



Bracknell Forest Borough Local Development Framework

Core Strategy Examination

Topic Paper TP02

Sustainable Growth

April 2007

Topic Paper 2

Title: Sustainable Growth

1. Introduction

1.1 This Topic Paper is one of eight produced by Bracknell Forest Borough Council to assist the Public Examination into the Core Strategy, which will commence on 25th June 2007.

1.2 This Sustainable Growth Topic Paper covers the following policies of the Core Strategy:

CS1 – Sustainable Development principles

CS2 – Locational Principles

CS3 – Bracknell Town Centre

CS4 – Land at Amen Corner (Parish of Binfield)

CS5 – Land north of Whitegrove & Quelm Park (Parish of Warfield)

CS9 – Development on Land Outside Settlements

1.3 The Council is preparing the following for Examination:

- **The Council's Self Assessment Statement (OD004)**

This is available on the Council's website at www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/ldf

- **The Topic Papers**

These cover procedural and conformity matters, the main Core Strategy themes and the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area. These will be available on the Council's website and in the Examination Library.

- **Written Statements responding to the Matters and Issues for Examination**

These will provide a detailed response to the separate Matters and Issues which will be identified by the Inspector as the basis for the debate at the Examination (and responding to specific points raised by representations to the submitted Core Strategy). These Statements will rely as far as possible on cross-referencing to the other documents listed above. These Statements will be available on the Council's website by the 24th May 2007.

- **Statements of Common Ground**

These will provide an agreed statement between the Council and specific representors on their representations. These Statements will be available on the website by the 24th May 2007.

1.4 Each Topic Paper is structured to provide:

- A broad summary of the submission representations and the changes sought;
- The broad basis of the Council's case in relation to the representations on this topic including the approach taken by the Borough Council, its conformity with national and regional guidance, and the evidence on which that approach is based.

- 1.5 Document references in ***bold italics*** relate to documents held within the Public Examination Core Document Library. In general, evidence is based on the following sources:
- Specific studies prepared to address issues to be covered in the LDF;
 - Comments received from consultation responses;
 - Information and guidance provided by the Sustainability Appraisal; and,
 - Existing national, regional and local policies and strategies such as national planning policy statements or the Sustainable Community Plan.
- 1.6 Procedural and Conformity Matters relating to the Core Strategy are dealt with in a separate Topic Paper '**Topic Paper 1 – Procedural and Conformity Matters**' (**TP01**).
- 1.7 Regarding Policies CS4 and CS5, and the general approach to growth, the Council produced a background paper at submission identifying the process leading up to the development of these policies entitled '**Major Locations for Growth, October 2006**' (**BP005**) (www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/subbackground).
- 1.8 This Topic Paper will cross refer to that background paper rather than repeat the information set out in that document.

2. Background

- 2.1 Sustainable Growth Policies and Policy CS9 set out the strategy and principles for the location of future growth in the Borough, including broad areas of future development. Policies in this Theme underpin the overall Vision and Strategy for future development in the Borough by:
- Identifying the principles of sustainable development which should be met through all new development;
 - Providing the spatial framework against which the locations of future development will be considered; and,
 - Identifying three broad sustainable locations to contribute to meeting the future development needs of the Borough.
- 2.2 Policy CS9 from the Environment Chapter has also been included in this Topic Paper as it is directly relevant to delivering sustainable development.
- 2.3 These policies flow from the **Bracknell Forest Sustainable Community Plan (October 2005) (LD009)** and the Core Strategy Vision and Spatial Objectives. The links between the Sustainable Growth policies and the Sustainable Community Plan priorities is set out in a separate paper (**OD012**). These policies particularly relate to: Priority 1: Promoting learning and training for all ages; Priority 2: Protecting and Enhancing the Environment; Priority 4: Providing decent and affordable housing and Priority 5: A town fit for the 21st century. The links between the vision and policies in this Topic Paper are defined in Appendix 1.

