

Urban Characterisation & Density
Supplementary Planning Documents

Sustainability

Appraisal

Scoping Report

(incorporating Strategic Environmental
Assessment)

March 2011

CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction**
 - Background
 - Sustainable Development
 - Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment
 - Urban Characterisation and Density Supplementary Planning Document
 - Stages of the SA Process

- 2 Stage A: Scoping**
 - Introduction
 - Task A1: Identify relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives
 - Task A2: Collecting baseline information
 - Task A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems
 - Task A4: Developing the SA framework
 - Task A5: Consulting on the Scope of the SA

- 3 Conclusions and Future Tasks**
 - Conclusions
 - Future Tasks

I INTRODUCTION

Background

- I.1 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is to be carried out for the Hart District Urban Characterisation and Density Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).
- I.2 The Urban Characterisation and Density SPDs will form part of the Hart District Local Development Framework (LDF) which comprises a number of documents that together guide the future of development in the District. There are two types of document in the LDF which help guide development:
- Development Plan Documents (DPDs) which contain policies and proposals; and
 - Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which contain detail and guidance on how to implement policies where this is considered necessary.
- I.3 The Urban Characterisation and Density SPDs will provide formal guidance on the design and character of future development within and adjacent to Hart's six main settlements. There will be an SPD for each of the main settlements, i.e. Fleet and Church Crookham, Blackwater, Yateley, Hook, Hartley Wintney, and Odiham.

Sustainable Development

- I.4 The term “sustainable development” has been used in policy-making since 1987 following the publication of the World Commission on Environment and Development Report 'Our Common Future'¹, commonly referred to as the Brundtland Report. The report developed guiding principles for sustainable development as it is generally understood today, and contained the following definition of sustainable development:

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”

- I.5 The concept of sustainable development gained additional momentum after the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, which encouraged the UK government to develop its own themes for sustainable development. The initial themes for sustainable development were presented in a document entitled 'A Better Quality of Life: a Strategy for Sustainable Development in the United Kingdom'². This was updated in 2005, when the Government produced a new UK framework for sustainable development 'Securing the Future'³. This document listed the following five principles of sustainable development

¹ World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) 'Our Common Future'

² Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (1999) 'A Better Quality of Life: a Strategy for Sustainable Development in the United Kingdom'

³ HM Government (2005) 'Securing the Future: Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy'

which are used to guide the implementation of sustainable development in the UK:

- Living within environmental limits;
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
- Achieving a sustainable economy;
- Promoting good governance; and
- Using sound science responsibly.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- I.6 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is required in the UK by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004⁴. All DPDs are subject to SA, but SA is not required for SPDs, it is optional. SA considers how the principles of sustainable development have been taken into account in the development of the document being appraised.
- I.7 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required in the EU by an EU Directive, commonly referred to as the “SEA Directive”⁵, on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Plans and programmes with the potential to have significant environmental effects (positive or negative) are required to undergo SEA. All DPDs are subject to SEA, and SPDs have the potential for significant environmental effects, therefore *may* be subject to SEA.
- I.8 Hart District Council has decided to undertake SA and SEA of the Urban Characterisation and Density SPDs. SA and SEA are required by separate legislation, however, as there are many cross-overs between the two processes, government guidance⁶ has recommended that the two processes be undertaken simultaneously. This approach will be taken for Hart’s Urban Characterisation and Density SPDs, therefore where SA is referred to this incorporates the requirements of SEA.

Urban Characterisation and Density Supplementary Planning Documents

- I.9 The Urban Characterisation and Density SPDs will:
- Identify, analyse and describe the form and character of the settlement it relates to and the sub-areas within it;
 - Provide a legible analysis of the streets and spaces within the settlement it relates to;
 - Note the mixes of uses and activities;
 - Analyse the residential form, character and layout, including representative plot characteristics;

⁴ HM Government (2004) ‘Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004’

⁵ EU (2001) ‘Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment’

⁶ ODPM (2005) ‘Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents’

- Map public transport accessibility and key pedestrian corridors;
- Recommend, where appropriate, local design policies and guidance based on the above analysis, taking into account national policy.

