
Chiltern District Council

Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Statement

November 2011

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Core Strategy for Chiltern District was formally adopted by full Council on the 15th November 2011. The Core Strategy now forms part of the Development Plan for Chiltern District.

1.2 In accordance with Section 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, the Council has carried out a Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy and produced a report which outlines the likely social, economic and environmental effects of the plan. This Report¹ and subsequent update² can be downloaded at www.chiltern.gov.uk/corestrategy.

1.3 The Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District also fully incorporates the requirements of the European Directive 2001/42/EC³, transposed into UK law via the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

2. Requirements

2.1 Part 4 (Post-Adoption Procedures) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, requires the Council to publish, as soon as reasonably practicable following the adoption of the Core Strategy, a statement containing the following:

- How sustainability/environmental considerations have been integrated into the Core Strategy;
- How the Sustainability Appraisal Report has been taken into account;
- How any opinions expressed by consultation bodies and the wider public have been taken into account;
- The reasons for choosing the Core Strategy as adopted, in light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Core Strategy.

2.2 The Council has produced this Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Statement in order to satisfy the above requirements. The following sections systematically address each of the regulatory requirements above.

¹ Final Sustainability Appraisal Report, October 2010

² Sustainability Appraisal of the Proposed Significant Changes to the Core Strategy for Chiltern District Submission Document, June 2011

³ Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (also known as the SEA Directive).

3. Overview

3.1 The table below, taken from page 13 of the final Sustainability Appraisal Report, outlines the stages involved in the Sustainability Appraisal process and the corresponding reports in which the findings have been published.

Table 1: Overview of the Sustainability Appraisal process

SA stages taken from the 2005 ODPM SA guidance	When and where was this done?
Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope.	
A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives.	Included in both the 2005 (Appendix 4) and also the updated 2008 (Section 4 and Appendix 3) SA Scoping Reports and Appendix 5 to the final SA Report.
A2: Collecting baseline information	Included in both the 2005 (Appendix 5) and also the updated 2008 (Appendix 5) SA Scoping Reports. Since April 2004 it has been updated on an annual basis in the Councils' Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). A summary of the main findings of this monitoring is set out in Appendix 6 to the final SA Report.
A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems	Section 4 of 2005 Scoping Report Section 5.5 of 2008 Scoping Report Preliminary SA Report 2009 (section 4.3) See also Section 3 of the final SA Report.
A4: Developing the SA Framework	First developed and included in the 2005 SA Scoping Report but the objectives and indicators have continued to evolve over time. See Appendix 2 to the final SA Report.
A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA	Consultation on the 2005 SA Scoping report took place in March 2005 and in March 2008 on the 2008 updated Scoping Report.
Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects.	
B1: Testing the DPD objectives against the SA Framework	Iterative process which was first included in the Preliminary SA Report of 2009. See also Section 4 of the final SA Report.
B2: Developing the DPD Options	Each stage of the development of the DPD options (set out below) was subject to sustainability appraisal (see section 5 for more detail). Whilst the early consultation stages provided valuable background information for the development of the Core Strategy, it was the Strategic Options Consultation June 2008 that first put forward the alternative growth scenarios on which the CS was subsequently based.
B3: Predicting the effects of the DPD	The appraisal of the Strategic Options was undertaken by consultants in June 2008 and the SA report was available for consultation alongside the Strategic Options Paper.
B4: Evaluating the effects of the DPD	Policies in the CS have been appraised and the results set out in Appendix 1.
B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects.	
B6: Proposing measures to monitor	This issue will be picked up in the Annual Monitoring Report.

the significant effects of implementing the DPD.	
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4. How have sustainability/environmental considerations have been integrated into the Core Strategy?

4.1 As demonstrated in Table 1 above, the Council has produced a number of interim Sustainability Appraisal reports which have guided the evolution of the Core Strategy and offered an ongoing assessment of the sustainability of the plan.

4.2 An initial scoping exercise was undertaken in which relevant plans, programmes and policies were identified and the baseline social, economic and environmental information was collected. This information was used to supplement section 3 (Portrait of Chiltern and its Communities) and section 4 (Issues and Challenges) of the Core Strategy.

4.3 The identified environmental and wider sustainability issues were then translated into a set of 18 specific sustainability objectives, forming the 'Sustainability Appraisal Framework'. This framework, as outlined in the Scoping Report (2005 and subsequently updated in 2008) covering social, environmental and economic objectives was then used to test emerging objectives, policies and site allocations in the Core Strategy.

4.4 Alongside the Sustainability Appraisal process, further environmental considerations (specifically biodiversity) were taken into account by the Council in a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). The initial HRA Screening Opinion Report and Full HRA Assessment seek to predict and mitigate any likely effects of the Core Strategy in relation to European protected sites with importance for wildlife known as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA).