- 2.4 The Policies contribute specifically to meeting the following Core Strategy Objectives, although they may also influence other objectives through their implementation:

CS1 – Objectives A,D,E,G,I,L

CS2 – Objectives A,D

CS3 – Objectives A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H

CS4 – Objectives A,B,D,F,G

CS5 – Objectives A,B,D,F,G

CS9 – Objective I

- 2.5 **PPS12 (Local Development Frameworks) (ND015)** confirms that a Core Strategy should set out *strategic* policies to deliver the vision. The Council believes that these policies form a set of focused, spatial policies from which more detailed policies will flow in other Local Development Documents.

3. Summary of Key Issues raised at Submission:

- 3.1 One of the purposes of this paper is to identify, in summary form, the representations received on this topic and the main changes sought by the submission representations. More detailed responses to representations will be dealt with through separate Written Statements which will be prepared to respond to the Matters and Issues for Examination identified by the Inspector. These Written Statements will be published on 24th May 2007.
- 3.2 Whilst not an exhaustive list, a summary of the main issues raised at submission is set out below against each Policy, along with a summary of the main changes sought.

CS1 Sustainable Development Principles

Key Issues raised and changes sought:

- Representations questioned whether this Policy is consistent with national guidance (particularly PPS12 and PPS1) including suggested word changes particularly relating to the use of 'enhancement';
- Evidence supporting the provision of water and sewerage to supply new development;
- Representations were made regarding detailed additions that should be made to the policy and text including reference to trees, previously developed land, healthcare (including reference to the possibility of a new hospital site), Green Infrastructure and Village Design Statements;
- Representations seeking expansion of reference to archaeological remains including amendments to criterion (ix);
- Representations suggesting that the Policy conflicts with Policy CS5 which seeks to develop open land;
- Representations questioning the Council's role and ability to influence statements within the policy and reasoned justification;
- Objections to the omission of more specific policies on the quality of water and land.

CS2 *Locational Principles*

Key Issues raised and changes sought:

- Representations seeking greater flexibility;
- Representations questioning whether the policy accords with national policy (particularly PPS1 and PPS3), and seeking specific changes relating to specific criterion;
- Representations questioning whether all settlements are treated the same and whether this is appropriate;
- Specific changes relating to the needs of employment sites including specific reference to Syngenta and to Broadmoor;
- Changes seeking additional references to: biodiversity, the proposed urban extensions, Travel Plans, primary healthcare, timing of proposals at North Bracknell;
- Representations seeking the allocation of specific sites.

CS3 *Bracknell Town Centre*

Key Issues raised and changes sought:

- Representations seeking greater recognition as to what has already been agreed in the Town Centre, including the role of the Masterplan;
- Representations seeking reference to SPA mitigation;
- Specific issues relating to the location of uses and reference to Travel Plans;
- Representations seeking clarification as to comprehensive delivery;
- The need to ensure the policy does not prejudice other employment sites.

CS4 *Land at Amen Corner (Parish of Binfield)*

Key Issues raised and changes sought:

- Representations seeking a more flexible approach to development in this area which does not define a specific boundary;
- Objections regarding lack of information on possible transport impacts;
- Details regarding the description, boundary, mix of uses, including the level of employment development, and clarity over settlement boundaries;
- Representations seeking cross referencing between policies (CS15) and inclusion of the number of proposed dwellings in the policy;
- Representations seeking allocation of alternative sites;
- Representations regarding the role and designation of the gap between Bracknell and Wokingham including designation as a Strategic rather than a Local gap;
- Representations seeking deletion of this policy and its development in later Development Plan Documents;
- Representations seeking additional reference to landscape character implications and to opportunities for green infrastructure.

CS5 *Land North of Whitegrove and Quelm Park (Parish of Warfield)*

Key Issues raised and changes sought:

- Objections to the principle of this site on grounds including loss of open space, impact on wildlife and landscape, traffic and transport implications, more appropriate alternatives and the impact on settlement patterns;
- Objections that the proposal is contrary to other local plans and strategies;

- Representations seeking additional reference to: landscape character implications; gaps; and opportunities for green infrastructure;
- Representations seeking changes to the flexibility and timing of the proposal and support for further implementation through an Area Action Plan;
- Representations questioning consistency with national planning policy including the level of detail appropriate for a Core Strategy and the allocation of a greenfield site;
- Level of detail including the amount of employment floorspace, implementation, and educational provision;
- Representations seeking the allocation of specific sites;
- Representations seeking deletion of this policy and its development in later Development Plan Documents.