1.10 The SPDs will then be used as tools to inform developers, architects, planners, highway engineers and the local community to ensure that future change and development is appropriate, in context and character, to the existing environment and communities within the District.

Stages of the SA Process

1.11 Government guidance on SA identifies the various stages of SA and how these relate to the different stages of preparing a Supplementary Planning Document. The stages are shown in Table 1.1 below, taken from the ODPM guidance.

Table 1.1 Incorporating SA within the SPD Process (Taken from Figure 9 of the ODPM Guidance⁷)

SPD Stage 1: Pre-production – Evidence Gathering
SA stages and tasks
<p>Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainable development objectives. • A2: Collecting baseline information. • A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems. • A4: Developing the SA framework. • A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA.
SPD Stage 2: Production – Prepare draft SPD
SA stages and tasks
<p>Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B1: Testing the SPD objectives against the SA framework. • B2: Developing the SPD options. • B3: Predicting the effects of the draft SPD. • B4: Evaluating the effects of the draft SPD. • B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects. • B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the SPD.
<p>Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C1: Preparing the SA Report
<p>Stage D: Consulting on draft SPD and Sustainability Appraisal Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D1: Public participation on the SA report and the draft SPD. • D2: Assessing significant changes.
SPD Stage 3: Adoption

⁷ ODPM (2005) ‘Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents’

SA stages and tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• D3: Making decisions and providing information.
Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the SPD
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• E1: Finalising aims and methods for monitoring.• E2: Responding to adverse effects.

1.12 This report represents stage A for all the Urban Characterisation and Density SPDs. The following section will outline in more detail the methodology that has been followed for this SA Scoping Report.

2 STAGE A: SCOPING

Introduction

- 2.1 This section of the report sets out how the scoping stage of the SA has been carried out, with reference to tasks listed under Stage A in Table I.1 in the previous section.
- 2.2 It is important to note that for the scoping stage for this SA it has been possible to draw on the Scoping Report for the SA of the overall LDF and Core Strategy which is being consulted upon in tandem with this document. This Scoping Report only includes information specific to the Urban Characterisation and Density SPDs as it supplements the Scoping Report for the LDF rather than repeating large sections of it.

Task A1: Identify relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives

- 2.3 This task requires a review of policies, plans and programmes relevant to the Urban Characterisation and Density SPDs to establish the sustainability objectives which need to be considered.
- 2.4 A comprehensive review of relevant policies, plans and programmes for the Hart District LDF has been undertaken as part of the LDF SA Scoping Report. In preparing the SA Scoping Report for the Urban Characterisation and Density SPDs consideration has been given to whether there are additional plans or programmes which should be considered specific to the SPDs.
- 2.5 The following documents were identified as relevant for consideration for these SPDs and the associated SA:

Table 2.1 Additional Relevant Plans and Programmes

Plan/Programme	Summary
National Policy	
Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3): Housing ⁸	Indicates that Local Authorities should facilitate good design by identifying distinctive features that define the character of a particular local area. Highlights that new residential development should be well integrated with neighbouring buildings and the local area.
Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development ⁹	States that planning authorities should plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. Indicates that good design should contribute positively to making places better for people, and that design

⁸ CLG (2010) Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3): Housing

⁹ ODPM (2005) Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development

	which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions should not be accepted.
Guidance Documents	
Planning for Places: delivering good design through Core Strategies ¹⁰	Sets out how design can inform and influence strategic planning documents such as Core Strategies. Indicates that detailed background studies such as characterisation studies can help underpin the broader strategic direction that evolves and is articulated in the LDF.
Urban Design Compendium 2: Delivering Quality Places ¹¹	Provides guidance on good urban design, including identifying principles of urban design and explaining how these can be applied to create successful places.
Suburbs and the Historic Environment ¹² ; and The Heritage of Historic Suburbs ¹³	Sets out how English Heritage believes that the most successful approach to planning, executing and managing change in our suburbs is one based on a sound understanding of local character, including its integral landscape. The general advice is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge that some change is inevitable; • Encourage analysis; • Encourage the development of a long term strategy for the future of the suburbs; • Recognise the diversity of the suburbs; • Recognise the relationship between elements of the suburban landscape.
Better Places to Live by Design: A Companion Guide to PPG3 ¹⁴	Emphasises the need for better design of residential areas. Highlights that quality of life can be improved if residential areas are well-planned, well-designed, and well-managed. Encourages better linkages between planning and design and for local authorities and developers to think more imaginatively about design and layout.
By Design – Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice ¹⁵	Highlights the importance of good design and how it is important <i>everywhere</i> . States that good design arises from a thorough and caring understanding of place and context as no two places are the same so there can be no blueprint for good design.