4.5 The initial Screening Opinion identified that the proposals within the Core Strategy had the potential to impact upon 3 European designated sites in close proximity to the district boundary. However, after undertaking a more comprehensive full HRA the Council concluded that the proposals within the Core Strategy in combination with other plans and programmes would be unlikely to significantly affect the integrity of Burnham Beeches SAC, Chilterns Beechwoods SAC or South West London SPA in terms of their respective qualifying interest features and conservation objectives. This approach was endorsed by key environmental bodies; the Environment Agency, Natural England and Bucks, Berks an Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT).

5. How the Sustainability Appraisal Report has been taken into account

Developing the options

5.1 In June 2008, the Council put forward 4 strategic growth options – one of which would form the basis of the Core Strategy. The options document along with a Sustainability Appraisal of the likely effects was produced for widespread consultation.

5.2 The four strategic growth options put forward were as follows:

- **Option 1:** Development continuing primarily in the built-up areas of all the larger towns and villages;
- **Option 2:** Concentrate new development in the two most accessible major settlements, Chesham and the urban area of Amersham (which included Little Chalfont);
- **Option 3:** Concentrate new development in the three most accessible major settlements, Chesham, Amersham (which included Little Chalfont) and Chalfont St Peter;
- **Option 4:** A more dispersed pattern of development with a combination of sites within, and on the edge of, many settlements.

5.3 Taking into account the results of the Sustainability Appraisal, the Council decided that, on balance, Option 3 was the most sustainable and the most likely option to deliver the housing allocation without resulting in unacceptable changes in character to the environment or significant loss of Green Belt land. The spatial strategy of the Core Strategy was subsequently based on this option.

5.4 When the appraisal was undertaken, it was assumed that option 3 would necessitate the release of some undeveloped land on the edges of these settlements and consequently it scored a 'major negative' with regard to both helping to preserve soil resources (SA objective 13) and also making the best use of previously developed land (SA objective 14). However, the Council has since been able to avoid these effects by demonstrating that there is sufficient previously developed land available within the urban areas to meet the housing allocation.

Refining the objectives, policies and strategic site allocations

5.5 A further Sustainability Appraisal Report, produced in June 2009, assessed the sustainability of the objectives, policies and strategic site allocations put forward in the Draft Core Strategy (June 2009) Document for Stakeholder Dialogue, which was produced for dialogue with key stakeholders. The report also identified likely cumulative and synergistic effects of the Draft Core Strategy in relation to a number of key sustainability issues, in order to help inform the ongoing preparation of the plan.

5.6 A key component of the appraisal at this stage was an objective assessment of 34 potential strategic housing sites, 5 potential sites for retail and 4 potential Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt (MDS) against a number of identified constraints linked to the agreed SA objectives. This assessment, alongside other important considerations such as deliverability, was used to refine the list of suitable sites to be

included in the final iteration of the Core Strategy. For example, it was suggested that a total of 5 potential housing sites were considered unsustainable and a further 30 had some sustainability issues which could be overcome.

5.7 The Final Sustainability Appraisal Report (October 2010) identifies that whilst all of the policies generally performed well when assessed against the SA Framework, potential adverse effects were identified for three of the policies in the submitted Core Strategy— namely;

- CS7 (Major Developed Sites within the Green Belt Allocated for Housing)
- CS9 (Rural Exceptions)
- CS21 (Areas of Little Change)

5.8 The report puts forward suggestions of how the issues identified could be mitigated either through application of the policy. It is concluded that there is sufficient scope within the Core Strategy for any negative effects identified to be off-set by other policies within the document, national policy or through inclusion of specific measures in the Delivery DPD.

5.9 The report identifies that the cumulative effect of additional development has the potential to lead to impacts on air pollution in Chesham and drainage issues in Chalfont St Peter. It indicates that both issues will need to be closely monitored over the life of the plan but neither issue poses an absolute constraint on development in these areas.

6. How any opinions expressed by consultation bodies and the wider public have been taken into account

6.1 Both the Core Strategy and Sustainability Appraisal Reports have been subject to a number of consultation events since 2004, as outlined in Table 1.

6.2 The Council produced a Statement of Representations⁴, which summarises all comments made on the Core Strategy for Chiltern District, Publication document. This document was submitted to the Secretary of State alongside the Core Strategy in January 2011. The Council has also produced a document entitled “Core Strategy Pre-Submission Consultation Statement 2010” which offers a summary of comments to the pre-publication stages of the Core Strategy (2008 - 2010) and a CDC response.

