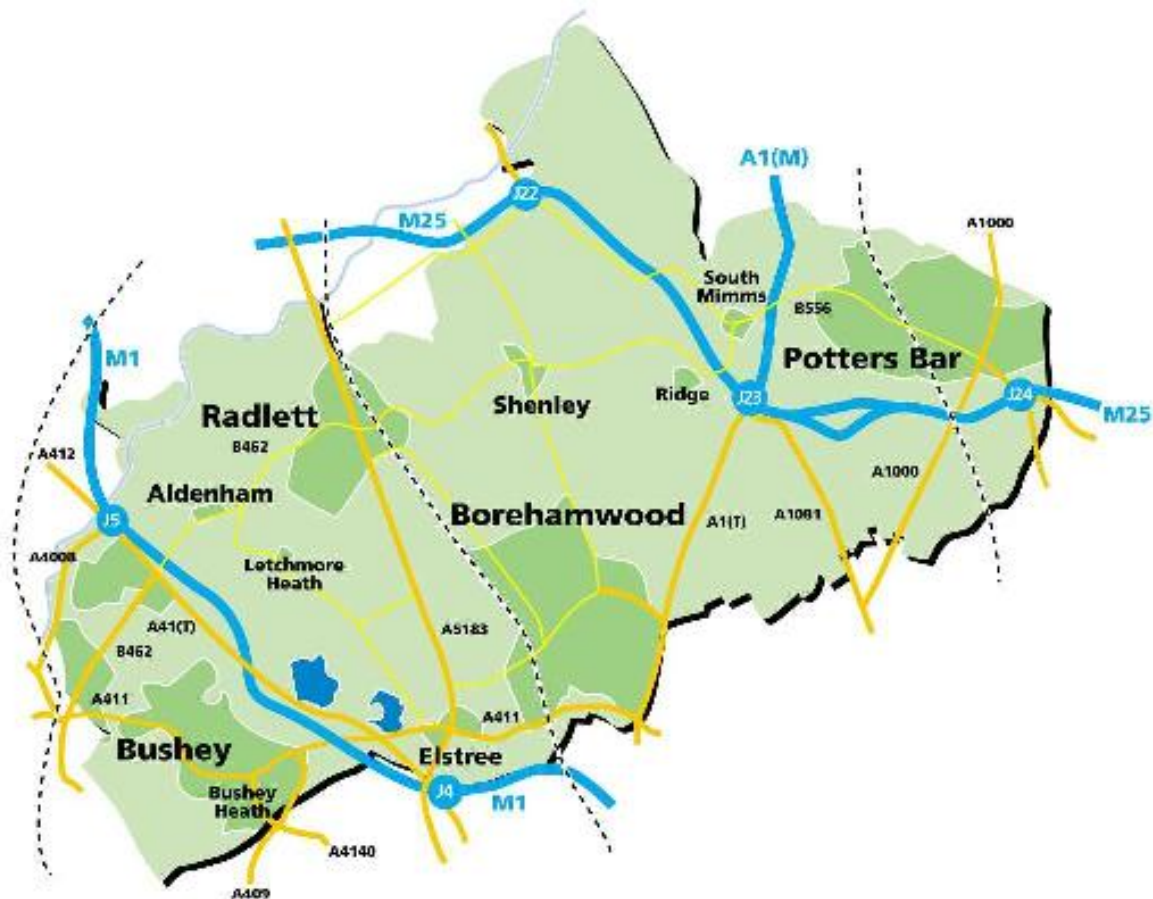


# Hertsmere Borough Council Local Plan



## Core Strategy DPD Post-adoption SEA Statement

March 2013

## Introduction

Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the Council is required to produce a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD). The Act requires a SA to be produced for any new or revised Local Development Document (LDD), including DPDs. The overall purpose of the SA process is to promote sustainable development through consideration of social, environmental and economic concerns in the preparation of a DPD and to evaluate reasonable alternative options.

Government Guidance states that the SA should incorporate the requirements for a Strategic Environmental Assessment required by European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive) and the SA highlights that this has taken place for this DPD in 2007. The SA is an iterative process, and was integral to the preparation of the Core Strategy.

Hertsmere Borough Council adopted the Local Plan Core Strategy DPD on 16 January 2013 taking effect from 17 January 2013. In compliance with Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, Articles 9 and 10 of the SEA Directive 2001, and Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, the Council has prepared this Statement.

