

Worthing Borough Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document

Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Statement Equality Impact Assessment Final Statement April 2011

1. Introduction

Worthing Borough Council adopted its Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) with effect from 12 April 2011.

This statement has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (16)(3) and (4), which require that a statement be produced on adoption of a plan or programme to show:

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
- How the environmental report has been taken into account;
- How opinions expressed and results of public consultation have been taken into account;
- The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives;
- The measures that are taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

Planning Policy Statement 12 widens these considerations from environmental to broader sustainability issues, as such, this statement provides information on the wider sustainability process, which incorporated Strategic Environmental Assessment.

2. How environmental considerations have been integrated into plan or programme

An integral part of the process of preparing the Core Strategy has been to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to ensure the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the development of the Core Strategy objectives and strategic policies. The requirements of EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 have been incorporated into the SA.

The Sustainability Appraisal commenced during the pre-production and evidence gathering stage, with an informal SA of the Issues and Options and the SA Scoping Report in 2005. Sustainability Appraisals were undertaken in accordance with the SA Scoping report throughout. However, the Scoping Report was revised

and updated in January 2006 to take account of new information. At each stage of the Core Strategy, options and objectives have been tested against the SA framework to predict and evaluate the effects of the Core Strategy. Ways of mitigating adverse effects have been included and measures proposed to improve the sustainability of options as the Core Strategy evolved. A SA Report was published at Preferred Options stage and an updated SA Report was submitted alongside the Submission Core Strategy (2007). The Core Strategy was then withdrawn and work started again in January 2009. Further SA work was undertaken to document changes and their impact following publication of the Revised Core Strategy consultation (June 2009) and Addendums were produced in June 2009, April 2010 (Proposed Submission consultation) and finally in July 2010 (Submission).

The methodology used to undertake the SA was considered by the Inspector and found to satisfy the relevant soundness test. All assessments and documents listed above can be viewed on the council's website at:

www.worthing.gov.uk/goto/ldf

3. How the environmental report has been taken into account

Issues and Options

The Issues and Options Report presented a number of options and reasonable alternatives on the spatial strategy to be pursued. In addition, it looked at alternatives for community priorities, sustainable development principles, main issues to be resolved, development emphasis, affordable housing and potential major projects. The Issues and Options SA tested the spatial strategy alternatives and sustainable development principles against a framework of sustainability objectives.

Preferred Options

The Core Strategy Preferred Options SA report was published alongside the Core Strategy Preferred Options document for public consultation in September 2006 (Core Strategy and Unlocking Development Potential). The preferred options were appraised against the sustainability objectives; a process which provided information on their possible economic, social and environmental impacts. The appraisal considered whether the impact was considered likely to be strong positive, weak positive, strong negative, weak negative, neutral or uncertain. The potential cumulative synergistic and secondary impacts and the likely timescales of the proposed policies on the sustainability objectives were also assessed. Each policy of the Preferred Options document includes a section on how the option scored in the SA. Reasons for choosing the Preferred Option including public consultation outcome were given.

Submission Draft

The Core Strategy was submitted in July 2010. Alongside this were the Preferred Options SA document (2006) for both Core Strategy and the sites document Unlocking Development Potential and the previously submitted but withdrawn Submission Core Strategy (2007) SA, the SA Addendum Reports June 2009, April 2010 and July 2010. These documents detailed the results of SA work undertaken on the changes made to the Core Strategy between Preferred Options and Submission stages. A number of changes to the Submission Core Strategy were proposed by the Council prior and during the Examination in Public to make the

plan sound. The Inspector accepted these changes and recommended some additional changes to the document in the binding report. All of these changes have been considered as part of the SA process and changes were deemed not to be significant to the strategy.

4. How opinions expressed and results of public consultation have been taken into account

Article 5.4 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive requires consultation with authorities with environmental responsibilities when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report (SA report). The required consultees at the time of publication were the Environment Agency, English Heritage, English Nature and the Countryside Agency; in addition responses were sought from a range of other organisations including West Sussex County Council, SEEDA, SEERA, Sussex Downs PCT, adjoining councils and the Sussex Downs Joint Committee. Comments received helped to inform the methodology and scope for the SA.

