk of flooding including the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems. This complies with the risk based approach in Planning Policy Statement 25: *Development and Flood Risk*. Nevertheless, the evidence shows that flooding issues are unlikely to compromise the development principles put forward in the CS.
79. Strategic Objective 7 reflects the objectives of the Local Transport Plan [**CD46**] to improve travel accessibility. Delivery is by means of Policy 19 which relates to sustainable travel. The promotion of the town centre as a safe and accessible area for cyclists as well as pedestrians in **PC34** is supported. The policy is strengthened by **PC33** in terms of requirements for development to properly mitigate adverse impacts on the road network. Worthing along with the other coastal towns has a particular problem with congestion due in part to its geography. This includes the A24/A27 and **PC15** is endorsed as it adds improvements to accessibility to the development principles applicable to The Warren Area of Change. Traffic modelling has concluded that overall the impacts arising from the development options in the CS are likely to be limited within the context of the overall growth of traffic flows on the highway network over the CS period [**CD48**]. Nevertheless various "hotspots" are identified where travel demand management and mitigation measures will be required and these are identified in the IDP to be funded by a variety of agencies. Where they rely on developer contributions this is identified as an infrastructure requirement for the Area of Change in question.
80. The development of the new bus-based rapid transit Coastal Transport System would greatly improve bus travel along the coast and create a transport hub at Worthing Station. **PC34** refers to its correct title in Paragraph 8.59 and is supported. However this transit system is likely to be a long term project that will need to resolve funding difficulties. In the meantime it is understood that the bus company, Stagecoach, has recently made a major investment in the bus service that it operates along the coast.
81. **Taking account of the Council's proposed changes it is concluded that the CS does provide for sustainable development in terms of mitigating and adapting to climate change through energy efficiency, careful use of water resources, reducing the need for travel and promoting sustainable travel.**

#### **ISSUE NINE: WHETHER THERE IS JUSTIFICATION FOR A STRATEGIC SITE FOR DEVELOPMENT AT WEST DURRINGTON AND WHETHER IT WOULD SECURE SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS FOR THE WIDER AREA**

82. The Strategic Allocation is a key component of the spatial strategy and the justification for including a greenfield site has already been considered under Issue One and concluded to be sound. Under Issue Three it has been concluded that the site is deliverable within the short term and there appears

to be clear commitment by the West Durrington Consortium to work with the Council to ensure that this happens in the most sustainable way. Under Issue Four it has also been concluded that West Durrington will make a significant contribution towards addressing the affordable housing needs of the Borough. It will help redress the balance in terms of housing mix through the emphasis on family homes. Under Issue Eight it has been concluded that there is the potential for the development to make an important contribution to sustainability and energy efficiency. The inclusion of the PFDA as a potential housing release in the future is also considered to be sound.

83. Strategic Objective 5 seeks to reduce economic and social disparities and improve the quality of life. The evidence provided to the examination [**WBC Statement C10**] confirms that the existing housing area adjoining the strategic housing site has high levels of social and economic deprivation. Opportunities for improving skills and training provided through the regeneration proposals for Northbrook College Area of Change will provide positive benefits for local people within this part of the Borough. The West Durrington strategic development is intended to tackle existing social issues and includes provision for a new school and community centre, health care facilities, sports and leisure facilities. These provisions have been developed through engagement with key service providers and local community organisations. The IDP sets out the infrastructure requirements which will benefit the existing community as well as new residents. Policy 1 requires sustainable linkages to be provided to ensure that the new development is effectively integrated with the surrounding area.
84. **It is concluded that there is justification for a strategic site for development at West Durrington and that it would secure significant benefits for the wider area in terms of reducing social deprivation.**

#### **ISSUE TEN: WHETHER THE CS PROVIDES SUFFICIENT GUIDANCE ON THE PROVISION OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT IS REQUIRED TO SUPPORT THE STRATEGY**

