

Bassetlaw District Council

Local Development Framework Core Strategy & Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD)

SUSTAINABILITY ADOPTION STATEMENT

1. Introduction

The procedures for adopting the Bassetlaw Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) include the requirement for a statement explaining how environmental considerations have been integrated into the DPD. This Statement therefore sets out:

- how the environmental report (the Sustainability Appraisal) has been taken into account;
- how the opinions of consultees have been taken into account;
- the reasons for choosing the Adopted Strategy in light of reasonable alternatives considered; and
- how the significant environmental effects of implementing the Strategy will be monitored.

This statement has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (16)(3) and (4).

2. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme

An integral part of the process of preparing the Core Strategy has been to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to ensure the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the development of the Core Strategy objectives and strategic policies. The requirements of EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 have been incorporated into the SA.

The SA process has played a central role in the development of the Bassetlaw Core Strategy. An initial scoping exercise helped define the environmental, social and economic condition of Bassetlaw, setting out the main sustainability issues and a framework for appraisal for the Local Development Framework, including the Core Strategy.

The Scoping Report sets out 14 Sustainability Appraisal Objectives against which the vision, objectives and policies of the Core Strategy were tested against. These are:

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	
1	To ensure that the housing stock meets the housing needs of Bassetlaw
2	To improve health and reduce health inequalities
3	To provide better opportunities for recreation and for people to value and enjoy the Bassetlaw's cultural heritage
4	To improve community safety, reduce crime and the fear of crime
5	To promote and support the development and growth of social capital across the District
6	To protect the natural environment and increase biodiversity levels across the District
7	To protect and enhance the historic built environment and cultural heritage assets in Bassetlaw
8	To protect and manage prudently the natural resources of the district including water, air quality, soils and minerals
9	To minimise waste and increase the re-use and recycling of waste materials
10	To minimise energy usage and to develop the district's renewable energy resource, reducing dependency on non-renewable sources
11	To make efficient use of the existing transport infrastructure, help reduce the need to travel by car, improve accessibility to jobs and services for all and to ensure that all journeys are undertaken by the most sustainable mode available
12	To create high quality employment opportunities
13	To develop a strong culture of enterprise and innovation
14	To provide the physical conditions for a modern economic structure, including infrastructure to support the use of new technologies

These objectives were developed in partnership with the Nottinghamshire Joint Sustainability Appraisal Framework (JSAF) and are based on those used for the Regional Plan.

3. How the Environmental Report has been taken into account

Issues and Options

In September 2009 the Council produced the Core Strategy Issues and Options Report which presented a number of options and reasonable alternatives for the spatial strategy. In addition, it looked at issues and options to address how to develop a balanced housing market; maintaining a quality local environment; and supporting a prosperous District. This document was informed by the findings from the SA Scoping Report and the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy. The alternative spatial strategy options were tested against the SA Framework in the draft SA Report, which was published alongside the Core Strategy Preferred Options.

Preferred Options

The Preferred Options SA Report was published alongside the Preferred Options Core Strategy and Development Management Policies document for public consultation in May 2010.

The Report set out a comparison of the sustainability effects of each of the strategic growth options and gave reasons for selection of the Preferred Option, taking account of responses received during public consultation on the Issues and Options. The preferred options were then appraised against the sustainability objectives; a process which provided information on their possible economic, social and environmental impacts. The appraisal considered whether the short-term and long-term impacts were likely to be strong positive, positive, neutral/no impact, negative, strong negative, or uncertain. Potential mitigation measures for the likely impacts were also identified. The DPD contains a summary of how each of the preferred objectives and policies scored in the SA.

Publication and Submission Draft

The final SA Report was produced and issued for consultation alongside the Publication Core Strategy in November 2010. The Report comprised the following:

- Identifying relevant baseline information, including other plans or programmes that influence the Core Strategy's proposals and policies;
- Assessing the Core Strategy against the SA Framework;
- Commenting on the specific parts of the Core Strategy where specific potential short-term and long-term impacts are identified and, where possible, making recommendations for proposed mitigation or enhancement; and
- Identifying secondary, cumulative or synergistic impacts that the policies may have on the SA Objectives, along with the potential effects of a 'do nothing' scenario.