CS9 Development on Land outside Settlements

Key Issues raised and changes sought:

- Representations questioning whether the policy accords with national policy (particularly PPS3 and PPS7) including lack of evidence of a landscape character assessment;
- Objections seeking that the Gaps part of the policy be deleted;
- Specific comments over whether areas should be Local or Strategic gaps;
- Concern over specific areas lying within gaps including Broadmoor Estate and Warfield Park and their identification on the Proposals Map;
- Representations seeking flexibility to accommodate development on land outside settlements;
- Representations relating to Green Belt policy, including the need to fully review the boundaries and omit specific sites.

4. Context

- 4.1 This Section of the Topic Paper sets out the broad basis of the Council's case in respect of the representations under this Theme. It identifies the context against which the policies have been prepared and the issues and evidence which have informed the final policies.

National context

- 4.2 Policies in this Theme (including Policy CS9), are influenced by a number of National Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes and it is not the intention to provide a detailed justification of each policy; however, the following paragraphs identify the key elements of this guidance which were used to inform the development of, or are considered relevant to support, the Core Strategy Policies covered in this Topic Paper.
- 4.3 The policies in this Theme have had full and proper regard to national and regional guidance. The creation of sustainable communities is one of the most important objectives of national planning policy. **PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) (ND007)**, paragraph 5, indicates that planning should ensure that 'sustainable development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community.' The Sustainable Growth policies of the Core Strategy have been prepared in accordance with the terms and provisions of PPS1 in that, along with other policies, they seek to integrate the various elements of sustainable

development, setting the framework for delivery of environmental, economic and social objectives. Through the proposed redevelopment of Bracknell Town Centre, the Core Strategy is consistent with elements of PPS1 which seek to focus developments that attract a large number of people within existing centres.

- 4.4 In accordance with PPS1 these policies also seek to promote regeneration (CS2,CS3), reduce the need to travel, (CS1, CS2, CS3), protect and enhance the quality of the natural and historic environment and of countryside and urban areas(CS1, CS9), and encourage the prudent use of resources (CS1). Through Policy CS2 and the identification of the redevelopment of Bracknell Town Centre (CS3), and the major locations for growth (CS4, CS5), these policies are consistent with PPS1 in that they will provide the most sustainable option for delivering sufficient land in appropriate locations to meet the expected needs for housing.
- 4.5 **PPS3 (Housing) (ND008)** seeks to create sustainable mixed use communities based on the principles of sustainable development set out in PPS1. Although published at the same time as the Submission Core Strategy, policies in the Sustainable Growth theme support the principles of PPS3 through:
- the provision of a strategy for the planned location of new housing which contributes to achieving sustainable development (CS1 – CS5);
 - promoting the efficient use of land (CS1);
 - giving priority to previously developed land (CS2); and,
 - promoting mixed and sustainable communities in sustainable locations (CS4, CS5, CS6).
- 4.6 **PPS6 (Planning for Town Centres) (ND009)** seeks to promote the vitality and viability of town centres through planning for their growth and development, and by promoting and enhancing centres by focusing development within them and encouraging a wide range of services accessible to all. Policies in the Sustainable Growth theme support the principles of PPS6 through the specific identification of the need and principles for major redevelopment of Bracknell Town Centre (CS3) for a mix of town centre uses, and through the identification of Bracknell Town Centre as the starting point for the location of new development in the Borough in Policy CS2.
- 4.7 The Council considers that the policies in this theme have suitable regard to **PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) (ND019)** which seeks to promote sustainable patterns of development (for example through focusing most development in, or next to, existing towns and villages), and through policies which seek to protect the quality and character of the wider countryside (CS9).
- 4.8 The approach to future growth has had full regard to the need for future infrastructure and resources in accordance with Annexe B of **PPS12** at a level appropriate to the Core Strategy. In addition to the statutory consultations this has included ongoing meetings and dialogue with the main infrastructure and service providers.

