



Hinckley & Bosworth  
Borough Council

*A Borough to be proud of*

**SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT  
MANAGEMENT POLICIES DPD**

**SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL  
ADOPTION STATEMENT**

**July 2016**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council adopted the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD on 12 July 2016.

Regulations 16 (3) and (4) in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (“The SEA Regulations”) require that the Borough Council shall “as soon as reasonably practicable” after the adoption of the plan make a statement available that contains the following particulars:

- a) How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
- b) How the environmental report has been taken into account;
- c) How opinions are expressed in response to:
  - i) The invitation referred to in regulation to in regulation 13(2)(d)
  - ii) Action taken by the responsible authority in accordance with regulation 13(4)
- d) How the results of any consultations entered into under regulation 14(4) have been taken into account;
- e) The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with;
- f) The measures that are taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

Additional information in relation to each of these particulars is set out below:

## **HOW ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS HAVE BEEN INTEGRATED IN THE PLAN OR PROGRAMME**

The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies forms part of the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan (2006-26) along with the other following documents:

- Core Strategy (2009)
- Hinckley Town Centre Area Action Plan (2011)
- Earl Shilton and Barwell Area Action Plan (2014)

Environmental impacts have been a key consideration during the production of the entire Local Plan. Throughout the production of the documents, each consultation stage was accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal. Specifically for the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD, the stages of production were as follows:

- 1) Issues and Options consultation - 2007
- 2) Preferred Options consultation - 2009
- 3) Pre-Submission consultation - 2014
- 4) Proposed Modifications consultation - 2014

It is important to note that the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD was produced within the strategic context of the Core Strategy which was adopted in 2009. The development of the Sustainability Appraisal began in 2005 with the production of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report by consultants WYG. This scoping report was updated in 2012 and again in 2013 and contained the Sustainability Criteria against which plans, policies and allocations would be assessed against to determine their sustainability credentials. The criteria took into account environmental considerations along with further considerations relating to social and economic matters. They were:

- 1) To ensure the provision of decent and affordable housing that meets local needs, links into the provision of services and an accessible local environment.
- 2) To improve health and reduce health inequalities by promoting healthy lifestyles, protecting health and providing access to health services.
- 3) To provide better opportunities for local people and tourists to access and understand local heritage, including our natural history.
- 4) To improve access to and participation in cultural and leisure activities.
- 5) To improve community safety, reduce the fear of crime and reduce anti-social behaviour.
- 6) To promote and support the empowerment of local communities in creating and implementing solutions that meet their needs focusing particularly on young, elderly and deprived people.
- 7) To preserve and enhance the natural environment (species and habitats) and green infrastructure whilst contributing to the achievement of Biodiversity Action Plan targets.
- 8) To conserve and enhance the built and natural character, diversity and local distinctiveness of towns and villages in Hinckley and Bosworth district.
- 9) To preserve and enhance the character and appearance and setting of archaeological sites, historic buildings, conservation sites, historic parks and other cultural assets including heritage assets on the 'Heritage at Risk' Register.

- 10) To conserve and enhance the character, diversity and local distinctiveness of the rural landscape in the borough area.
- 11) To conserve and enhance woodland cover in the borough area, particularly where it supports the National Forest area.
- 12) To maintain and improve the quality of water resources and protect the flood plain.
- 13) To improve air quality particularly through reducing transport related pollutants.
- 14) To proactively manage mineral resources and avoid/reduce pollution of land.
- 15) To minimise energy use and develop renewable energy resources.
- 16) To reduce greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate the rate of climate change.
- 17) To improve access to education and training for children, young people and adult learners.
- 18) To develop a strong culture of enterprise and innovation whilst providing access to appropriate employment opportunities for the local population, particularly in rural areas.
- 19) To help farmers diversify their agricultural activities or venture into new rural businesses. To help other rural businesses diversify their activities.
- 20) To optimise the use of previously developed land, buildings and existing infrastructure.
- 21) To promote and ensure high standards of sustainable design and construction.
- 22) To minimise waste and to increase the re-use and recycling of waste materials.
- 23) To improve access to services, particularly for the rural population, those without a car and for disabled, elderly and deprived people.
- 24) To encourage and develop the use of public transport, cycling and walking as alternatives to the private car.

To accompany versions of the document up to and including the the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) consultation on the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD, the Borough Council commissioned consultants WYG to produce a Sustainability Appraisal of the plan to accompany it.

