



Woking Borough Council

**Development Management Policies Development
Plan Document (DPD)**

Executive Summary - Sustainability Appraisal Report

February 2015

Woking Borough Council

Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) – Sustainability Appraisal Report

Executive Summary

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Sustainability Appraisal Report (SA) assesses the environmental, economic and social implications of the policies of the Development Management Policies DPD. It enables an objective assessment of each policy and the contribution it makes towards sustainable development of the Borough. It also enables weaknesses in the DPD to be identified and appropriate mitigation measures introduced to make them as sustainable as it can possibly be. The main purpose of the Development Management Policies DPD is to provide the necessary framework for the delivery of the requirements of the Core Strategy. The DPD comprises detailed Development Management policies that expand on the strategic policies of the Core Strategy to help determine day to day planning applications. The policies covered in the DPD are at Appendix 1. The Core Strategy has been subjected to a comprehensive SA that has been considered at an Examination. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides useful guidance on the preparation of SAs. It emphasises that assessments should be proportionate and should not repeat policy assessments that has already been undertaken. The SA of the Development Management Policies DPD has been carried out in this context, recognising that the parent strategic policies in the Core Strategy that they seek to deliver have been comprehensively assessed.

1.2 The SA Report is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The SA Report also encompasses the requirements of the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive).

1.3 The SA has been carried out as an integral part of the Development Management Policies DPD process and it will form an important evidence base to demonstrate that sustainable development is at the heart of the DPD and has influenced key decisions at each stage of its process.

1.4 A Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening (HRA) has been carried out as a separate document to complement the SA. A copy can be obtained on request from the Planning Policy Team and it is also on the Council's website (www.woking.gov.uk). The HRA concluded that the Woking draft Development Management Policies DPD has been screened out as having no likelihood of leading to significant adverse impacts on European designated sites alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

2.0 The Sustainability Appraisal Framework

2.1 The policies of the DPD were assessed against the objectives of the SA Framework. The SA Framework has been used to provide a consistent basis for describing, analysing and comparing the sustainability effects of the various policies of the DPD. The SA Framework is objective-led and hence includes a set of objectives to be achieved by the various elements of the Framework. The SA Framework takes into account the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and is informed by comments of the statutory consultees as part of the consultation on the Scoping Report.

Table 1 is the SA Framework and the objectives that it seeks to achieve.

Table 1

1. to provide sufficient housing which meets the needs of the community and which is at an affordable price
2. facilitate the improved health and wellbeing of the population and reduce inequalities in health
3. reduce vulnerability to flooding and harm from flooding to public well-being, the economy and the environment
4. reduce poverty, crime and social exclusion
5. to improve accessibility to all services and facilities
6. make the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings
7. minimise air, light and noise pollution
8. reduce land contamination and safeguard agricultural soil quality
9. conserve and enhance biodiversity
10. conserve and enhance and where appropriate make accessible for enjoyment the natural, historic and cultural assets and landscape of Woking
11. reduce the causes of climate change – particularly by increasing energy efficiency and the production of energy from low and zero carbon technologies and renewable sources – and adapt to its impacts
12. reduce the impacts of consumption of resources by using sustainably produced and local products
13. reduce waste generation and disposal and achieve sustainable management of waste
14. maintain and improve water quality of the region’s rivers and groundwater, and manage water resources sustainably
15. reduce the need to travel, encourage safe, sustainable transport options and make the best use of existing transport infrastructure
16. maintain high and stable levels of employment and productivity, and encourage high quality, low impact development and education for all
17. provide a range of commercial development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy and, in particular, support and enhance the economies of town, district, local and neighbourhood centres

3.0 Key conclusions of the SA (this is grouped under appraisals of objectives, appraisal of options and Appraisal of policies)

3.1 Appraisal of objectives

3.1.1 The overall purpose of the DPD is to facilitate the delivery of the Core Strategy. The objectives of the DPD are therefore exactly the same as the objectives of the Core Strategy, and are stated in paragraph 12.2 of the DPD. The objective of the Core Strategy has been appraised against similar SA Framework. No purpose would be served by repeating that in the SA of this DPD. The SA Report of the Core Strategy is on the website (www.woking.gov.uk).