Regional Context

- 4.9 Full account has also been taken of the existing Regional Spatial Strategy and the evolving South East Plan. Policies in this Theme reflect **Regional Planning Guidance Note 9 (RPG9) (RD002)** in that all policies seek to contribute to sustainable development and focus development on urban areas and sustainable greenfield sites in accordance with RPG9 Policy Q1.
- 4.10 Promotion of redevelopment in Bracknell Town Centre is supported by RPG9 policies Q2 and more specifically Policy Q5 which promotes and underlines the importance of regenerating town centres. Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy is consistent with RPG9 Policy Q1 which seeks to focus development in urban areas, thereby protecting and minimising the impact on the wider countryside, and E9 which seeks to protect Green Belt boundaries. RPG9 paragraphs 6.6 and 6.7 recognise the important role of the wider countryside and strategic gap function.
- 4.11 Promoting sustainable growth is a key theme cutting across all emerging **South East Plan (SEP) (RD001)** policies. Core Strategy Policy CS1 is consistent with the function of SEP Policy CC1 in that it supports the principle objective of achieving and maintaining sustainable development.
- 4.12 Core Strategy CS2 reflects the SEP through encouraging more efficient use of land by setting criteria for allocating future development sites. SEP Policy CC8a is key in promoting a sequential approach to locating sustainable development and sets a requirement for local authorities to formulate policies on sequence.
- 4.13 Policy CS3 is supported by the regional emphasis on an appropriate location for sustainable development and reflects specific SEP policies which identify it as a regional spoke (T3) and a Secondary Regional Centre (TC2).
- 4.14 Core Strategy Policy CS9 is consistent with SEP policies relating to the role and function of the general countryside (CC12), to Green Belt Policy (CC10a) and specifically to SEP Policy CC10b regarding the designation of strategic gaps.

5. Council Approach

- 5.1 In addition to national and regional policy, the development of the approach towards providing for sustainable growth has been informed by:
- Consultation during the preparation process;
 - Other plans and strategies;
 - Commitments to regenerate Bracknell Town Centre;
 - Sustainability Appraisal; and
 - Background Studies.

Issues and Options

- 5.2 At the **Issues and Options (OD008/OD009)** stage, views were sought on different approaches or options to the locational elements of new development. The **Initial Sustainability Appraisal** (June 2005) (**BP009**)

tested a range of options set out in this consultation relating to growth distribution, levels of growth, broad locations, housing and employment, transport and accessibility, environment including conservation, landscape character, climate change and sustainable resources, and the redevelopment of Bracknell Town Centre. At this time the Council were also taking forward a Site Allocations Development Plan Document and the Spatial Growth options were therefore informed by site specific assessments.

5.3 At this stage the issues and options were informed by a number of background studies and preparatory work. These included:

- A Borough-wide consultation in summer 2003 on key planning issues as a start to the review of the existing Local Plan;
- Preparation of a **Fact Pack (BP003)** identifying key statistical evidence about the Borough; and,
- Completion of an **Urban Potential Study (April 2005) (ETS005)** which indicated that some land outside settlements would be needed for longer term growth

5.4 The issues and options consultation gave support to:

- promoting development primarily within settlements;
- maintaining the Green Belt boundaries and protecting the Green Belt from inappropriate development;
- protecting sites of nature conservation importance and landscape importance; and,
- planning for communities which are able to deliver a range of services and facilities to support the community.

5.5 Regarding the possible need to identify land outside settlements for future development, there was greater support for a number of smaller extensions than one large one; yet as identified above, there was support to plan for sustainable communities.

5.6 Regarding the possible locations of any development outside existing settlements, four broad locations of search were identified for consideration. The **Report of Consultation at Regulation 25** identifies that at this stage there was no clear consensus arising from consultation in support or otherwise of any of the four options for growth.

5.7 Regarding the issues covered by policies in the Sustainable Growth theme, the Initial Sustainability Appraisal appraised the key impacts of each option and suggested the most sustainable way forward. In summary, this concluded that:

- The most sustainable locational option would promote the majority of development primarily in settlements;
- Options to maintain the green belt and protect sites of nature conservation are sustainable;
- There are considerable social and economic benefits to the growth of planned communities: they enable sufficient housing to meet the community's needs, improved services and infrastructure, and economic and employment development;

- Any policies guiding development within areas which contribute towards the landscape character will have predominantly positive environmental effects;
- Options promoting both the redevelopment of Bracknell town centre and the regeneration and success of smaller centres have predominantly positive sustainability effects; and,
- Any policies guiding development within areas with a high ecological or historical conservation value will have predominantly positive environmental effects.

