

Bracknell Forest Council Site Allocations Local Plan

Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment)

Post-Adoption Statement

Introduction

Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the Council is required to produce a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP). The Act requires a SA to be produced for any new or revised Local Development Document (LDD), including Development Plan Documents (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 planning policies and to evaluate reasonable alternative options.

Government Guidance states that the SA should incorporate the Strategic Environmental Assessment required by European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive) and the SA demonstrates that this took place for this Local Plan in 2009. The SA is an iterative process, and was integral to the preparation of the Site Allocations Local Plan.

Bracknell Forest Council adopted the Site Allocations Local Plan on 17th July 2013 taking effect that day. The Council has prepared this Statement in compliance with Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, Articles 9 and 10 of the SEA Directive 2011, and Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004,.

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); and,
 - 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 of information contained in the Sustainability Appraisal undertaken on the Site Allocations Local Plan since 2009. The documents referenced in this Statement can be viewed on the Council's website at:

<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/siteallocationsdevelopmentplandocumentlibrary> .

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, including sites for allocation, within the Site Allocations Local Plan. The Site Allocations Local Plan contains policies that establish principles and locations for delivering housing and other development up to 2026.

The Sustainability Appraisal process commenced together with the Strategic Environment Assessment in 2009 and an update to the Sustainability Appraisal for the Plan was produced for each published version of the Plan.

The stages of appraisal are shown in the following timeline, which was repeated at appropriate stages of preparing the Local Plan. The Inspector considered that the SA/SEA was adequate and formed part of a robust site selection methodology. Subsequently the Local Plan was found sound (with modifications) in June 2013 by the Planning Inspectorate and was adopted in July 2013.

Stage of SA/SEA	Stage of Plan	Main aspects
Initial SA February 2010 ¹ (Participation Document-SAL 3)	The Participation Stage (Issues and Options) February 2010	At the participation stage, an initial SA was provided for 8 possible broad areas.
Preparing the SADPD Preferred Options Draft SA/SEA (SAL 26)	Refinement of Options	This included an SA of the 8 broad areas (alternative locations) and an appraisal of development needs and locations for housing options.
Publication of the SADPD Preferred Options Draft SA/SEA November 2010 (SAL 26) ²	Preferred Option Stage (November 2010)	This included an appraisal of the 4 preferred option strategic sites and the selection of options for policies covering other development needs and smaller housing sites. Please note that although the SA/SEA iterative process heavily influenced the site selection process there were other factors that also helped determine selection of the preferred options- See BFBC/10 ³ (Audit Trail of Site Selection)
SADPD Draft Submission SA November 2011 and SADPD Draft Submission SA appendices November 2011 (SAL 50a and SAL 50b) ^{4 5}	Draft Submission Stage (November 2011)	This provided an overview of the SA/SEA up to this point. It contained a final appraisal of the Local Plan policies including the 4 revised strategic sites, revised development needs, revised

¹ http://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/portal/planning/sadpd/sadpd_participation?pointId=1264692300905#section-1264692300905

² <http://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/portal/planning/siteallocations/sadpdposa>

³ <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bfbc10-sadpd-audit-trail-of-site-selection.pdf>

⁴ <http://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/file/2042388>

⁵ <http://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/file/2042389>

		other smaller housing locations and additional smaller sites with development potential.
Sustainability Appraisal: Supplementary Statement on Proposed Modifications February 2013 (SAL119) ⁶	Site Allocations DPD Proposed Modifications	This provided a screening assessment as to whether any further SA/SEA was required to be carried out on any of the modifications and where necessary an appraisal of new policy CP1 and amended SA1& SA2 sites. [Please note that modifications suggested by BFC and any additional modifications put forward by the Inspector in his report were considered by the independent Inspector to have been adequately covered by the Council's SA/SEA]

The Scoping Report (Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report Site Allocations Development Plan Document- Jan 2010) undertaken in 2009 was part of the first stage, which set out the framework of sustainability objectives and baseline indicators. Policies were tested against these objectives at the 'Issues and Options' 'Preferred Options' and 'Submission' stages. 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 Local Plan.

b. How the environmental report has been taken into account

The policy framework set out in the SA, including the sustainability objectives and the mitigation and monitoring measures, provides for the protection of a range of environmental and wider sustainability interests from the adverse impacts of development. As stated above the SA (environment report) was integrated into each stage of the Local Plan.