The purpose of this statement is to set out:

- a. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
- b. How the environment report has been taken into account;
- c. How opinions expressed in response to:
  - i. The invitation referred to in regulation 13(2)(d);
  - ii. Action taken by the responsible authority in accordance with regulation 13(4),  
have been taken into account;
- 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 the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- f. The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

This report is a summary, in line with the regulations, of information contained in the Sustainability Appraisal undertaken on the Core Strategy since 2007. These documents as referenced in this Statement can be viewed in full on the Council's website at:

<http://www.hertsmere.gov.uk/Planning--Building-Control/Planning-Policy/Local-Plan/Core-Strategy.aspx>.

## a. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme

The Sustainability Appraisal process was an integral part of the formation of the policies and principles in the Core Strategy. The strategic policy framework in the Hertsmere Local Plan Core Strategy sets out a number of policies that makes provision for the needs of development in the Borough and also policies that address the adverse impact of development on the environment, communities and the economy.

The Sustainability Appraisal process started together with the Strategic Environment Assessment in 2007 and an update to the Sustainability Appraisal for the Plan was produced at each stage that the Plan was re-published. In addition to each of these stages the baseline information was updated in 2010 after there were more significant changes to the Core Strategy.

The stages of appraisal can be represented by the following timeline, which was repeated depending on the stage of the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy went on to be found sound in December 2012 by the Planning Inspectorate and was adopted in January 2013.

Stage of Sustainability Appraisal	Stage of the Plan	Main aspects
SA and SEA October 2007	Draft 'preferred options' Core Strategy November 2007	Forming objectives; and Proposing mitigation for any adverse effects and monitoring indicators.
SA Report December 2008	Submission version December 2008	Review of proposed changes to the document compared to the 2007 version. Changes were not found to significantly alter the sustainability appraisal results.
SA Report December 2010	Revised Core Strategy consultation draft December 2010	Baseline data updated; Review of major changes to policies including housing target; Proposed mitigation for adverse effects, some rewording and monitoring indicators.
SA Report November 2011	Revised Core Strategy submission version November 2011	Review of changes to the document following consultation; No significant adverse effects were found and minor negative effects could be minimised
SA Note August 2012	Main Modifications to the Core Strategy following Examination in Public August 2012	Note to review the changes made through a consultation on Main Modifications: Review of changes the affected policies and their significance

The Scoping Report undertaken in 2007 was part of the first stage, which set out the framework of sustainability objectives and baseline indicators. These formed that basis that policies were tested against at 'preferred options' stage and also against which future LDDs could be measured against. The report also identified the main sustainability issues affecting the Borough, set out baseline information and statistics, and identified higher-level plans and programmes which influence the production of the Core Strategy.

The report was later reviewed and updated on submission version, revised version and revised submission version. A further note assessed the impact on the proposed main

modifications to the plan following Examination in Public in 2012. Public consultation took place for six weeks at each stage the SA was reviewed and updated.

The statutory consultees were notified of the consultation stage of the Core Strategy, including English Heritage, Natural England and the Environment Agency. These stakeholders were essential to the progress of the Core Strategy. This involved extensive correspondence including face to face meetings and concluded in a number of changes being made and signed statements of common ground.

Part of the requirements for plan making is to establish whether the plan would have a significant adverse impact on the conservation objectives of the European-level protected sites. In accordance with Article 6(3) and (4) of Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (the 'Habitats Directive') a Habitats Regulations Assessment is required.

A screening assessment was undertaken in 2006, which concluded that the Core Strategy would not have a significant effect on European sites as a result from any such sites. Natural England accepted this outcome and confirmed in January 2012 that no further assessment would be required in this regard.

## **b. How the environment report has been taken into account**

The policy framework including the sustainability objectives, set out in the Core Strategy, together with mitigation and monitoring measures provides for the protection of a range of environmental and wider sustainability receptors from the adverse impacts of different types of development. As stated above the SA (environment report) was integrated to each stage of the Core Strategy.

The development of the Core Strategy has been informed by an extensive body of evidence and assessment. The process of the DPD was long running, with much of the supporting evidence gathering and assessment work being reviewed and updated as preparation of the Core Strategy progressed.

The evolution of the policies in the Core Strategy was informed by a number of background studies and technical assessments. Public engagement has also been an essential component of the process, including consultation on the results of the sustainability appraisal. These were integrated into the Core Strategy and helped evaluate alternative options.

