



Local Development Framework &
Core Strategy

Sustainability

Appraisal

Scoping Report

(incorporating Strategic Environmental
Assessment)

July 2011

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I INTRODUCTION

Background

- I.1 The Local Development Framework (LDF) comprises a number of documents that together guide the future of development in the District and provide the planning framework within which this will be delivered. There are two types of document in the LDF which help guide development:
- Development Plan Documents (DPDs) which contain policies and proposals, and may include site allocations; and
 - Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which contain detail and guidance on implementing the policies set out in DPDs where this is considered necessary.
- I.2 This LDF Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) is intended to be the overarching scoping report to cover all DPDs and SPDs produced as part of the LDF. Although each DPD/SPD will also have a dedicated scoping report, these will be very specific to those documents, as the general issues relevant to all the documents are covered in this LDF Scoping Report. The document-specific scoping reports will therefore only supplement, not repeat this document.
- I.3 With respect to the Core Strategy, a scoping report has already been consulted upon on more than one occasion. However, as this document is more up-to-date and includes some changes, this document will in effect form the Core Strategy Scoping Report, replacing any previous versions.

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

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’

new UK framework for sustainable development ‘Securing the Future’³. This document listed the following five principles of sustainable development 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. The 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 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 LDF, therefore where SA is referred to this incorporates the requirements of SEA. A Quality Assurance Checklist is provided in **Appendix I** which will be completed to accompany the SA Reports of each DPD/SPD assessed to highlight how the requirements of the SEA Directive have been met.

Stages of the SA Process

- I.9 Government guidance on SA identifies the various stages of SA and how these relate to the different stages of preparing a Development Plan Document (it is virtually the same when applying to SPDs). The stages are shown in **Table I.1** below, taken from the ODPM guidance:

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

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’

Table 1.1 Incorporating SA within the DPD Process (Taken from Figure 5 of the ODPM Guidance⁷)

DPD 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 sustainability objectives. • A2: Collecting baseline information. • A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems. • A4: Developing the SA framework. • A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA.
DPD Stage 2: Production
SA stages and tasks
<p>Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B1: Testing the DPD objectives against the SA framework. • B2: Developing the DPD options. • B3: Predicting the effects of the DPD. • B4: Evaluating the effects of the DPD. • B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects. • B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the DPDs.
<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 the preferred options of the DPD and SA Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D1: Public participation on the preferred options of the DPD and the SA report. • D2(i): Appraising significant changes.
DPD Stage 3: Examination
SA stages and tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D2(ii): Appraising significant changes resulting from representations.
DPD Stage 4: Adoption and monitoring
SA stages and tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D3: Making decisions and providing information
<p>Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the DPD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E1: Finalising aims and methods for monitoring. • E2: Responding to adverse effects.

1.10 This report represents stage A. The following section will outline in more detail the methodology that has been followed for this LDF SA Scoping Report, which will also be followed for subsequent scoping reports accompanying other documents.

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

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 1.1** in the previous section. The same methodology will be used for subsequent scoping reports accompanying other documents.

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

- 2.2 This task requires a review of policies, plans and programmes relevant to the LDF and Core Strategy DPD to establish the sustainability objectives which need to be considered.
- 2.3 A comprehensive review of relevant policies, plans and programmes, highlighting their key sustainability objectives is provided in **Appendix 2** of this document. Table 2.1 below lists all the documents included, separated into the categories of: international, national, regional, sub-regional and local.

Table 2.1 Key Plans and Programmes Relevant to the Hart District Core Strategy

International
EU (1991) Directive 91/271/EEC concerning urban waste-water treatment
EU (1991) Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources
EU (1992) Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna
EU (2000) Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for the Community action in the field of water policy
EU (2008) Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe
EU (2008) Directive 2008/98/EC on waste and repealing certain Directives
EU (2009) Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources
EU (2009) Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds
UNFCCC (1997) Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
National
CLG (2007) Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change, Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1
CLG (2009) Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
CLG (2010) Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment
CLG (2010) Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk
CLG (2011) Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport
CLG (2011) Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing
HM Government (1994) UK Biodiversity Action Plan
HM Government (2005) Securing the Future: delivering UK Sustainable Development