6.3 Any changes made as a result of these responses have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal during the preparation of the Core Strategy.

6.4 Throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy, a number of more specific comments on the various Sustainability Appraisal reports have been made by the statutory consultation bodies; Natural England, Environment Agency and English Heritage, as well as the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT). Wherever possible and appropriate, the Council has endeavoured to incorporate comments made by the statutory bodies.

⁴ Statement of Representations (Jan 2010)

7. The reasons for choosing the Core Strategy as adopted, in light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with

7.1 As explained in chapter 5, the Council put forward 4 strategic options for growth in Chiltern District. All 4 options were appraised in the Council's Strategic Options Sustainability Appraisal Report, June 2008. Taking into account the results of the Sustainability Appraisal, the members of the Council decided that, on balance, Option 3 was the most sustainable and the most likely option to deliver the housing allocation without resulting in unacceptable changes in character to the environment or significant loss of Green Belt land.

7.2 Further, during the Examination in Public (EiP), the Inspector highlighted that the strategy chosen by the Council had evolved sufficiently that it could no longer be described as any of the options put forward in the June 2008 Strategic Options paper. With this in mind, the Council undertook further sustainability appraisal of this evolved option, to ensure compatibility with the agreed sustainability objectives. The results of this appraisal and appraisal of significant changes proposed by the Council during the EiP are included in the document entitled 'Sustainability Appraisal of the Proposed Significant Changes to the Core Strategy for Chiltern District Submission Document'. An extract of the assessment is included below.

Table 2: Sustainability Assessment of adopted strategy compared to 2008 options

Sustainability Objective	Spatial Strategy proposed in revised CS1	2008 Strategic Options Sustainability Appraisal			
		Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
1. Housing	✓	-	+	+	++
2. Safety	?	0	0	0	0
3. Accessibility	✓+	-	+?	+?	-
4. Health	✓	0	+	+	0
5. Transport	✓+	-?	++	++	-
6. Water Use	?	-?	-	-	-?
7. Biodiversity	✓	++?	-?	-?	-
8. Landscape & Townscape	?	0	+	+	-?
9. Historic Environment	?	-?	+	+	+
10. Climate Change	✓	0	+	+	0
11. Flood Risk	?	0?	0	0	0
12. Waste	✓	0	0	0	0
13. Soil	✓+	+	-?	-?	-
14. Land Use	?	++	-	-	-
15. Economic Growth	✓	-	+	+	-?
16. Diversity	~	0?	0?	0?	0?
17. Workforce	~	-?	+	+	++
18. Employment	✓	-?	-?	-?	-?

Please note: the appraisal system employed in 2008 differs slightly from that used in this report, therefore both keys are included below.

Key

Major positive	✓+
Minor positive	✓
Uncertain	?
Negative	X
Neutral	~

Key (2008 SA)

Major positive	++
Minor positive	+
Neutral	0
Minor negative	-
Major negative	--
Uncertain	?

7.3 The table above demonstrates that the revised Spatial Strategy, as outlined in

policy CS1, has evolved to ensure any negative sustainability impacts are minimised. On the whole, the assessment considers that the strategy, as re-stated in the final Core Strategy, is likely to have positive impacts when assessed against the agreed sustainability objectives.

8. The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Core Strategy

8.1 In addition to the indicators listed within the Core Strategy document itself, the Council intends to use a series of indicators set out against the agreed Sustainability Appraisal framework, to monitor the effects of the Core Strategy when implemented. These indicators, included below, go well beyond simply environmental effects.

Table 3: Sustainability Appraisal Framework and Indicators

Objective Number	Objective	Indicators
Social Progress which meets the needs of everyone		
1	To provide existing and future residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home	1. To provide existing and future residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home. 2. The number of housing completions, new planning permissions granted and commitments (extant planning permissions). 3. (i) Total housing stock (ii) no. of empty properties (iii) no. empty for more than 6 months (iv) vacancy rate 4. House price/earnings affordability ratio – All dwellings 5. Amount of affordable housing delivered 6. No of households on the housing register 7. Amount of 'key worker' homes provided 8. Temporary accommodation/ rough sleepers
2	The creation of safer places to live & work and to reduce anti-social behaviour	1. Recorded crimes per 1,000 pop.- domestic burglaries, robberies, theft of vehicles and theft from vehicles 2. % of residents with a fear of crime 3. No. of noise complaints received 4. Number of Anti Social Behaviour Orders issued (ASBOs) issued and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts signed (ABC).
3	To improve accessibility to essential services & facilities to provide opportunities to obtain good access to high quality health, education, recreation & other community facilities & services	% and number of properties in each Accessibility Zone identified in the Council's Accessibility, Parking Standard and Community Infrastructure Study
4	Improve & maintain health & well-being of the population & reduce inequalities in health	1. The health of the population of the District
Effective Protection of the Environment		
5	To encourage the use and integration of sustainable methods of transport, to reduce negative effects on the environment	1. Different modes of travel 2. % of children travelling to (a) primary school (b) secondary school by different modes of transport 3. Passive diffusion tube data suggesting an exceedence of the UK Annual Mean Objective for nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂). 4. No. of Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) designations. 5. Traffic flows for all vehicle types by million vehicle kilometres