## **c. How opinions expressed in response to: i) The invitation referred to in regulation 13(2)(d); ii) Action taken by the responsible authority in accordance with regulation 13(4), have been taken into account**

The requirement set out in paragraph 4(c) of Regulation 16 is concerned with demonstrating how the decision making process has taken account of consultees opinions on the Plan and the accompanying environmental report.

An extensive programme of consultation ran in parallel to the preparation of the Core Strategy, commencing in 2005 with the initial 'issues and options' stages and culminating in the examination in 2012. Throughout the preparation of the DPDs the Council has sought to address issues raised through the consultation exercises, and to reflect those concerns in the content and wording of policies. Changes to the DPD to take account of issues and concerns raised by consultees have been made up to, and following, the examination in Public, to take account of the Planning Inspector's binding recommendations, including changes the housing target and affordable housing contributions.

A full account for the consultation that has informed the preparation of the DPD, which constitutes a considerable body of material, can be found in the documents listed below:

- Statement of Consultation March 2009
- Statement of Representations March 2009
- Statement of Consultation February 2012
- Statement of Representations February 2012

#### **d. How the results of any consultations entered into under regulation 14(4) have been taken into account**

The requirement set out in paragraph 4(d) of Regulation 16, to provide an explanation of how the results of any consultations entered into with other EU Member States on trans-boundary impacts have been taken into account in the Plan is not relevant to the post-adoption environmental statement for the Core Strategy.

Hertsmere is located within Hertfordshire and is a land-locked Borough to the north of London. The nature of the activities proposed in the Core Strategy mean that consultation within other EU Member States was not appropriate during the preparation of the DPD.

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

The requirement set out in paragraph 4(e) in Regulation 16, is concerned with providing a summary of the reasons why the adopted plan was chosen, when compared with the other reasonable alternatives considered during its preparation. The SA sets out potential alternatives for employment and housing in paragraphs 2.41-2.46 of the Core Strategy 2013.

The following matters were of particular importance in the adoption of the Core Strategy. These matters were discussed at examination and important in the Plans adoption process.

- The introduction of a new policy on the NPPFs presumption in favour of sustainable development;
- The housing target was altered to provide for the full housing target identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy, the East of England Plan, which was formerly revoked after the Plan was found Sound. The evidence base behind the East of England Plan provided a framework for housing need in the region;
- Housing can be delivered in the existing urban area without a Green Belt review;
- The increase in the required level of Affordable Housing, where the viability assessment found that a higher threshold than that previously proposed was found to be financially viable;

- The confirmation that Local Plan 2003 policy H4 on safeguarded land in the Green Belt for housing development was to be saved. In addition, the saving of safeguarded land for employment development in Potters Bar, together with the introduction of a new site at Rowley Lane, Borehamwood as safeguarded for employment development;
- The split of the natural environment and Green Belt policy in the submission version (November 2011) into two policies in order to create more certainty;
- The alteration to retail policy and the change in threshold for when an impact assessment is required, to be in accordance with the changes to national planning policy; and
- The introduction of additional contingencies for monitoring housing delivery, affordable housing, tenure mix and employment land.

#### **f. The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant effects of the implementation of the plan or programme**

The requirement set out in paragraph 4(f) in Regulation 16, is concerned with the provision of a description and explanation of the measures by which the significant environment effects of the plan would be monitored. The SA highlighted a number of positive effects as a result of the Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy (Chapter 9) includes a monitoring framework, which identifies the indicators that will be used to track and report on the performance of the Plan. Progress with the implementation of the Plan will be reported on an annual basis.

The Monitoring Framework suggested through the Appraisal process and then included in the Core Strategy has addressed the need to monitor non-significant positive and negative effects, and the identified significant positive effects. These targets are incorporated into the Council's wider annual monitoring report for planning matters.

The monitoring process will report on the extent to which the policies in the Plan are being implemented. This includes those policies that are concerned with delivering the required level of housing in the prescribed location, with the required level of affordable housing, and with an appropriate level of employment land.

The implications for the environment of development taking place in line with the principles set out in the Core Strategy will be subject to further detailed investigation and assessment at the planning application stage. Proposals must also be in compliance with detailed policies in the Local Plan 2003 and forthcoming policies including the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies. There were no significant negative effects found as a result of policies contained within the Core Strategy.