5.8 Sustainability appraisal at this stage and during preparation of Preferred Options highlighted many cross-cutting and fundamental sustainability issues which could be addressed by the Core Strategy document. As a result, this was addressed within an overarching Policy approach at Preferred Options (SG1 – Sustainable Principles).

Preferred Options

5.9 Consultation responses and local priorities led to the preparation of a draft Vision and spatial objectives as part of the **Preferred Options (BP010)**. At this stage the Council also consulted on Preferred Options for the **Site Allocations DPD (BP012)**. This vision sought to ensure that growth was planned in a sustainable manner. It acknowledged the need for additional development and the need to plan for sustainable mixed communities. The importance of the regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre to the overall Strategy was highlighted, as was reference to the importance of existing open spaces and the Green Belt.

5.10 Responses from Issues and Options, development of a Spatial Vision for the Borough and other sources of background information, including the preparation of a **Draft Sustainability Appraisal (BP011)**, led to the **Preferred Options** consultation seeking views on a number of preferred policy approaches. These related to;

- an overarching policy ensuring that development contributes to sustainability objectives (Sustainable Principles (SG1));
- the approach to the location of new development (Locational Principles (SG2));
- preferred broad locations for longer term future growth (Urban Extensions (SG3) and Bracknell Town Centre (BTC1));
- an approach which protects the gaps between settlements (Gaps and Green Wedges (E1)),
- the approach to protecting Green Belt boundaries and protecting the Green Belt from inappropriate development (Green Belt (E3)).

5.11 Alternative options were assessed and identified through the Sustainability Appraisal process.

5.12 The preferred approach identified at this stage was to:

- develop an underlying policy approach supporting the themes of sustainable development, including the efficient use of land and resources, reducing the need to travel, protection of natural resources, and promotion of economic and social benefits, (SG1);

- recognise the importance of the regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre both to the sustainable future development of the Borough in economic and social terms and to give it the priority identified by the community through the **Sustainable Community Plan**, and having regard to the submitted outline planning application (BTC1) ;
 - give priority to locating new development in the most sustainable locations, including focusing development primarily within settlements in the Borough (SG1/SG2);
 - give priority to previously developed land and having regard to the character, accessibility and infrastructure within settlements (SG2);
 - recognise the importance of the Green Belt both nationally and to the local community (E3); and,
 - identify the separate identities of settlements (E1).
- 5.13 During the production of the Draft Sustainability Appraisal for the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Preferred Options it emerged that some of the larger sites outside settlements scored more highly than individual and smaller sites outside settlements. In summary, it was concluded that a larger concentration of development would more realistically provide an opportunity to provide local infrastructure needs and deliver a more sustainable approach to growth.
- 5.14 Whilst a decision was taken to delay the Site Allocations DPD on advice from GOSE, the detailed appraisal of sites through the Site Allocations process has provided an extra level of robustness to the decisions made on strategic locations for growth.
- 5.15 Based on the Draft Sustainability Appraisal and other local considerations such as ownership and existing neighbourhood structure, two strategic locations for longer term growth were identified from the four broad areas identified at Issues and Options (SG3). These were land to the west of Bracknell and land north of Whitegrove and Quelm Park. Further discussion of these as the most sustainable option can be found in the **Major Locations for Growth Background Paper (BP007)**
- 5.16 The Council considers that the identification of smaller sites (as proposed by representors) is not appropriate for the Core Strategy and would be contrary to national guidance. The allocation of such sites will be considered through the Development Management: Housing and Commercial Policies and Sites DPD.

Background Studies

- 5.17 To help support and develop the Preferred Options and Submission policies further background studies were completed. The effect of these on Policies CS4 and CS5 are set out in the **Major Locations for Growth Background Paper**. Other Policies were supported by the studies identified in Appendix 4 of the Core Strategy. Of particular relevance to this Topic Paper:
- An updated **Urban Potential Study** (Bakers Associates, June 2006)(**ETS006**) which looked to 2026 and continued to identify that it was unlikely that all development would be able to be met from within the settlements over this period;

- **A Landscape Analysis of Site Allocations and an Assessment of Gaps/Green Wedges** (Entec, August 2006) (**ETS007**) which informed the designation of local and strategic gaps; and,
- **A Bracknell Forest Strategic Flood Risk Assessment** (Entec, August 2006) (**ETS008**) which was used to assess specific sites and influence the locations for major growth.