Objective Number	Objective	Indicators
6	To provide for sustainable levels of water use & supply & management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Water leakage rate from mains & customer pipes by litres/ property 2. The amount of water used and available 3. Rivers of Good or Fair chemical & biological water quality 4. No. of incidents of major & significant water pollution occurring in a particular year 5. Quality & quantity of groundwater
7	To maintain & enhance biodiversity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Achievements of Buckinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan targets P. 155 AMR 2. Condition & area of SSSI's, Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves 3 Area of ancient woodland in District
8	To protect & enhance the landscape and townscape character of Chiltern & in particular, those areas of designated importance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % of designated area covered by management plans 2. Percentage and area of District in Chilterns AONB 3. Area under agreement under the Environmentally Sensitive Area & Countryside Stewardship agri- environment schemes 4. Area of designated public open space developed
9	To conserve & where appropriate enhance the historic environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Buildings of Grade I & II* at risk of decay 2. No. of scheduled ancient monuments & historic parks & gardens lost or damaged. 3. % of CA reviews completed & number of new Conservation Areas designated. 4. % of archaeological sites at risk
10	To reduce contributions to climate change through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Sustainable building practices b) Maximising the potential for renewable energy & energy conservation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of grants given for energy saving improvements 2. % of new buildings achieving either the SAP or BREEAM rating for energy efficiency 3. Amount of gas and electricity consumed. 4. Electricity generated from renewable sources & CHP 5. Amount of CO2 emissions per year
11	To minimise the risk of flooding from fluvial and surface water sources, in relation to both new & existing development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. of properties affected by fluvial flood events 2. No. of properties affected by surface water flooding. 3. Amount of new development in the floodplains of the Chess and Misbourne rivers 4. New development with sustainable drainage installed (SuDs).
Prudent Use of Natural Resources		
12	Minimise waste & then re-use or recover it through recycling, composting or energy recovery	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % of household waste recycled and sent to landfill 2. % of construction & demolition waste going to landfill 3. Amount of hazardous waste 4. Amount of secondary/ recycled aggregates used compared with virgin aggregates
13	To conserve soil resources & quality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amount of grade 1 and 2 agricultural land lost to new development 2. No. of potentially contaminated sites. 3. No. of planning applications with Land Quality Planning Condition (contaminated land) and informatives imposed.
14	To improve the efficiency of land use through the re-use of existing buildings & previously developed land	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % of new homes built on PDL 2. Density of new housing built
Maintenance of High and Stable Levels of Economic Growth and Employment		
15	To achieve a broad balance between housing, population & employment whilst encouraging economic growth and competitiveness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Average business start-up and closure rates per 10,000 population. 2. Out commuting levels
16	To encourage a diverse economy which is focused	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number and proportion of employees in knowledge based sectors.

Objective Number	Objective	Indicators
	on higher value added, lower impact activities	2. Diversity of economic sectors represented in the area. 3. Image indices derived from consultations with businesses & local property specialists as part of the planning process
17	To develop & maintain a skilled workforce to support long-term competitiveness of the District	1. % of 15 year old pupils in schools maintained by the local education authority achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* - C or equivalent. % of population with and without qualifications. 2. % of population qualified to NVQ level 3 or equivalent 3. Proportion of adults with no qualifications.
18	To ensure high & stable levels of employment so everyone can benefit from the economic growth of the region	1. Proportion and number of people of working age who are unemployed 2. No. of people of working age out of work a year or more.

8.2 The SA indicators above will be monitored and form part of the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR is made publically available each year and, from 2011 onwards, will also include the results against the Core Strategy policy indicators.

9. Conclusions

9.1 The use of Sustainability Appraisal as a tool to assess the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the Core Strategy throughout its preparation has meant that sustainability considerations have been an integral part of the Core Strategy process.

9.2 The Sustainability Appraisal work undertaken has been used in an iterative manner in order to ensure that the development of options, policies, allocations and reasonable alternatives was undertaken with issues of sustainability at their heart.

9.3 The Council will continue to monitor the impacts of the Core Strategy during implementation, through the agreed monitoring framework.