Strategy
ODPM (2002) Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open Space, Sport and Recreation
ODPM (2003) Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future
ODPM (2004) Planning Policy Guidance 24: Planning and Noise
ODPM (2004) Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
ODPM (2004) Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy
ODPM (2004) Planning Policy Statement 23: Planning and Pollution Control
ODPM (2005) Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development
ODPM (2005) Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
ODPM (2005) Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management
Regional
GOSE (2009) The South East Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England
SEEDA (2006) The Regional Economic Strategy 2006-2016: A Framework for Sustainable Prosperity
SEERA (et al) (2008) The South East Regional Sustainability Framework
Sub-Regional
Environment Agency (2009) Thames River Basin Management Plan
Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership (1997) The Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire
Hampshire County Council (2006) Hampshire Local Transport Plan 2006-2011
Hampshire County Council (2011) Hampshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2031
Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board (2009) Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Delivery Framework
Local
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (2010/11) Core Strategy Issues Consultation
Bracknell Forest Borough Council (2008) Core Strategy (adopted) and Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options (2010)
East Hampshire District Council (2009) Core Strategy Preferred Policies
Hart District Council (2007) Hart District Council Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2007-2011
Hart District Council (2008) Hart Sustainable Community Strategy
Hart District Council (2009, incl. amendments) Interim Avoidance Strategy for the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
Rushmoor Borough Council (2010) Core Strategy (submission)
Surrey Heath Borough Council (2010) Core Strategy (submission)
Waverley (2011) Core Strategy Preferred Options
West Berkshire Council (2010) Core Strategy (submission)
Wokingham Borough Council (2010) Core Strategy (adopted)

- 2.4 It is acknowledged that there will be other documents which are not included in this list which could be considered relevant, but only the key documents have been reviewed to keep the list manageable and readable. As documents for the LDF are prepared, which may cover different topics and go into detail on specific topics, the SA of those documents can include the consideration of plans and programmes which are specifically relevant to those documents.

Task A2: Collecting baseline information

- 2.5 This task requires the collection of baseline information about the plan area, and anywhere outside the plan area which may be relevant. This will help to set out the current situation in the District and how conditions are likely to evolve over time. This information can then be used to help identify the key issues and problems facing the District, and can inform the assessment of any plans being assessed.
- 2.6 Baseline information has been collected from a number of sources, notably the Council's Geographical Information System (GIS), and the LDF evidence base studies. Up-to-date information is used where possible, but only information which was readily available could be used.
- 2.7 There is a vast amount of information available about the District, and rather than repeat this in this document, the key aspects have been drawn out, and are presented as the key issues and problems facing the District under the next section (Task A3). More detailed information, including maps of constraints, is provided in **Appendix 3**. Gaps in information are identified where they exist.

Task A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

- 2.8 This task requires the identification of key sustainability issues and problems 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. The key sustainability issues and problems which have been identified are listed in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2 Key Sustainability Issues and Characteristics in Hart

Settlements
Residents rely on areas outside the District for some facilities, services, and shops
Population & Housing
The population is increasingly ageing
House prices are high and there is a shortfall of affordable housing
There is a need for homes suitable for people with a disability and/or older people
Additional provision of sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople may be required
Health and Well-Being, Cultural Activity, Leisure, and Recreation
There is a need for additional cultural, leisure, and recreational facilities
Poverty and Crime
Generally wealthy population – the least deprived District in the Country
Low and decreasing crime rates but fear of crime remains particularly after dark
Character, Vitality and Viability
The centres of some of Hart's main settlements would benefit from regeneration
The vitality and viability of Hart's settlements is threatened by the presence of larger centres outside the District
There is a need for additional convenience floorspace, particularly in Fleet