Submission

- 5.18 A summary of the issues raised at the Preferred Options consultation and the Council's response can be found in the **Statement of Compliance (LD004)**. Wide ranging comments were received both in support and objecting to different elements of the strategy and the policies within this Topic Paper.
- 5.19 These responses, the findings from the **Final Sustainability Appraisal Report (BP001)**, and the outcome of studies referred to above, informed the Submission Policies which included:
- Policy CS1 which provides an overarching policy ensuring that development has regard to sustainable development principles consistent with the Preferred Options approach and which will act as a strategic 'hook' for more detailed policies to be contained in further Local Development Documents, (e.g. on resource management and biodiversity).
 - Through Policy CS2 a policy identifying the principles against which the location of new development will be considered having regard to national and regional guidance on locational issues, and referencing that development will take place within settlements, and through the allocation of specific sites to meet future development needs in the Borough. This policy recognises the importance of the redevelopment of Bracknell Town Centre to the Borough's spatial strategy and includes a level of flexibility through the allocation of sites and application of criterion 2 – 4.
 - Identifying the broad locations of major future growth in accordance with PPS1, PPS3 and PPS12. Policy CS3 gives appropriate weight to the principles of redevelopment in Bracknell Town Centre, recognising the role identified at Preferred Options and the principles set out in the **Town Centre Masterplan (ITS003)** and the (at that time) submitted outline planning application.
 - CS4 and CS5 which identify a strategic approach to the two urban extensions to meet longer term development needs. The level of detail in these policies is considered appropriate to signpost an appropriate mix of uses to be determined in detail through the Area Action Planning process (see LDD profiles in the **Bracknell Forest Borough Local Development Scheme 2007 – 2010 (LD008)**).
 - Policy CS9 which provides an overarching approach to the need to protect land outside settlements, including the Green Belt and important gaps, consistent with national and regional guidance, and informed by the technical background studies and the need to meet future growth needs. This builds on the Preferred Options Approach (E1) but recognises the need to reference the wider countryside. This policy also incorporates the Preferred Options Green Belt policy approach (E3) into one overarching policy.

5.20 Regarding the identification of broad locations for growth, the approach to two large urban extensions rather than a number of smaller sites for longer term growth continued to be supported through the Appraisal process. Page 6 of the Final Sustainability Appraisal Report states that “... *the sustainability process has helped inform the choice between various strategic urban extensions and indicated that a policy promoting urban potential sites will, in general, bring forward the most sustainable sites. In addition, the results of the site specific appraisal have stressed the importance of achieving comprehensive development on larger urban extensions, as opposed to smaller individual sites within the same geographical area coming forward as separate proposals.*’ Further details on the assessment of these sites can be found in the Sustainability Appraisals and in the Major Locations for Growth Background Paper.

Implementation and Monitoring

5.21 A key element of the new planning system is to ensure that policies are implemented and monitored. As set out earlier, the Core Strategy sets out key strategic policies that will guide development in the Borough but which in many instances will be detailed in further Local Development Documents. One of the key mechanisms for the implementation of policies in this Theme, in addition to determination through planning applications and appeals, is through the preparation of further Local Development Documents.

5.22 In particular, the Council has identified in its latest Local Development Scheme (April 2007 – May 2010), Area Action Plans for the two urban extensions. The Amen Corner Area Action Plan commenced in March 2007 and is due for adoption in 2010. The Area Action Plan for land North of Whitegrove and Quelm Park is due to commence in October 2009. Other elements of sustainable growth will be delivered through the preparation of a Development Management: Housing and Commercial Policies and Sites DPD due to commence in May 2007.

5.23 The approach to monitoring policies is set out in Appendix 5 of the Core Strategy and specific targets and indicators are linked to a number of policies and objectives. At this strategic level, the Council has, wherever possible, used the National Core Indicators which establish an overall monitoring framework.

