

# Non-Technical Summary of the Sustainability Appraisal Report

Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic  
Environmental Assessment)

**Core Strategy Development Plan  
Document**

Preferred Approach  
Regulation 25

July 2011

## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1 The following non-technical summary is available as part of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report, as an appendix to the Core Strategy Preferred Approach document, and as a stand alone document. It informs consultees and the general public about the process of Sustainability Appraisal in plain English, avoiding the use of technical terms. A list of acronyms and a glossary is provided in Table 6 at the end of this non-technical summary. The production of a non-technical summary is a requirement of the EU Directive known as the ‘SEA Directive.’

### Introduction

- 2 Hart District Council is preparing a set of planning documents which will collectively provide a long-term planning vision for the District and contain policies and guidance that will be used to guide development in Hart. This collection of planning documents is known as the Local Development Framework.
- 3 The Core Strategy will form part of the Hart District Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy is a Development Plan Document which contains overarching strategic policies and will influence development in the District until 2028. Other Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents will contain more detailed policies and guidance, which must adhere to the policies of the Core Strategy.
- 4 As required by UK law in the form of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is being carried out of the Core Strategy to make sure that social, environmental and economic issues are taken into account at every stage of writing the Core Strategy. The requirements for SA also incorporate the requirements of the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive, therefore the SA incorporates SEA.
- 5 This document summarises the SA of the Core Strategy Preferred Approach Development Plan Document in non-technical terms. The full SA (incorporating SEA) entitled ‘Sustainability Appraisal Report: Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) Core Strategy Development Plan Document Preferred Approach Regulation 25’ is available at [www.hart.gov.uk](http://www.hart.gov.uk).

### Scoping

- 6 A scoping stage is required as part of the SA which involves setting the context for the appraisal by considering current baseline information on the environment, local communities and the local economy, and relevant plans and programmes. This includes identifying key sustainability issues and characteristics, and outlining the SA framework which will be used to carry out the appraisal.

- 7 The SA framework consists of 21 SA objectives which cover a number of topics including a range of social, environmental and economic issues. The SA objectives are listed below.

**Table I SA Objectives**

<b>Hart District Council SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA1</b>	To provide all residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home which meets their needs
<b>SA2</b>	To protect and enhance the health and well-being of the population
<b>SA3</b>	To encourage increased engagement in cultural activity, leisure, and recreation across all sections of the community
<b>SA4</b>	To reduce inequality, poverty and social exclusion
<b>SA5</b>	To improve community safety by reducing crime and the fear of crime
<b>SA6</b>	To create and sustain vibrant and locally distinctive settlements and communities
<b>SA7</b>	To protect and enhance the District's historic environment
<b>SA8</b>	To protect and enhance biodiversity
<b>SA9</b>	To protect and enhance the District's countryside and rural landscape
<b>SA10</b>	To maintain and improve the water quality of the District's rivers and groundwaters and other water bodies
<b>SA11</b>	To maintain and improve soil quality
<b>SA12</b>	To reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases and manage the impacts of climate change
<b>SA13</b>	To reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting detriment to the local community, environment and economy
<b>SA14</b>	To increase energy efficiency, security and diversity of supply and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources
<b>SA15</b>	To promote the efficient use of land through the appropriate re-use of previously developed land
<b>SA16</b>	To improve the efficiency of resource use and achieve sustainable resource management
<b>SA17</b>	To improve accessibility to all services and facilities
<b>SA18</b>	To improve efficiency of transport networks by enhancing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and promoting policies which reduce the need to travel
<b>SA19</b>	To maintain and improve opportunities for everyone to acquire the education and skills they need to find and remain in work
<b>SA20</b>	To maintain high and stable levels of employment and promote sustainable economic growth and competitiveness
<b>SA21</b>	To stimulate regeneration where appropriate and encourage urban renaissance

- 8 The scoping stage covering the Core Strategy and the LDF as a whole has been set out in an SA Scoping Report entitled 'Local Development Framework and Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment)' July 2011. A draft of that document was consulted upon from 1<sup>st</sup> April - 13<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