3.1.2 In summary, the SA of objectives of the Core Strategy revealed that majority of the objectives makes significant contribution towards achieving sustainable development in the Borough and consequently, towards delivering the vision for the Core Strategy.

3.1.3 Many of the objectives have neutral impacts on the objectives of the SA Framework.

- 3.1.4 Although not a requirement of the EU Directive or the recommended process for carrying out an SA, an objective compatibility appraisal was carried out for the Core Strategy objectives. A key reason for doing this was to ensure that no single objective is substantially undermined or compromised in order to achieve another objective. In majority of case, the objectives were mutually supportive of each other and complement each other to deliver the overall vision of the Core Strategy. Based on this assessment, there is no evidence that the pursuit to achieve one objective will undermine any of the other if appropriate mitigation measures could be secured.
- 3.1.5 There were a few instances where conflict exists between the objectives. These were mainly related to the objective of concentrating development at the main urban centres where key facilities and service are available and the potential implications on air quality. This will mainly arise from increased traffic. There is no doubt that the main urban centres are the most sustainable locations for development. However, such an approach to development has its implication that has to be addressed. The need to promote public transport, walking and cycling and manage air quality would be critical in ensuring the sustainable development of the area.
- 3.1.6 The above conclusions will equally apply to the appraisal of objectives of this DPD.

3.2 Appraisal of alternative options

3.2.1 The policies of the DPD expand in detail the strategic policies of the Core Strategy for the purposes of determining day to day planning applications. There has been a comprehensive appraisal of options for addressing the issues which the DPD and for that matter the Core Strategy seeks to address as part of the SA of the Core Strategy. The appraisal of options demonstrated that the parent policies in the Core Strategy are the most sustainable policies to address the preferred options. No purpose would be served by repeating the appraisal of options in the SA Report of the Core Strategy as advised in the NPPF. The appraisal of options of the Core Strategy is on the Council's website. A summary of relevant key outcomes of the SA of options are summarised below:

- Most new development to be concentrated in urban areas with a relatively small percentage of the housing provision to be provided in the form of greenfield sites on the edge of settlements to meet the need for family homes;
- Improve cycle and pedestrian infrastructure in new development;
- Where relevant, new development should provide travel plans setting out how additional journeys would be managed;
- Focus future office development within the town centre and encourage redevelopment of outmoded and outdated town centre office space to cater for future needs. Encourage redevelopment of outmoded and outdated office space in industrial estates;
- Make annual provision of 292 new dwellings.

The above bullet points are only a summary and should not in any way undermine the relevance of the other outcomes of the SA of options to the Development Management Policies DPD.

4.0 Appraisal of the policies of the Development Management Policies DPD

4.1 There has been a comprehensive appraisal of the policies of the DPD against the SA Framework to ensure consistency in the appraisal process.

4.2 The SA has been carried out as an integral part of the DPD process with an in-built mechanism for informing the development and refinement of the policies.

4.3 The SA has demonstrated that overall, the policies of the DPD when implemented will have positive impacts on the sustainability objectives and consequently, on sustainable development. There are only few policies with negative impacts on the sustainability objectives. For example, the effects of developing garden land on biodiversity. Mitigation measures have been built into the policy on the development of garden land to overcome the negative effects. The DPD includes a policy on Green Infrastructure to enhance the overall biodiversity of the area. It is noted that there are a number of policies with neutral impacts on the sustainability objectives. The policies of the DPD are carefully balanced to provide adequate mitigation measures to address potential conflicts. Most of the conflicts are either short or medium term and could be resolved in the long term by appropriate mitigation measures.

4.4 The performance of the policies of the DPD will also be influenced by how well they are phrased with respect to their clarity and intent in their meaning. In this regard, the test would be having policies that are:

- Written in simple and user friendly language but at the same time meeting all its technical requirements.
- Clear on what it seeks to achieve.
- Concise and unambiguous.
- Detailed in nature and conform to all requirements.