85. PPS 12 makes clear that infrastructure planning should inform the CS and be part of a robust evidence base. The IDP [**CD56**] fulfils this role and is a key document in this respect. No major strategic deficits have been identified that are likely to inhibit the delivery of the development proposed in the CS. The IDP shows how local shortfalls in infrastructure provision will be funded and the timescale for their delivery. Clearly the level of certainty is greater for shorter term projects than those that will be undertaken later in the plan period. The IDP also sets out potential risks if the various items of infrastructure do not come forward and the contingencies necessary to deal with them. This has informed the higher level Strategic Risk Appraisal in Appendix 2 of the CS. One benefit of the IDP being separate from the CS is that it can be treated as a "live" document and regularly updated with more detail and information provided as certainty increases.
86. The IDP includes the specific infrastructure requirements for the Strategic Allocation and Areas of Change and has informed the relevant sections of the CS, including the development principles, issues and challenges. The Council's Proposed Changes **PC10**, **PC11**, **PC14** and **PC17** are endorsed as they further align the constraints identified by infrastructure providers in the

IDP to the Areas of Change at the Grafton Site, Teville Gate, The Warren and Decoy Farm.

87. The IDP envisages that a source of infrastructure funding will be by means of developer contributions. This is addressed through Policies 10 and 12, the former of which relates specifically to affordable housing. However as a strategic document the CS would not be expected to provide the details of such contributions and Policy 12 indicates that this will be set out in a subsequent Local Development Document. This is further identified in the LDS as a *Planning Contributions* SPD to be produced by March 2012. However the Council has now indicated that the matter may be dealt with through a DMDPD. Whichever the outcome the Council is taking the appropriate steps to provide further detailed guidance on the matter. It will also allow the issue of CIL to be considered in due course, which will be subject to viability assessment.
88. **Taking account of the Council's proposed changes it is concluded that the CS does provide sufficient guidance on the provision of the infrastructure that is required to support the strategy.**

#### **ISSUE ELEVEN: WHETHER THE PLAN MAKES ROBUST PROVISION FOR THE DELIVERY OF DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE MONITORING OF ITS EFFECTIVENESS AND INCLUSION OF FLEXIBILITY AND CONTINGENCY MEASURES**

89. In order to be sound the CS must demonstrate that it is effective. There is firm evidence that the CS has been through a lengthy period of stakeholder engagement. As concluded in the previous section it is supported by a robust framework of infrastructure planning which itself has been informed following consultation with the key delivery agencies. The CS has undergone several periods of consultation and subsequent change and refinement. The Council has proposed a number of changes to accommodate the concerns of the regulatory bodies including the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England. Whilst not all suggestions have been accommodated it is not considered that there are any outstanding matters of soundness that remain unaddressed.
90. West Sussex County Council and Worthing Borough Council have produced a Statement of Common Ground on highway matters [**CD45**] and have agreed that there is no strategic objection to the spatial strategy. Other delivery agencies, developers, landowners and local people have participated in the consultation and examination process. It is striking that relatively few representations were received that questioned the soundness of the plan. No insoluble barriers to deliverability have been identified and in this respect the CS complies with PPS 12. Furthermore, this is an evolving process and there will be reviews to reflect changing circumstances and new local partnerships as they emerge, especially in terms of the new localism agenda.
91. Nevertheless, it is important to ensure that delivery is actually proceeding in accordance with the timelines envisaged in the plan. Regular and effective monitoring is therefore an essential element of the implementation process and will allow relevant intervention measures to be introduced if necessary. The monitoring framework in the CS focuses on the seven Strategic Objectives with links to the relevant policies. The Council is keen to ensure that only

targets that are measurable and can be justified by robust and up to date data are included. This is a commendable objective but there do remain some indicators with vague or immeasurable outcomes.