Details of those consulted on the methodology and scope of the SA are set out in Appendix 1 of the Core Strategy Preferred Options SA report. A total of 7 comments were received. A number of minor changes were made to the SA methodology and scope of the SA as a result of the initial SA work and formal consultation on the SA Scoping Report. Some of the indicators and the plans and programmes were amended.

Issues and Options Consultation

The results of the initial informal appraisal of the Issues and Options and the Issues and Options SA Scoping report was published for consultation alongside the Core Strategy Issues and Options in the period Nov 2005-Jan 2006. A total of 50 comments were received.

Preferred Options Consultation

The Preferred Options SA report was published for consultation alongside the Preferred Options in September 2006. A total of 36 consultation responses were received; the summarised responses are contained in the Compliance Document (2007).

2007 Submission Consultation

The Submission Core Strategy SA Report was published alongside the submission Core Strategy for consultation in October 2007. No comments were received on the final SA.

Revised Core Strategy

The changes were mainly presentational and no comments were received on the SA Addendum Report June 2009.

Two more Addendum reports were produced. One in April 2010 for the consultation on the Reg 27 document Submission Core Strategy (Proposed Submission) and one in July 2010 when the Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State. No comments were received on either of the reports.

5. The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with

In preparing the Core Strategy, a range of approaches to addressing the key planning issues facing Worthing were considered. This statement sets out the reasons for choosing the approach of the plan as adopted in the light of the other reasonable alternatives. A number of alternative approaches were set out in the Issues and Options and Preferred Options documents. Appendix 3 of the Preferred Options document sets out the appraisal of the Issues and Options. Section 10, 11 and 12 of the Core Strategy Preferred Options SA together with Appendix 4 and 5 set out detailed consideration of the reasonable alternatives considered at Preferred Options stage.

The Sustainability Appraisal clearly indicated that a balanced spatial strategy, focusing development in certain areas (included in the Unlocking Development Potential DPD – sites document) later called Areas of Change was the most sustainable compared to alternatives. One large development West Durrington catering for a large part of the family housing was included in the Unlocking Development Potential DPD and became a policy as opposed to an Area of Change.

Having determined the most sustainable approach to the distribution of development, at Preferred Options stage several options were considered as alternatives for each area or variants of areas of change. These Preferred Options went on to form the basis of the final policies in the Submission Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy, as adopted, has been found sound following examination by an independent Inspector and represents a sustainable approach to key planning issues in the Borough up to 2026.

6. The measures that are taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme

Section 9 of the Core Strategy addresses the implementation of the Core Strategy. It addresses contingencies and explains the important role of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Appendix 2 Strategic Risk Appraisal of the Core Strategy sets out a variety of levels of intervention should the strategy be at risk of not being delivered or would significantly delayed.

Section 10 of the Core Strategy sets out how monitoring of the Core Strategy will be addressed. Appendix 1 contains a monitoring framework setting out a table of indicators that will be used to monitor policies contained in the Core Strategy.

The documents referred to in this statement can be viewed at:

www.worthing.gov.uk/goto/ldf

7. Conclusion

It is very clear from this statement that environmental considerations have been integrated into the Worthing Core Strategy from its very inception. At every stage that followed environmental reports, SA's and consultation responses have informed and influenced the options and policy approach taken within the Development Plan.

8. Equality Impact Assessment – Final Statement

The Council must conduct impact assessments as soon as a relevant new policy, function or service is considered. The primary role of the Equality Impact Assessment is to make sure that equality is placed at the centre of policy development and review, as well as service delivery.

In April 2010 (updated for Submission) the Council undertook an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) of the Core Strategy. The EqIA examined whether the Core Strategy DPD and the associated consultation arrangements caused any adverse impact or discriminated against different groups in the community.

The assessment concluded that the overall strategy would contribute directly and indirectly to the delivery and accessibility of new homes, school, employment opportunities and infrastructure facilities. Whilst no mitigation measures were considered necessary it was recognised that it is essential to monitor the implementation and impact of the Core Strategy policies through the production of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

A number of changes to the Submission Core Strategy were proposed by the Council prior and during the Examination in Public to make the plan sound. The Inspector accepted these changes and recommended some additional changes to the document in the binding report. These changes were deemed not to be significant and no additional Equality Impact Assessment was required.