5.0 Recommended mitigation to inform the DPD

5.1 The SA identified few potential negative impacts that could be mitigated over the medium to long term. The proposed mitigations measures include:

- Development of garden land should take account of the biodiversity value of the site;
- Development should be encouraged to promote sustainable transport modes;
- residential development should make provision to mitigate the impacts of development on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas.

6.0 Linkages with other strategies of the Council

6.1 The DPD is one of a number of Council strategies and documents that seek to achieve a similar goal of sustainable development. In this regard, the DPD will not sit in isolation but within a wider context of the Council's overall drive to achieve sustainable development of the area. A list of the relevant other documents include:

- Affordable Housing Delivery Supplementary Planning Document (SPD);
- Housing Strategy;
- Climate Change Strategy;
- Design SPD;
- Green Space Development Strategy;
- Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule;
- Economic Strategy.

7.0 Monitoring the effects of the DPD

7.1 The DPD has an in-built monitoring framework with specific indicators to ensure a consistent and comprehensive monitoring of the performance of the policies of the DPD. The outcome of the monitoring will be reported in the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) that will be published by 31 December of each year. The AMR will be made available to the public via the Council's website.

8.0 Consultation

8.1 The SEA Directive and the Planning Act both recommends public involvement in the SA process. Furthermore, they expect the outcome of public consultation to be taken into account. It is also a requirement that designated consultation bodies in the UK are consulted at each relevant stage of the SA process. These bodies are:

- English Heritage.
- Natural England.
- Environment Agency

8.2 The Council has an adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) that sets out how it will consult the public on planning documents. The requirements of the SCI are being followed in preparing the SA Report.

8.3 The designated consultation bodies were consulted on the Scoping Report and the SA Framework used for the appraisal. Their comments had been taken into account in finalising the Scoping Report.

8.4 It is intended that the SA Report of the DPD will be published for full public consultation as part of the consultation on the DPD to give the public an opportunity to input into the process. This will be in February 2015.

9.0 Next Stages of the process

9.1 The SA Report will be published alongside the DPD for public consultation. This will allow the public the opportunity to comment on the SA Report and to highlight any new information that need to be taken into account. All comments will be analysed and used to inform further review of the SA Report before the Submission version of the DPD and its accompanying SA Report is published. The public will once again have the opportunity to comment on the SA Report of the Submission version of the DPD.

10.0 Conclusion

10.1 The preparation of the SA Report is an essential requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004). It is fundamental to the preparation of the DPD to ensure its soundness. The SA has been prepared to meet the requirements of the EU Directive and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. It addresses all the key stages and tasks in the Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Framework (ODPM, November 2005). The SA has been prepared as an integral part of the DPD process and its outcomes has informed the detailed wording of the policies of the DPD.

10.2 The outcome of the SA has demonstrated that overall the DPD will make a positive contribution towards achieving sustainable development in the Borough. Where there are conflicts, appropriate mitigation measures have been incorporated into relevant policies to overcome that.

Appendix 1

Policies covered in the Development Management Policies DPD

DM1	Green Infrastructure Opportunities
DM2	Trees and landscaping
DM3	Outdoor recreation and sports facilities
DM4	Development in the vicinity of Basingstoke Canal
DM5	Environmental pollution
DM6	Air and Water quality
DM7	Noise and Light pollution
DM8	Land contamination and hazards
DM9	Flat above shops and ancillary accommodation
DM10	Development on garden land
DM11	Sub-divisions, specialist housing, conversion and loss of housing
DM12	Custom build dwellings
DM13	Buildings within and adjoining the Green Belt
DM14	Rural workers dwelling
DM15	Shops outside designated centres
DM16	Service arrangement and deliveries for employment and retail
DM17	Public realm
DM18	Advertising and signs
DM19	Shopfronts
DM20	Heritage assets
DM21	Education facilities
DM22	Communication infrastructure