In the assessment of the Publication Core Strategy a number of changes were made to the Strategic Objectives and Development Management policies, demonstrating the process of refinement of the DPD and the overall effectiveness of the SA process.

Following consultation on the Publication Core Strategy the DPD was submitted for examination on 31 January 2011, along with a schedule of proposed minor changes. A number of focused changes to the Submission Core Strategy were proposed by the Council during the Examination in Public to make the plan sound. Post-examination, these focused changes were subject to further SA.

Impact of the Environmental Report

The SA identified the likely significant effects of different options, which served to inform decisions about the approaches to be taken forward to the Preferred Options stage. This process of iteration has been important in the development of clear and concise policies and the development of suggested mitigation measures.

Most importantly, the SA process has given officers, decision makers and the wider community the opportunity to consider formally issues of sustainability alongside the plan making process. While this has not meant that all issues have been or can be resolved through the LDF process, it has served to raise greater awareness of the potential problems and trends that will face the District in the future.

Although consultation on the Scoping Report highlighted a number of issues that were subsequently addressed, further consultation on the SA of the Preferred Options Core Strategy and Development Management Policies did not bring forward any significant concerns about the long-term sustainability of the proposals contained within the draft document.

4. How opinions expressed and results of public consultation have been taken into account

Article 5.4 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive requires consultation with authorities with environmental responsibilities when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report (Sustainability Appraisal). As such, the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England were consulted at each stage in the production of the Core Strategy and development of the SA. Comments received from these bodies and other interested parties have fed into the development of the Issues and Options Report, the Preferred Options, the Submission draft and the Adopted Core Strategy.

Scoping Report

A summary of responses received during consultation on the Scoping Report are set out in Appendix 5 of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy Preferred Options. A total of 33 comments were submitted by the three environmental consultation bodies and a number of minor changes were consequently made to the Scoping Report, largely relating to the environmental indicators and the review of relevant plans and programmes affecting development of the DPD.

Preferred Options

Following consultation on the Preferred Options and the draft Sustainability Appraisal, no significant changes were required. Most of the minor changes that have been made to the DPD have come as the result of comments received in consultation on the document itself.

The most significant comment made directly on the SA came from CABE, who directed us towards their publications on the influence of design in relation to measurable social, environmental and economic outcomes. Whereas the SA of the Preferred Options intimated that it is difficult to quantify the effects of good design, CABE were keen for us to draw out the many positive benefits that can be derived from higher standards of design in all new developments.

Publication and Submission Draft

No comments were received on the final draft of the Sustainability Appraisal, nor on the post-examination appraisal of the focused changes.

5. Reason for choosing the plan as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with

In preparing the Core Strategy, a range of approaches to addressing the key planning issues facing Bassetlaw were considered. This statement sets out the reasons for choosing the approach adopted in the light of the other reasonable alternatives.

Three alternative Strategic Options were set out in the Issues and Options Report and assessed in Section 4 of the Preferred Options draft Sustainability Appraisal document. The appraisal indicated that Options 1 and 3 were the most sustainable options for the future development of Bassetlaw, with the greatest potential for long-term positive impacts on the SA Objectives. Option 2 emerged as the least sustainable, which was congruent with the feedback gained through the consultation process, where Options 1 and 3 stood out as the favoured approaches by some margin.

However, in terms of taking these options forward to the Preferred Options stage, having taken the comments from the Issues & Options consultation into account, it was clear that none of the three proposed options were sufficient on their own. As such, a revised Spatial Strategy, drawing upon elements of all of those proposed initially, was developed. The Preferred Option was considered to reflect the consultation feedback, while respecting the strategic framework set out by the Regional Spatial Strategy; ensuring that urban growth, regeneration opportunities and rural communities all receive support.

Having determined the most sustainable approach to the distribution of development, the Preferred Options went on to form the basis of the final policies in the Submission Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy, as adopted, has been found sound following examination by an independent Inspector and represents a sustainable approach to key planning issues in the District up to 2028.

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

The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) is the primary vehicle for monitoring the extent and significance of the environmental effects of implementing Core Strategy and Development Management Policies and their progress in achieving the objectives of the Sustainability Appraisal. The AMR will monitor Core Strategy implementation using the indicators in Section 6 of the DPD. Changes to these indicators will identify any unforeseen effects and facilitate a response to adverse effects.