6. Conclusions

6.1 The Council considers that these policies and their contribution to the overall Core Strategy are **sound** as they:

- Have been fully informed at each stage by a Sustainability Appraisal (Test 3);
- Reflect the guidance on spatial planning set out in national planning policy and are in general conformity with existing and evolving planning guidance and the Regional Spatial Strategy (Test 4);
- Relate appropriately to the priorities in the Bracknell Forest Sustainable Community Strategy prepared by the Bracknell Forest Partnership (Test 5);

- Identify an approach which is consistent with the approaches and plans of adjoining authorities (Test 6);
- Are supported by appropriate evidence where necessary and have been objectively assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment (Test 7);
- Include clear monitoring and implementation mechanisms which have been identified with each policy and in the monitoring Appendix to the Core Strategy (Test 8); and,
- Include inherent flexibility within the overall strategy (Test 9).

6.2 Therefore, the Council feels this approach is sound and consistent with the emerging South East Plan, the Core Strategy Vision and national planning policy guidance. As a result, the Council believes no fundamental changes are necessary to make the plan sound. Minor factual changes may be put to the Inspector for her consideration for purposes of clarity. Where relevant, these will be identified within the Written Statements and/or Statements of Common Ground.

Appendix 1: Links between the Core Strategy Spatial Vision and Core Strategy Policies

The Borough will continue to grow sustainably (CS1, CS10, CS11, CS12), in a planned manner, with new development being directed to sustainable locations (CS2) and having good access to a range of local facilities, services, housing and employment (CS2, CS23, CS24). New development will be located so as to maximise the opportunity to travel by all modes (CS1, CS23) and to improve relative accessibility for all. New development will be mindful of the character of the area in which it sits and will be designed and located such that it will enhance the quality of life in the Borough (CS7).

There will be a continuation of development both within settlements, where appropriate, and outside settlements through planned longer term expansion (CS2, CS3, CS4, CS5). Having had regard to the future development needs, environmental, physical and policy constraints and to an assessment of the level of development that may be accommodated within settlements, land to the west of Bracknell and to the north of Whitegrove and Quelm Park have been proposed for such expansions (CS4, CS5). New housing (CS15) will be targeted to meet the needs of local people and will include a mix of tenures, size and types of unit (CS16, CS17, CS18). New communities will be planned to provide the necessary physical infrastructure (e.g. roads, water) (CS24) as well as the social infrastructure (eg. schools, libraries, leisure facilities, health facilities) to support the community (CS6, CS8, CS13).

The Borough will continue to develop as an important business centre: 'smart' growth will be encouraged whereby businesses maximise the use of technology and human resources rather than additional land resources for sustained economic growth. New employment development will be focussed mainly within Bracknell town centre (CS19, CS20) and the existing employment areas. New housing growth areas will be developed as sustainable communities and may include a mix of uses including employment, leisure and community facilities (CS4, CS5, CS19).

Partnership working will ensure that Bracknell Town Centre is regenerated to provide a mix of homes, shops, jobs and other opportunities that will provide economic, social and environmental benefits to residents, businesses and visitors (CS3, CS19, CS21). The town centre will be easily reached by public transport and have a good standard of access by car. It will also be served by park and ride facilities, for example at Peacock Farm. The town centre will also include a health facility which serves new and existing residents in and around the town centre.

Accessibility to Bracknell will be increased with improved connections to Heathrow through the delivery of the Airtrack proposals (better use of rail connections using mostly existing infrastructure on the Reading to Waterloo line via Staines) along with improved links to London and other areas including the Blackwater Valley (CS23).

The smaller town, village and neighbourhood centres will be maintained and enhanced to provide a valuable role in providing local services and reducing the need for local people to travel for their day to day requirements (CS2, CS21, CS22). A 'design-led' approach to new development will provide a safe and attractive living environment (CS7).

The quality of the environment will continue to improve with the existing high levels of open space and 'greenery' within the settlements maintained and improved (CS7, CS8, CS9) . The Green Belt boundary will remain unchanged and areas of important natural and historic interest will be protected, conserved and enhanced (CS1, CS9). Special attention will be placed on the importance of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (CS14) to ensure that its integrity is maintained whilst allowing sustainable development which meets the needs of the Borough to take place.