



Basingstoke
and Deane



Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Local Plan (2011-2029)

Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment Report: Adoption Statement

May 2016

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1. This Statement

- 1.1 Sustainability Appraisal (SA)/ Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) involves a series of procedural steps which are designed to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations¹. The final step in the process involves preparing a 'statement' at the time of the plan's adoption. The SA (inc. SEA) Adoption Statement addresses the requirement to prepare a post-adoption 'statement' under Part 4 of the SEA Regulations.
- 1.2 The SA (inc. SEA) Adoption Statement for the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011 – 2029) has also been prepared in accordance with the following:
- The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).
 - The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012
 - Paragraph 165 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012
- 1.3 The SA (inc. SEA) Adoption Statement includes information on:
- how sustainability considerations have been integrated into the Local Plan
 - how the SA has been taken into account
 - how the results of public consultation have been taken into account
 - the reasons for choosing the adopted Local Plan
 - how any significant sustainability effects of implementing the Local Plan will be monitored.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Local Plan is the overarching planning document for the borough for the period 2011-2029. It identifies where development will take place, how new employment will be supported and how the environment of the borough will be protected and enhanced. It allocates major sites and locations for development to meet the needs of the growing population.
- 2.2 The Local Plan has been prepared through a long and detailed process, with input from local residents, councillors, interested bodies and statutory consultees, taking into account a range of issues and considerations.
- 2.3 The Planning Inspector's final report on the Local Plan, dated 6 April 2016, concluded that the Plan provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the borough, providing a number of modifications are made to the Plan. These Main Modifications had all been subject to the iterative SA process. The Local Plan was adopted on **26 May 2016**.
- 2.4 The stages of the Local Plan and SA (Inc. SEA) are discussed below.

¹ The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

3. How sustainability considerations have been integrated into the Local Plan

- 3.1 The SA (inc. SEA) has been carried out alongside the preparation of the Local Plan and has been a continuous and iterative process throughout. The social, environmental and economic dimensions have been taken into account at every stage of Plan production to ensure sustainable development.
- 3.2 The development and appraisal of the Local Plan, and in particular the spatial strategy which sets the overall direction of growth, has also been an iterative process with the findings of the SA (inc. SEA) feeding into the selection and refinement of the Plan's spatial strategy and its policies. Each version of the Plan has been subject to an SA which details the evolution of the process of testing the vision, strategic objectives, options and refined options / changes.

4. How the SA has been taken into account

- 4.1 The work undertaken on the SA for the Local Plan is outlined below. In summary, Sustainability Appraisal Reports (incorporating strategic environmental assessment) have been published for comment alongside each draft version of the plan. As set out within the SA Reports, the process was undertaken to inform decision making rather than to make the decisions themselves. The outcome of public engagement and consultation has been taken into account as part of the preparation of the plan.

Core Strategy SA Scoping Report (September 2007)

- 4.2 The newly adopted Local Plan was originally developed as a Core Strategy and in September 2007 the Council published a Scoping Report for the Strategy, which was the first stage of the SA process. The SA Scoping Report established the baseline, key sustainability issues and the policy framework for the SA and therefore set its context. The Scoping Report was subject to public consultation in September and October 2007.
- 4.3 Whilst the SA Scoping Report was produced on the basis of a Core Strategy, it was considered that the Report remained suitable and relevant when the Strategy became a Local Plan, as the scope of the documents and the key sustainability issues remained unchanged. Given the time lapse since production of the Scoping Report and the iterative process of SA, some of the appendices of the SA Scoping Report were subsequently updated. This included both a review of more recent plans, programmes and policies, and an update of the baseline data.

SA (incorporating SEA) for the Pre Submission Local Plan (August 2013)

- 4.4. The subsequent stages of the SA were undertaken alongside the equivalent stages of the plan-making process so that the findings and

recommendations of the SA could be integrated and reflected at each stage. The choices regarding reasonable alternative options and allocations were subject to SA using a framework of twenty individual SA objectives.

- 4.5 Between August and October 2013, the Council formally consulted on the Pre-Submission Local Plan and the SA (inc. SEA) for the Pre-Submission Local Plan. The purpose of the consultation was to explore whether there were any legal or 'soundness' issues with the draft plan.

SA (incorporating SEA) for the Revised Pre Submission Local Plan (April 2014)

- 4.6 Following consultation on the Pre-Submission Local Plan, the Council commenced work on preparing the Revised Pre-Submission Local Plan, taking into account the representations received and updating the SA (inc. SEA) where necessary. Formal public consultation on the Revised Pre-Submission Local Plan and SA (inc. SEA) took place between April and June 2014. The findings of the SA and the way in which it had influenced the plan-making process, were set out in the relevant SA Report (April 2014). The changes to the Plan did not result in any significant changes to the overall conclusions of the SA (inc. SEA) at this stage.

SA (incorporating SEA) addendum for the Submission Local Plan (October 2014)

- 4.7 The Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government via the Planning Inspectorate for formal examination in October 2014. The Local Plan was submitted together with a large number of supporting documents, including the SA (inc. SA) Report. An addendum to the SA (inc. SEA) was also submitted which included a schedule of minor changes made to the Revised Pre-Submission Local Plan SA (inc. SEA) following consultation. The minor changes did not result in any significant changes to the overall conclusions of the SA (inc. SEA) at this stage.
- 4.8 The SA (inc. SEA) for the Submission Local Plan consolidated the appraisal of options to demonstrate that a transparent and robust approach had been undertaken during the SA process.