For rural facilities to remain these will require continued use by local communities
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
Biodiversity
The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area is a significant constraint to development, particularly in and around Yateley and Blackwater
There are various sites designated for nature conservation across the District which affect all the main settlements
Landscape
The landscape is largely rural and encompasses a range of landscape types; there are no statutory landscape designations
Water Quality
The quality of water in waterbodies needs to be improved to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive
Soil Quality
There are large areas of best and most versatile land (high grade agricultural land)
Air Quality and Climate Change
Carbon dioxide emissions per capita per household are high compared to the South East and UK averages
Flooding
There are small areas with a higher risk of fluvial flooding and these affect all of Hart's main settlements, particularly Yateley and Blackwater
There are some areas which are more susceptible to surface water and groundwater flooding than others
Energy and Resource Use and Renewable Energy Generation
There is a high demand for gas and electricity in homes in Hart compared to the South East and UK averages, but significant scope for renewable energy provision
Hart is in an area of serious water stress
Previously Developed Land
There is a limited supply of brownfield land available for development
Transport
More than half of residents commute <i>out</i> of Hart for work, but half of the District's workforce commute <i>into</i> the District from nearby areas
The rural nature of the District and commuting patterns make sustainable travel difficult, therefore most commuting is done by car
Travel demand is increasing leading to congestion on the roads and trains, and at railway car parks
Education
There is adequate provision of school places but many of these are not in the locations where they are needed
The Economy
The employment rate is high compared to national, regional and county averages, and the unemployment rate is low
Wages are high compared to the Hampshire and South East averages, but some people commute out of the District for higher paid work
There is a surplus of office space, some of which is outdated/obsolete but there is a small shortfall of industrial space

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 policies and options of the plan against. The SA objectives have been produced based on the review of plans and programmes and the baseline information mentioned in the previous tasks. They also closely follow the regional objectives from the South East Regional Sustainability Framework⁸ (2008), and cover all the topics listed in the SEA Directive.
- 2.10 In some cases, SA objectives can be scoped out as not being relevant to a particular document. In the case of overarching documents like the Core Strategy, it is thought that all the SA objectives will be relevant, but for topic-specific DPDs/SPDs only some of the SA objectives may be relevant. The SA objectives are listed below in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 SA Objectives

Hart District Council SA Objectives
SA1 To provide all residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home which meets their needs
SA2 To protect and enhance the health and well-being of the population
SA3 To encourage increased engagement in cultural activity, leisure, and recreation across all sections of the community
SA4 To reduce inequality, poverty and social exclusion
SA5 To improve community safety by reducing crime and the fear of crime
SA6 To create and sustain vibrant and locally distinctive settlements and communities
SA7 To protect and enhance the District's historic environment
SA8 To protect and enhance biodiversity
SA9 To protect and enhance the District's countryside and rural landscape
SA10 To maintain and improve the water quality of the District's rivers and groundwaters and other water bodies
SA11 To maintain and improve soil quality
SA12 To reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases and manage the impacts of climate change
SA13 To reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting detriment to the local community, environment and economy
SA14 To increase energy efficiency, security and diversity of supply and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources
SA15 To promote the efficient use of land through the appropriate re-use of previously developed land
SA16 To improve the efficiency of resource use and achieve sustainable resource management
SA17 To improve accessibility to all services and facilities

⁸ SEERA, GOSE, SEEFA, EA, Dept of Health, South East Forum for Sustainability, Regional Action and Involvement South East, NHS South Central Strategic Health Authority, NHS South East Coast Strategic Health Authority, English Heritage, Social Inclusion Partnership for the South East (2008) The South East Regional Sustainability Framework: Towards a Better Quality of Life

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
SA19	To maintain and improve opportunities for everyone to acquire the education and skills they need to find and remain in work
SA20	To maintain high and stable levels of employment and promote sustainable economic growth and competitiveness
SA21	To stimulate regeneration where appropriate and encourage urban renaissance

2.11 When the policies or options of the plan are assessed, scores are awarded against each of the SA objectives. 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 slightly hinder meeting this SA objective
--	Moderate negative effect – proposed approach likely to moderately hinder meeting this SA objective
---	Major negative effect – proposed approach likely to significantly hinder meeting this SA objective
?	Uncertain – effects on the SA objective unclear

2.12 The assessment of the policies and options of the plan uses the SA objectives listed in Table 2.3 above and is 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 a policy 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 policy 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 Scoping reports are required to 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

Conclusion

- 3.1 This Scoping Report represents the findings of the stage A tasks undertaken for the SA of the Hart District LDF, which is also to apply to the Core Strategy DPD.
- 3.2 This document was consulted upon in draft from 1st April – 13th May 2011, and has now been finalised. The consultation responses and actions taken as a result of those responses are summarised in **Appendix 4**.
- 3.3 This document will be used to inform the SAs of all LDF documents. Scoping Reports will still be prepared for each LDF document where it is required, but these will only supplement, not repeat the information provided in this document.
- 3.4 It may be necessary to update this document periodically in order to ensure it is kept up-to-date. If significant changes are made to this document it will be consulted upon again.