## Refining Options and Predicting Effects

- 9 During the evolution of the Core Strategy, a variety of options have been considered and tested using the SA framework set out above. The results of the options appraisal are presented in the SA Report and have informed the development of policies for inclusion in the Core Strategy. The sustainability of the different options was considered in choosing which options to take forward.
- 10 Options were considered for housing numbers; housing distribution (options for previously-developed land, including approach to employment land and options for greenfield development); and strategic locations.
- 11 In terms of housing numbers, although the Coalition Government has expressed its intention to revoke regional plans, the Council is still currently required to be in general conformity with the South East Plan, therefore the Council is required to plan for 220 homes per annum.
- 12 Notwithstanding the Council's obligation to be in conformity with the South East Plan, the Council has explored the options for setting its own housing target. The following options were considered for housing numbers:
- Option 1) Capacity-led i.e. the number which could be accommodated on sites within settlements;
  - Option 2) The draft South East Plan figures i.e. 200 per annum;
  - Option 3) South East Plan figures i.e. 220 per annum;
  - Option 4) Locally-generated growth figures (zero net migration<sup>1</sup>) i.e. approximately 302 per annum;
  - Option 5) Demand-led growth i.e. 1,542 per annum based on evidence from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (DCA, 2009).
- 13 Major negative scores were awarded against options 1 and 5 therefore neither of these were considered appropriate targets. Option 4 could potentially have a significantly greater impact on the environment than options 2 and 3 as it proposes a greater amount of development, but is more likely to meet predicted housing needs.
- 14 Options 2 and 3 would involve less impact on the environment than Option 4, but would do less to meet housing need than Option 4. Comparing Options 2 and 3, both will have some impacts on the environment, though impacts of Option 3 would be slightly greater. Option 3 would meet slightly more housing need than Option 2.

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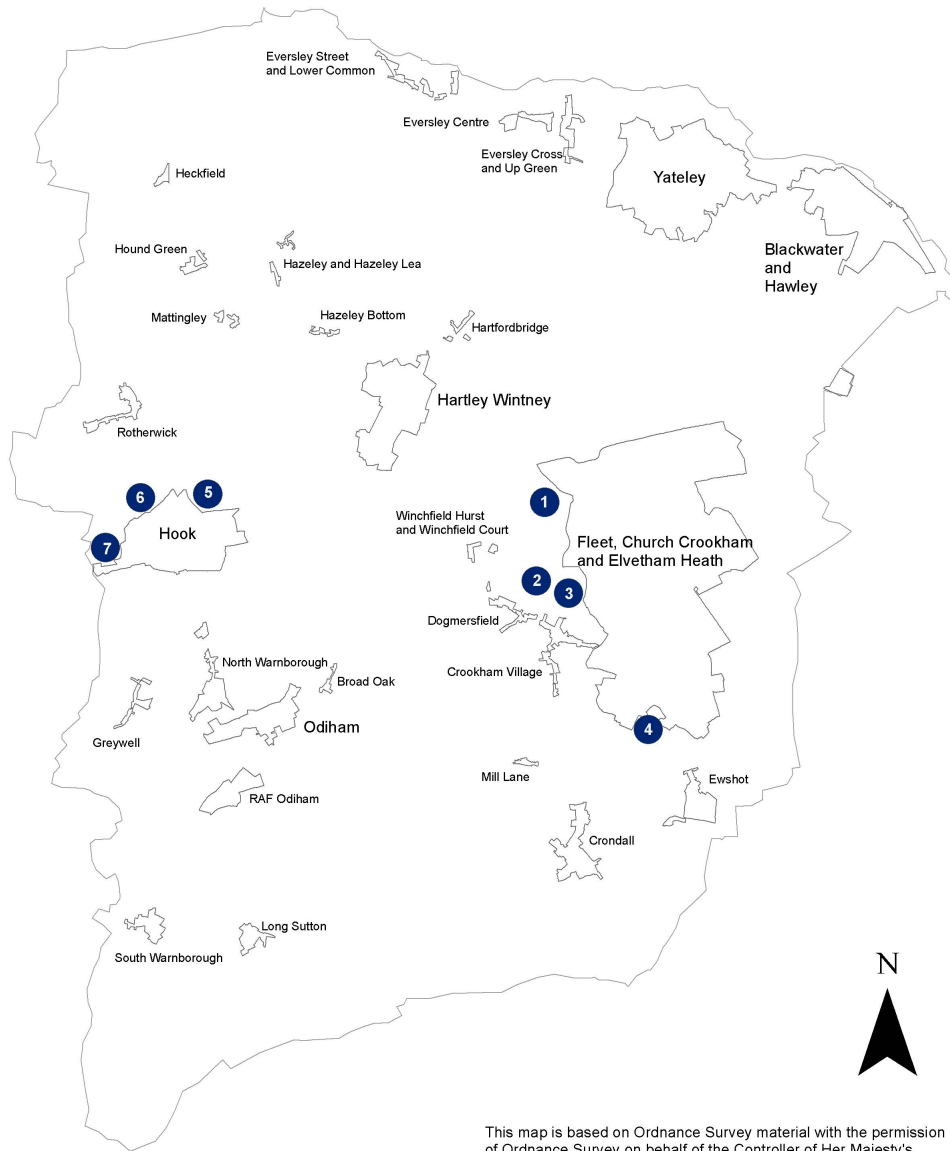
<sup>1</sup> Zero net migration is calculated by predicting how many households are likely to be formed from those already living in the District, taking into account how many people are likely to migrate out of the District, and cancelling out the figure for those migrating out of the District by allowing for the same number to migrate into the District. This results in a number of households, and therefore the number of new homes required.