SA (incorporating SEA) for the Submission Local Plan with proposed modifications (May 2015)

- 4.9 Following submission of the Local Plan for examination, an Exploratory Meeting on the Submission Local Plan was held by the appointed Inspector on 11 December 2014. Following the meeting he wrote to the Council setting out additional work that was required to progress the Local Plan.
- 4.10 Officers, in association with relevant partners and stakeholders, undertook further assessments to update the evidence base for the Submission Local Plan, in particular, in relation to objectively assessment housing need and

the annual housing figure. In light of the Exploratory meeting and updated evidence, proposed main modifications to the Local Plan were required.

- 4.11 The SA (inc. SEA) for the Submission Local Plan with proposed modifications (May 2015) appraised the proposed modifications to the plan following submission. Whilst parts of the SA were not subject to change, relevant sections were updated and new sections included. Some of the main modifications resulted in new/ revised options and policies being subject to a full SA assessment. Public consultation on the Submission Local Plan with proposed modifications (May 2015) and the SA (incorporating SEA) for the Submission Local Plan with proposed modifications took place between May and June 2015.

Quality assurance review (April 2015)

- 4.12 The SA (inc. SEA) has been subject to external scrutiny on three occasions through its development (by AMEC and twice by Levett-Therivel). These reviews concluded that the SA was fit for purpose and was a sound and robust basis for making decisions in the plan.
- 4.13 Following the Local Plan Exploratory Meeting the Council commissioned Levett-Therivel to assess whether the updated SA Report and appendices for the Submission Local Plan with proposed modifications (May 2015) were robust and compliant with the SEA Directive. They were also asked to consider any specific further actions required, with particular reference to the proposed main modifications made in response to the Inspector's concerns at the Exploratory Meeting. The Council made changes to the SA (inc. SEA) Report in response to recommendations made in the quality assurance review which reached an overall conclusion that there were no non-compliance issues.

SA (incorporating SEA) addendum for the Submission Local Plan incorporating proposed modifications (December 2015)

- 4.14 The progress of the Local Plan through the Examination process resulted in a number of proposed modifications (main and minor) to the Plan. The SA (incorporating SEA) addendum for the Submission Local Plan incorporating proposed modifications appraised the impacts of the proposed main modifications and considered whether they had any additional or different significant effects predicted to arise. Some of the main modifications resulted in policies being subject to a full SA assessment.
- 4.15 Public Consultation on the Submission Local Plan incorporating proposed modifications (December 2015) and SA (incorporating SEA) addendum for the Submission Local Plan, incorporating proposed modifications took place between December 2015 and February 2016.

5. How the results of public consultation have been taken into account

- 5.1 As outlined above, each version of the SA (inc. SEA) has been subject to public consultation, including with the statutory consultees (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England). As identified in the Council's Duty to Cooperate Statement, Natural England and Historic England both agreed that the SA (inc. SEA) meets the regulatory requirements. Comments from relevant consultees at all stages of the SA (inc. SEA) process were taken into account.
- 5.2 Representations received on the SA (inc. SEA) consultation and the Council's response, have been provided on the Council's website for public viewing.

6. The reasons for choosing the adopted Local Plan

- 6.1 The SA (inc. SEA) has considered reasonable alternatives and, within each iteration of the SA, a clear audit trail has been provided of the preferred options taken forward within the Local Plan.
- 6.2 Through the SA process, a number of potential development options have been tested, including different development levels and distribution strategies, and this process has informed the plan as it has developed. Potential development sites were also assessed in detail through this process, the conclusions of which were fully considered in the selection of allocated sites. The SA process identified constraints associated with individual sites and potential mitigation measures which were considered in the development of criteria based policies for each of the housing site allocations.
- 6.3 Policies in the Local Plan have also been subject to comprehensive SA (inc. SEA) and they best achieve the dimensions of sustainable development in comparison to the reasonable alternative options. The SA has ensured that the refinement of policies has not given rise to significant effects. Appropriate mitigation measures have been integrated into the Plan to ensure that the policies chosen were the most sustainable option.

7. How any significant sustainability effects of implementing the Local Plan will be monitored

- 7.1 The Local Plan will be subject to an on-going programme of monitoring as part of the Councils' Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). This will demonstrate the on-going suitability of the Plan's policies/ allocations and enable any arising unforeseen effects to be identified. Monitoring will also provide information as to whether the predicted effects of the SA were accurate.
- 7.2 Monitoring plays an important role in assessing the actual effect of any plan, including the Local Plan. This can feed into more accurate future predictions

of effects, and can also help identify where changes need to be made to promote more sustainable development within the Borough.

- 7.3 A monitoring strategy is included within Chapter 12 of the SA (inc. SEA) Report. Guidance recommends that SA monitoring is incorporated into the Council's existing monitoring arrangements and the proposed framework therefore takes into account existing monitoring in the Authority Monitoring Report and proposed monitoring of the Local Plan.
- 7.4 The SA (inc. SEA) process has continually assessed and identified predicted significant adverse and positive effects of the Plan with mitigation and/or enhancement measures being integrated at appropriate stages in the evolution of the Plan. This has ensured that the Council is able to appropriately address these effects and monitor the potential for unforeseen adverse impacts.
- 7.5 In addition to incorporating relevant mitigation and enhancement measures to address the predicted significant effects, regular monitoring of the Plan will ensure unforeseen adverse effects are identified and enable the actual impact of the Plan to be tested against the predicted effects. Table 14 of the SA (inc. SEA) Report sets out the proposed monitoring framework of significant effects.

8 Further information

- 8.1 A hard copy of the adopted Local Plan and the SA (inc. SEA) documents, including this SA (inc. SEA) Adoption Statement, can be inspected at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Civic Offices, London Road, Basingstoke, RG21 4AH (8:30am – 17:00 pm Mon – Thurs, 8:30am – 16:30pm Fri).
- 8.2 In addition, all of the documents can be viewed online on the council's website at <http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/planningpolicy>