¹⁰ CABE (2009) Planning for Places: delivering good design through Core Strategies

¹¹ English Partnerships, Housing Corporation, Roger Evans Associates Ltd (2007) Urban Design Compendium 2: Delivering Quality Places

¹² English Heritage (2007) Suburbs and the Historic Environment

¹³ English Heritage (2007) The Heritage of Historic Suburbs

¹⁴ DTLR, CABE (2001) Better Places to Live by Design: A Companion Guide to PPG3

¹⁵ CABE, DETR (2000) By Design – Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice

Task A2: Collecting baseline information

- 2.6 This task requires the collection of baseline information about the plan area, and anywhere outside the plan area which may be relevant. A large amount of baseline data is presented in the LDF and Core Strategy SA Scoping Report. The information in this document is considered sufficient for the Urban Characterisation and Density SPDs, therefore no additional baseline data has been collected specific to these SPDs. However, the SPDs themselves do contain baseline information on the settlements they apply to. The LDF and Core Strategy SA Scoping Report should be read in conjunction with this document.

Task A3: Identifying sustainability issues and characteristics

- 2.7 This task requires the identification of key sustainability issues and characteristics relevant to the plan in question, based on the review of plans and programmes and the baseline information collected as part of the previous tasks.
- 2.8 The LDF SA Scoping Report identifies a number of significant sustainability issues within Hart. No additional issues or characteristics have been identified for the Urban Characterisation and Density SPDs. Sustainability issues and characteristics highlighted in the LDF and Core Strategy SA Scoping Report have therefore been selected for consideration for this SA as appropriate. The key sustainability issues and characteristics considered of most relevance to the Urban Characterisation and Density SPDs are listed below:

Character, Vitality and Viability
The centres of some of Hart's main settlements would benefit from regeneration
Historic Environment
There are important historical assets in the District's settlements, particularly in Hartley Wintney and Odiham, and some of the smaller rural settlements

Task A4: Developing the SA Framework

- 2.9 The SA framework is made up of a number of SA objectives which are then used to test the plan against. A set of 21 objectives have been identified as part of the LDF and Core Strategy SA Scoping Report based on the review of plans and programmes and the baseline information for the District.
- 2.10 As the Urban Characterisation and Density Study SPDs relate to a specific topic, it is possible that not all the SA objectives will be relevant. Table 2.3 below lists the SA objectives from the LDF SA Scoping Report and indicates which are considered relevant to the Urban Characterisation and Density Study SPDs. The SPDs will only be tested against the SA objectives which are considered relevant.

Table 2.3 Relevance of SA Objectives to the Urban Characterisation and Density Study SPDs

Hart District Council SA Objectives	Can this objective be delivered by these SPDs?
SA1 To provide all residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home which meets their needs	No
SA2 To protect and enhance the health and well-being of the population	Yes
SA3 To encourage increased engagement in cultural activity, leisure, and recreation across all sections of the community	No
SA4 To reduce inequality, poverty and social exclusion	Yes
SA5 To improve community safety by reducing crime and the fear of crime	No
SA6 To create and sustain vibrant and locally distinctive settlements and communities	Yes
SA7 To protect and enhance the District's historic environment	Yes
SA8 To protect and enhance biodiversity	Yes
SA9 To protect and enhance the District's countryside and rural landscape	No
SA10 To maintain and improve the water quality of the District's rivers and groundwaters and other water bodies	No
SA11 To maintain and improve soil quality	No
SA12 To reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases and manage the impacts of climate change	No
SA13 To reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting detriment to the local community, environment and economy	No
SA14 To increase energy efficiency, security and diversity of supply and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources	No
SA15 To promote the efficient use of land through the appropriate re-use of previously developed land	Yes
SA16 To improve the efficiency of resource use and achieve sustainable resource management	No
SA17 To improve accessibility to all services and facilities	No
SA18 To improve efficiency of transport networks by enhancing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and promoting policies which reduce the need to travel	No
SA19 To maintain and improve opportunities for everyone to acquire the education and skills they need to find and remain in work	No
SA20 To maintain high and stable levels of employment and promote sustainable economic growth and competitiveness	No
SA21 To stimulate regeneration where appropriate and	Yes