As mentioned above, the Scoping Report for this DPD was produced in 2012 and provided the baseline which was then updated in 2013, as well as tests for compatibility between the Sustainability Appraisal objectives and Core Strategy Objectives, which also relate to the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD. These tests showed compatibility between the two sets of objectives. Within the scoping report a range of sustainability issues are identified and an SA framework was produced. This SA framework and suite of objectives informed the SA rationale which was used by WYG to assess sites and policies.

The WYG assessment of the DPD showed that there were a number of potentially significant sustainability effects, specifically from the development management policies as these are designed to promote sustainable development and ensure the protection of the environment and natural resources.

The submission version Development Management Policies were concluded by WYG to be centred around sustainable development which create the conditions for development to have positive impact on the natural and built environment, as well as heritage features. Policies were found to have strong sustainability impacts in retaining and protecting biodiversity and the high quality landscape of the Borough by ensuring green corridors and settlement separation and protection for designated sites. Policies also require strong protection for historic assets and the historic environment, and also scored well on this area of sustainability. Due to strong requirements for economic growth the policies also ensure a strong compatibility with ensuring appropriate development in sustainable and well located areas, and also ensure strong town and retail centres which ensure socio economic elements are taken into account in planning policy.

The site allocation assessment undertaken by WYG concluded that within rural areas, small numbers of residential housing, community facilities and green spaces will ensure that rural areas are served by a number of allocations that deliver a high degree of sustainability. The urban sites also make allocations for green spaces, community facilities, retail, employment and residential areas. The residential sites and employment sites are those that were found to have the most significant effects on sustainability, some of which require mitigation at later stages of policy development and the planning process.

WYG assessed the allocations for residential sites in the Urban area and found that they were likely to have a number of effects, however many are on brownfield land within the settlement boundary of Hinckley and therefore are well located. Others are located on Greenfield sites which could have a number of significant effects that require mitigation. Urban allocations also include appropriate green spaces including green space designations which are likely to enhance landscape, biodiversity and recreation and health opportunities. These allocations are also supported by local and neighbourhood centre allocations which alongside large and also small

employment allocations mean that a number of positive socio economic effects can be seen including access to employment and goods and services.

WYG concluded that allocations for residential use in rural areas, due to their small size were found to be likely to have potential benefits in providing housing schemes, however this was expected to be limited. These sites are predominantly small, sometimes infilling the village envelope in rural areas and would therefore have lower landscape and biodiversity impacts due to this. A number of continued and small new allocations are made in the rural areas for employment which alongside local centres and community facilities are important in retaining the vitality of these centres and villages.

The WYG report outlined the potential generic mitigation that could be included within developments are the following;

- Ensure landscape impacts from housing allocations are minimised by design, landscaping and appropriate green infrastructure;
- Development will be required to be sympathetic to the conservation area and historic environment;
- Development should ensure low impact on adjacent green infrastructure softening into the semi natural space;
- Development should be designed to a high quality reflecting local building types and vernacular;
- Green Infrastructure should be built into developments to mitigate the loss of biodiversity;
- Ensure appropriate landscape mitigation softening the rural into the urban fabric;
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems on site where possible, use of low water systems and green field run off rates;
- Sustainable Transport Measures and appropriate walking and cycling routes should be integrated;
- Low energy demand in the built environment should be stipulated;
- Ensure low energy demand in the built environment and from transport specifically;
- Consideration of Site Waste Management could reduce waste produced;
- The setting of the Canal should be considered in the design stage of the development to ensure that the site boundary adjacent to the Canal is sympathetic to its classification as a conservation area. Existing semi-mature trees currently line the banks of the canal and so should provide some screening from views of the development;
- Flood risk assessment may be required to determine if development will have a significant negative effect on the risk of local flooding. Policies should encourage sustainable urban designs which encourage low water use and Green field run-off rates;
- It may be necessary to undertake a plot specific ground investigation to better assess underlying ground conditions.

These mitigation measures have been reflected within the Development Management Policies to ensure that the recommendations have properly been taken into account.

In addition to the report prepared by WYG, and to support the Proposed Modifications draft of the DPD, the council prepared a Sustainability Appraisal Addendum dated December 2014. This Addendum was prepared in response to representations made to the Regulation 19 draft of the DPD which considered that the Borough Council had not made it sufficiently clear that the most appropriate site for the allocation of sites for new housing development had been selected.

Using the 24 Sustainability Criteria detailed above, a comparative assessment of all reasonable alternatives for a residential site allocation was undertaken to properly demonstrate that the most sustainable site was allocated for each settlement with a housing requirement.

During the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD Examination Hearing Sessions, it became apparent that the document would require Main Modifications to be made in order to be considered 'sound'. These Main Modifications were subject to consultation and were accompanied by an appropriate Sustainability Appraisal.