- 15 The Council is required follow Option 3 i.e. the South East Plan target of 220 homes per annum over the period 2006-2028 (a total of 4,840), therefore the Core Strategy sets out plans for this level of development.
- 16 The options for housing distribution were considered in two parts, firstly options for the redevelopment of previously-developed land, then options for greenfield development.
- 17 The options for redevelopment of previously-developed land were:
- Option 1) Retain all employment land (as this is the main source of previously-developed land in the District); or
  - Option 2) Release some employment sites (whilst still retaining an adequate supply of employment land).
- 18 Option 2 scored significantly better than Option 1. The Council has decided to go for Option 2, therefore will aim to release some employment sites to help meet the District's housing target, but this will be limited to ensure that an adequate supply of employment land is still maintained. Notwithstanding the fact that there is a significant amount of out-commuting from Hart, it is still considered appropriate to release some employment sites, as evidence has indicated that there is a small surplus.
- 19 Having established that there was not an adequate supply of land available for housing development within existing settlement boundaries, or from releasing employment sites, it was decided that there was a need to develop some greenfield sites. Options for broad areas for greenfield developments were therefore considered as follows:
- Option 1) Extend Fleet;
  - Option 2) Extend Fleet, Blackwater, Yateley and Hook (Hart's four main settlements);
  - Option 3) Extend Fleet, Blackwater, Yateley, Hook, Hartley Wintney, and Odiham (Hart's six main settlements);
  - Option 4) Extend all settlements (broadly reflecting their current scale);
  - Option 5) Allocate a new settlement at Winchfield.
- 20 No single option clearly scored better than another. Options 1-4 were all considered appropriate options. Option 5 was not considered appropriate as the amount of development likely to be allocated at Winchfield would probably be insufficient to improve existing service provision to a standard required for a new settlement. There are very few existing services and facilities in Winchfield therefore significant improvements would be necessary, which may be at the expense of other Council objectives e.g. provision of affordable housing, and sustainable construction.
- 21 The Council has selected Option 4 as the most appropriate option for greenfield development as this is likely to make the best use of existing infrastructure capacity. This will allow significant resources to be targeted

at delivering the larger strategic allocations where maximum community gain and infrastructure improvements can be secured.

- 22 Having decided on the broad distribution of development, decisions then needed to be made on what sites might need to be allocated in the Core Strategy. The Council cannot allocate *all* sites in the Core Strategy, only ones which are fundamental to the delivery of the Core Strategy (referred to as “Strategic Locations” in Hart’s Core Strategy).
- 23 Strategic locations tend to be large-scale developments, and in line with the distribution approach (where development is distributed across the District’s settlements broadly reflecting the settlements’ current scales), these are focused at the larger settlements in the District. Smaller sites will be allocated in a later document to be prepared after the Core Strategy.
- 24 The following broad areas were considered for their potential for strategic locations (shown on map over the page):
- Option 1) North West Fleet (between the M3 and the railway line);
  - Option 2) West Fleet (west of Hitches Lane);
  - Option 3) West Fleet (east of Hitches Lane);
  - Option 4) South of Church Crookham (between Watery Lane and Queen Elizabeth Barracks);
  - Option 5) North East Hook (area around the A30 and Reading Road);
  - Option 6) North West Hook (towards Whitehouse Farm);
  - Option 7) West of Hook (between Hook and the District boundary).
- 25 Locations in Yateley and Blackwater were not considered in detail as they are constrained by flood risk, and their proximity to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). Areas to the east of Fleet and the south of Hook were not considered to have any potential due to the presence of the SPA and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The area to the north of Fleet was also considered to have little potential as the M3 forms the northern boundary to the settlement, and any development to the north of this would therefore be separated from the rest of the settlement by the M3.
- 26 It was clear that all the strategic locations had their disadvantages, and there was no perfect location for relatively large scale development. However, some of the strategic locations were considered better than others.
- 27 Around Fleet, Strategic Locations 1, 2 and 3 performed the best, but Strategic Location 1 could be considered isolated from the rest of the settlement in landscape terms, and there are several constraints at location 3 therefore location 2 was preferred. However, it was stressed that the northern parts of both locations 2 and 3 were preferred over the southern parts. Development of the northern parts of locations 2 and 3 would, amongst other things, retain a gap between Fleet and Crookham Village.

**Figure I Map of Strategic Locations**



**Key**

- Strategic Locations