encourage urban renaissance	
-----------------------------	--

2.11 When the SPDs are assessed, scores are awarded against each of the SA objectives considered to be relevant. The scores are chosen from the following:

Table 2.4 Scoring Mechanism

Scoring	Explanation
+++	Major positive effect – proposed approach likely to contribute significantly to meeting this SA objective
++	Moderate positive effect – proposed approach likely to contribute moderately to meeting this SA objective
+	Minor positive effect – proposed approach likely to contribute slightly to meeting this SA objective
0	Neutral / No impact – proposed approach unlikely to have any effect on meeting this SA objective
-	Minor negative effect - proposed approach likely to contribute slightly to meeting this SA objective
--	Moderate negative effect – proposed approach likely to contribute moderately to meeting this SA objective
---	Major negative effect – proposed approach likely to contribute significantly to meeting this SA objective
?	Uncertain – effects on the SA objective unclear

2.12 The assessments of the SPDs will use the SA objectives listed in Table 2.3 above and will be informed by the information collected at previous stages, notably the review of plans and programmes, and the baseline data. However, it is also based on the professional judgement of officers at Hart District Council.

2.13 The SA scoring is not a quantitative process but a qualitative one, and therefore does not entail simply adding up how many pluses or minuses an option has over another. It also involves in-depth analysis which accompanies the assessment in order to help interpret the results and to inform decision-making. It may be the case that a single negative score against an objective could be so significant that even if other scores are positive, an option may be rejected, or the SPD may require amendment.

2.14 The full results of the SA will be provided in tables such as the one in Table 2.5 below, including an explanation as to why each score has been awarded, how likely the effects are to occur, the spatial scale of the effects predicted, the permanence of the effects predicted, and how long term they are thought likely to be.

Table 2.5 Example Scoring Table

SA Objective	Assessment of Effect	Commentary
SA1 To provide all residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home which meets their needs	++	Comments: This part of the SPD will help to meet Hart’s housing needs. Likelihood of effect: Likely Spatial Scale: Hart District Temporary/Permanent: Permanent Short, medium, long term: Medium to long term
SA2 To protect and enhance the health and well-being of the population	etc	

Task A5: Consulting on the Scope of the SA

2.15 This Scoping Report will now be consulted upon for a minimum of five weeks. The statutory environmental consultees (Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage) are to be consulted as well as other relevant organisations and the general public.

3 CONCLUSION AND FUTURE TASKS

Conclusion

- 3.1 This Scoping Report represents the findings of the stage A tasks undertaken for the SA of the Urban Characterisation and Density SPDs for Fleet and Church Crookham, Yateley, Blackwater, Hook, Hartley Wintney, and Odiham.
- 3.2 This document is now subject just over five weeks consultation which will close on **13th May 2011**. Please email any comments to the planning policy team at planningpolicy@hart.gov.uk or if you prefer to respond in writing send comments to the following address:

Planning Policy Team
Hart District Council
Civic Offices
Harlington Way
Fleet
Hants
GU51 4AE

- 3.3 If you have any questions about this document please use the contact details above or call the planning policy team on 01252 774226.

Future Tasks

- 3.4 Following the consultation period, responses will be considered and the report amended as appropriate. The next stage of the SA involves developing and refining options and assessing the effects of the plan. A Sustainability Appraisal Report will be produced to present the results of this, and will also include a summary of the responses received from this consultation and the actions taken.