Following the discussion at the Examination Hearing Sessions, an additional Sustainability Appraisal Supplement was produced dated February 2016. This Supplement used the same methodology as the Sustainability Appraisal Addendum on a wider range of potential alternative sites for residential allocation to further demonstrate that the Borough Council had proceeded with the most appropriate strategy for site selection and allocation.

## **HOW THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT HAS BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT**

The recommendations of the Sustainability Appraisal reports have been taken into account at all stages of the preparation of the DPD and where necessary, amendments have been made to ensure that the most appropriate and sustainable strategy has been taken forward into the plan. This has included amending potential allocations where necessary and confirming that the wording of Development Management Policies ensures sufficient environmental considerations are taken into account during the decision making process.

The Sustainability Appraisal documents were considered by the Inspector appointed to carry out the Examination of the plan. The Inspector was satisfied that the process had been undertaken in an appropriate and legally compliant fashion. The report concluded that "SA has been carried out appropriately at each stage of the Plan's preparation and is adequate, including a supplementary SA to accompany the proposed Main Modifications."

## **HOW OPINIONS ARE EXPRESSED IN RESPONSE TO:**

- i) The invitation referred to in regulation to in regulation 13(2)(d)
- ii) Action taken by the responsible authority in accordance with regulation 13(4)

Regulations 13(2)(d) and 13(4) require the council to invite the consultation bodies and public consultees to express their opinions on the relevant documents and to keep a copy of the documents available for inspection at its principal office at all reasonable times free of charge.

The Council has met this requirement by seeking the opinions of all statutory consultees (including English Heritage, Natural England, the Environment Agency), along with general consultation bodies and members of the public on the DPD and Sustainability Appraisal. The Borough Council made all documents available at its principal offices, on its website and within all libraries in the borough at each stage of the plan's preparation. The comments received from these bodies have been taken into account by the council in preparing the DPD and Sustainability Appraisal reports and changes have been made where necessary as a result.

Further details of the consultation on the DPD that has been carried out, including the bodies and persons that were invited to make representations, how those bodies and persons were invited to make representations, the main issues that were raised in the representations and how these views have been taken into account is set out in the following consultation reports:

- Site Allocations and Generic Development Control Policies DPD Preferred Options (February - April 2009) Statement of Consultation Responses (2011);
- Statement of Consultation Responses: Pre-submission 17 February 2014 – 31 March 2014 (December 2014);
- Submission Consultation Statement and Summary of Responses (March 2015).

As a direct result of comments made in relation to the Sustainability Appraisal during the Regulation 19 consultation, the Borough Council prepared the Sustainability Appraisal as explained above.

## **HOW THE RESULTS OF ANY CONSULTATIONS ENTERED INTO UNDER REGULATION 14(4) HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT**

The consultation under regulation 14(4) refers to any transboundary consultations where an authority is of the opinion that it is likely to have significant effects on the environment of another Member State.

The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD is not considered to have any significant environmental effects on another Member State and therefore no consultations under regulation 14(4) have been undertaken.



## **THE REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE PLAN OR PROGRAMME AS ADOPTED, IN THE LIGHT OF OTHER REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES DEALT WITH**

The development of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD has been an iterative process, subject to multiple and wide ranging consultations. The plan that has been adopted is considered by the Borough Council to provide the most appropriate option in the light of the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal, the response to consultation, and the need to provide for development to meet future needs in accordance with the Core Strategy and national planning policies and guidance.

The sites that have been allocated in the plan have been chosen following a site appraisal process outlined above. This has examined all the reasonable alternatives and details why the Borough Council has selected the most appropriate option for the plan. The development of policies in the document has been influenced by the recommendations of the Sustainability Appraisal process and the results of public consultation on all rounds of public consultation. The document was subsequently submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination by an independent inspector.

The inspector's report on the examination of the plan considers that the DPD provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the Borough provided that a number of modifications are made to it. These modifications have been accepted by the council in their entirety and included in the plan which has been adopted.

## **THE MEASURES THAT ARE TAKEN TO MONITOR THE SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OR PROGRAMME**

The Borough Council has prepared an Infrastructure and Monitoring Framework which forms an appendix to the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD. This builds on the framework within the adopted Core Strategy and provides additional indicators to ensure that the potential impacts of the plan are adequately monitored throughout implementation.

The Infrastructure and Monitoring Framework makes specific reference to the potential significant environmental effects of the DPD to ensure that the effects of the plan are adequately monitored. This will be reported annually through the Borough Council's Authority Monitoring Report. This document is based on the period 1 April through to 31 March and is published by December each year.