The development of the Local Plan has been informed by an extensive body of evidence and assessment. The Local Plan process was lengthy, with much of the evidence gathering and assessment work being reviewed and updated as its preparation progressed.

The evolution of the policies in the Local Plan 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 Local Plan and helped evaluate alternative options.

⁶ <http://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/file/2425923>

c. How opinions expressed in response to: i) The invitation referred to in regulation 13(2)(d); and, ii) Action taken by the responsible authority in accordance with regulation 12(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 with the preparation of the Local Plan. This commenced in 2010 with the initial 'issues and options' stages and culminated in the examination in 2012/13. Throughout the preparation of the Local Plan 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 Local Plan to take account of issues and concerns raised by consultees have been made up to, and following, the examination to take account of the Planning Inspector's modifications. A full account of how consultation has informed the preparation of the Local Plan can be found in the documents listed below:

- SADPD Consultation Statement [Reg 30(i)(d)] November 2011- SAL53⁷
- SADPD Draft Submission Sustainability Appraisal November 2011- SAL51a⁸
- SADPD Draft Submission Sustainability Appraisal Appendices November 2011- SAL51b⁹
- SADPD Regulation 22(1)(i) Consultation Statement June 2012- SAL62¹⁰

Please note that the Inspector's final report stated :

'it is evident from the documents submitted by the Council, including the Regulation 22(1)(c) Statement⁷⁵, that relevant statutory requirements have been met'.

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 Site Allocations Local Plan.

Bracknell Forest is located within Berkshire and is a land-locked Borough. The nature of the activities proposed in the Site Allocations Local Plan mean that consultation with other EU Member States was not appropriate during the preparation of the Local Plan.

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

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (12) (2) requires 'environmental reports' (SA/SEA) to consider any reasonable alternatives, taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme.

As part of the iterative SA process, the alternative options for the Site Allocations were individually tested against the sustainability objectives and consulted upon widely. The results of this were used at each stage in the process to inform the decision on which options should

⁷ <http://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/file/2042379>

⁸ <http://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/file/2042388>

⁹ <http://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/file/2042389>

¹⁰ <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sadpd-regulation-22-1-c-consultation-statement.pdf>

be taken forward as policies and which would require amendments or further mitigation measures, ultimately culminating in the adopted Site Allocations Local Plan.

Each SA Report demonstrates how sustainability objectives have been taken into account at each stage, and integrated into the development of the Site Allocations Local Plan. An audit trail and formal statement on the assessment of options and representations made at each stage of the process is therefore available.

The Site Allocations Local Plan (with its supporting documents) has been found sound following examination by an independent Inspector and represents a sustainable approach to delivering housing and other development in the Borough up to 2026.

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

The requirement in paragraph 4(f) of Regulation 16, is to explain how the responsible authority will monitor the significant effects of the plan's implementation. The SA highlighted a number of potentially positive and negative effects as a result of implementing the SALP.

Chapter 6 of the SALP 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 at least an annual basis through the Council's Authority Monitoring Report (AMR).

There are also policies and associated indicators in the adopted Core Strategy (2008)¹¹ that can be used to monitor any potential negative environmental effects raised as a result of the SA/SEA work. An example of this is where potential negative effects were predicted against biodiversity, including habitat such as the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. Core Strategy policy CS14 and its associated indicator will be used to monitor any effects on the Thames Basins Heath SPA and the results will be reported in the AMR alongside other effects previously raised as a concern in the environmental report.

Therefore there is a comprehensive monitoring framework in place to monitor any environmental effects caused by implementation of the SALP. There is also a mechanism in place to report such findings on an annual basis through the AMR.

Further information

A full copy of the Sustainability Appraisal (Incorporating SEA), Draft Submission Site Allocation DPD and the Site Allocations Development Plan Document Sustainability Appraisal: Supplementary Statement on Proposed Modifications can be downloaded from the website: <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/siteallocationsdevelopmentplandocumentlibrary> .

Alternatively, to receive a hard copy, please contact:

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¹¹ <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/core-strategy-development-plan-document-february-2008.pdf>