92. The Council has addressed this to some degree by adding further performance indicators and targets through **PC35-PC40**. These changes are supported but **PC35, PC39** and **PC40** provide indicators with no associated target/ outcome. This missing information was however included in the Council's representations to the examination [**CD163**]. In order to make these indicators meaningful in the monitoring process I recommend that the relevant targets are added (**IC5**). The Council is confident that there will be scope to make the outcomes of the Annual Monitoring Review process more locally relevant when future reports are directed to local members and the community rather than the Government Office. The delivery progress and effectiveness post implementation of each of the Areas of Change and the Strategic Allocation will be reported through the Annual Monitoring Review and this is specifically referred to in **PC8** which is endorsed.
93. Nevertheless, the indicators and targets in relation to Strategic Objective 6 remain weak and English Heritage has made reasonable suggestions as to how they could be strengthened. Whilst it is noted that the programme for completion of the new conservation area appraisals is dependant on resources this would provide a measurable target that should be possible to realistically identify. I recommend that in the interests of soundness such a change should be made (**IC6**). The Council has made clear that it will keep the monitoring process under review as more information becomes available. Further indicators and targets will be provided through the *Conservation and Heritage* and *Public Realm Strategy* Technical Notes, which the LDS indicates are likely to be adopted by June 2012 and November 2012 respectively.
94. Effectiveness also requires flexibility and for a plan that spans a 15 year timeframe and is being generated during an economic downturn this is especially pertinent. Some of the Areas of Change are longer term regeneration projects that are therefore subject to greater uncertainty. Whilst it is not unreasonable to expect the economic situation to improve over the lifetime of the plan the development principles have been drawn up to allow some scope for variation, for example in terms of the mix of uses and the layout and design of future development.
95. It is intended that more detailed guidance will be provided through other Local Development Documents, including Development Briefs. The Council has chosen to produce a detailed LDS which sets out all statutory and non statutory documents that are envisaged at this time, including a timetable. This provides a helpful picture within which the strategic context of the CS will operate. The LDS will be reviewed and updated as the Council's priorities change and develop.
96. **Taking account of the Council's proposed changes it is concluded that the plan does make robust provision for the delivery of development through the monitoring of its effectiveness and inclusion of flexibility and contingency measures, subject to my changes IC5 and IC6.**

## **OTHER MATTERS**

97. The evidence base is set out in Appendix 4. Additional documents have been added through **PC41** and **PC42** and **IC4**. These changes will provide a more robust and complete foundation to underpin the CS and its policies.
98. When the CS is adopted it is intended to publish a revised Proposals Map to update the current map that supports the 2003 Local Plan. The changes are outlined in Appendix 8 and the Council has proposed a further change, **PC44**, to West Durrington District Centre which was considered under Issue Six. A separate Minerals and Waste Development Framework is being produced by West Sussex County Council although work on this has been suspended pending clarity on the Regional Strategy situation and the implications of the localism agenda. The Borough Council acknowledges that if new minerals and waste sites are included in Worthing they will need to be included on the Proposals Map. There are a number of policies from the 2003 Local Plan which will continue to be saved until such time as a further Development Plan Document is produced to replace them. These are detailed in Appendix 6.
99. Protection of the natural environment is addressed through Strategic Objective 1. The spatial strategy directs development and change to the existing built up area and has been determined to some extent by the quality of the countryside that surrounds the town. This includes the South Downs National Park to the north of the A27. The CS, with the Council's proposed changes, will provide suitable safeguards to ensure that its national importance as a landscape asset are properly recognised and protected. Although West Durrington is a greenfield site it has strategic importance and ecological and landscape constraints are highlighted in Policy 1. The local evidence base includes a *Landscape Capacity Study* [**CD37**] and Biodiversity Report [**CD41**] which supports both the Strategic Objective and its delivery through Policy 13. The Landscape Study also informed the consideration of alternative housing strategies in terms of whether additional greenfield sites would be appropriate. Policy 13 refers to residential development outside the built up area as part of a Borough-wide housing land review if there is a proven under delivery of housing.
100. Green Infrastructure is addressed through Policy 14 and is supported by a local needs assessment *Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study* and its 2009 *Update* [**CD35; CD36**]. This includes an audit of a variety of different greenspace assets in accordance with the advice on green infrastructure provided by Natural England [**CD62**]. Policy 14 provides suitable safeguards to protect existing green infrastructure but does not prevent development that has a beneficial effect. Further detailed guidance on new provision will be provided in the *Green Infrastructure Strategy* SPD. The LDS indicates that this will take account of the guidance from agencies such as the Environment Agency and Natural England. This SPD is envisaged to be completed by March 2012.

## **Legal Requirements**

101. An examination of the compliance of the Core Strategy with the legal requirements is summarised in the table below. It is concluded that the Core Strategy meets them all.

<b>LEGAL REQUIREMENTS</b>	
<b>Local Development Scheme (LDS)</b>	The Core Strategy is identified within the approved LDS, May 2009, but this set out an expected adoption date of October 2010. This was subsequently revised in the LDS published in July 2010, which shows an adoption date of February 2011. Although the programme has further slipped by a month or two this is unsurprising taking account of the changing regional and national policy context. Overall the CS's content and timing are now compliant with the LDS.
<b>Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and relevant Regulations</b>	The SCI was adopted in October 2006 and amended in January 2010. Consultation has complied with the requirements of PPS 12 and the relevant Regulations, including consultation and engagement during the process of preparing the CS.
<b>Sustainability Appraisal (SA)</b>	SA has been carried out, independently verified and is adequate.
<b>Appropriate Assessment (AA)</b>	The Habitats Regulations AA Screening Report (April 2010) satisfactorily concludes that the CS would not adversely affect the integrity of European sites of nature conservation importance.
<b>National Policy</b>	The Core Strategy complies with national policy except where indicated and changes are recommended.
<b>Sustainable Community Strategy</b>	Satisfactory regard has been paid to the Joint Worthing and Adur SCS: Waves Ahead.
<b>2004 Act and Regulations (as amended)</b>	The Core Strategy complies with the Act and the Regulations.

## Overall Conclusion and Recommendation

102. **I conclude that with the changes proposed by the Council, set out in Appendix A, and the changes that I recommend, set out in Appendix C, the Worthing Core Strategy DPD satisfies the requirements of Section 20(5) of the 2004 Act and meets the criteria for soundness in PPS 12. Therefore I recommend that the plan be changed accordingly. And for the avoidance of doubt, I endorse the Council's proposed minor changes, set out in Appendix B, apart from PMA6 which is factually incorrect.**

*Christina Downes*

INSPECTOR

This report is accompanied by:

**Appendix A** (separate document) – Council's proposed changes that go to soundness

**Appendix B** (separate document) - Council's proposed minor changes

**Appendix C** (attached) – Recommended changes that the Inspector considers are needed to make the plan sound

## Appendix C – Recommended changes that the Inspector considers are needed to make the plan sound

Inspector Change No.	Policy/Paragraph/Page	Change
<b>IC1</b>	Paragraph 7.24, Page 84	Add a further sentence: <b>“A review of the suitability of the targets will be undertaken if the monitoring process identifies significant and sustained changes in market conditions or other factors that may affect the viability of development”.</b>
<b>IC2</b>	Area of Change 4: Union Place South, Page 54	Add to the Objectives section: “The additional potential for cultural, leisure <b>and office</b> uses within a more comprehensive scheme.....”
<b>IC3</b>	Paragraph 6.33, Page 70	Amend the final sentence as follows: <b>“For the purpose of this policy employment uses include B1, B2 and B8”.</b>
<b>IC4</b>	Appendix 4	Add the following evidence base documents to <b>PC41</b> : <b>West Sussex Environment Strategy (2008)</b> <b>The Worthing Local Interest Study (2003)</b> <b>Listed Building Register</b> <b>Conservation Area Appraisals</b>
<b>IC5</b>	Appendix 1, Strategic Objectives 1 and 5	<p>In <b>PC35</b> to the Local Indicator add the Target/ Outcome <b>“To be determined through the Green Infrastructure Strategy”.</b></p> <p>In <b>PC39</b> to the Local Indicator “Amount of open space, sport and recreational facilities lost to new development add the Target/ Outcome <b>“No loss without alternative provision”.</b></p> <p>In <b>PC39</b> to the Local Indicator “Amount of new community facilities developed” add the Target/</p>

		<p>Outcome "<b>Net increase</b>".</p> <p>In <b>PC39</b> to the Local Indicator "Number of community facilities lost as a result of development" add the Target/ Outcome "<b>No loss without alternative provision being provided</b>".</p> <p>In <b>PC40</b> to the 2 Local Indicators add the Target/ Outcome "<b>Annual increase</b>".</p>
<b>IC6</b>	Appendix 1, Strategic Objective 6, Page 121	Establish a measurable target of the number of up to date conservation area appraisals to be produced annually.