

Doncaster Council Core Strategy DPD Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Statement

Introduction

1. This statement provides a summary of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Doncaster Core Strategy. The development of the Core Strategy has been subject to a detailed SA which also complies with European Directive 2001/42/EC the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. The requirements of the SA and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) were combined in one process which was embedded within the Council's adopted Scoping Report and will be referred to as SA throughout this report. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) of the Core Strategy were also produced and reported on separately.

2. In accordance with Regulation 16 (3) and (4) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 this statement sets out:

- How the SA has been carried out and how it has been integrated into the Core Strategy;
- How the various sustainability issues for the Borough have been taken into account;
- How the SA has been used to assess the social, economic and environmental effects of the Core Strategy;
- How the results of the various consultation stages have been taken into account;
- The reasons for choosing the Core Strategy as adopted in light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with;
- Main Impacts of the Core Strategy; and
- The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Core Strategy.

3. The Core Strategy has been formally adopted following resolution of Full Council on 18th May 2012. The Core Strategy is the principal document in the Local Development Framework providing the spatial vision for the area alongside the strategic objectives and policies to guide development in the Borough over the plan period 2011 – 2028.

Sustainability Appraisal

4. SA is a systematic tool designed to assess, predict and monitor the effects of a plan or programme. The main role of the SA is to ensure that decisions are made in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and aims to integrate social, economic and environmental considerations from the outset. The results of the SA have in turn influenced the development of the Core Strategy policies, including the reasons for rejecting alternatives.

5. An SA was undertaken at each stage of the preparation process to inform the policies of the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy was submitted, alongside the final SA report to the Secretary of State to undergo an independent public examination. This report sets out the findings regarding the likely significant environmental, economic and social effects of the aims and policies of the Core Strategy and

describes measures that will help prevent, reduce or offset any adverse effects, and enhance positive effects from their implementation¹

How the SA has been carried out and how it has been integrated into the Core Strategy

6. The SA has been undertaken by independent consultants, as well as Officers in-house within Doncaster Council, and there is a strong relationship between the development of the Core Strategy and the key SA stages, as summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Stages of the SA process

SA Stage	SA Reports Produced
SA Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding the scope	Scoping Report 2005 Updated Scoping Report 2007 Revised Scoping Report (to reflect updated objectives and indicators) 2008 SA of Core Strategy Options Addendum (including updated SA Objectives and Indicators) 2011 SA Report of Publication Version (incorporating updated indicators etc.) 2011 See Publication SA Report section 3.6 for details.
SA Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects SA Stage C: Preparing the SA report SA Stage D: Consulting on the Core Strategy and SA report	Appraisals have been undertaken for the following documents (date of appraisal in brackets): Core Strategy Options 2005 Core Strategy Preferred Options 2005 Core Strategy Further Options 2007 Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options 2010 Core Strategy Options Addendum 2010 Core Strategy Publication Version 2011 See Publication SA Report section 4 for details.
SA Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the plan	The Publication SA Report sets out recommendations for monitoring the social, environmental and economic impacts of implementing the Core Strategy. This monitoring will be undertaken after the plan has been adopted.

How the various sustainability issues for the Borough have been taken into account

7. The key sustainability issues affecting the borough were established as part of the Scoping Report and are set out in Table 2 below.

¹ Copies of this report (including a non-technical summary) can be downloaded from the Council's website via www.doncaster.gov.uk/ldf

Table 2: Sustainability Appraisal Issues

Social Sustainability Appraisal Issues:
S1 Pockets of deprivation
S2 A lack of range of housing choice and affordability
S3 Limited access to the natural environment for all
S4 Lack of local community facilities
S5 High levels of crime and fear of crime
S6 Low levels of educational achievement
S7 Lack of integrated public transport
S8 Urban traffic congestion
Environmental Sustainability Appraisal Issues
En1 Pressure on the historic built environment
En2 Threat to landscape character
En3 Pressure on Green Belt
En4 Pressure on designated sites and biodiversity
En5 Risk of flooding
En6 Threat from noise pollution
En7 Threat from air pollution
En8 Geology
En9 Large amounts of biodegradable waste being landfilled
Economic Sustainability Issues
Ec1 Lack of a diverse economy
Ec2 Lack of range of local jobs
Ec3 Lack of skilled local workforce
Ec4 Limited opportunities for redevelopment of derelict and other brownfield land.

How the SA has been used to assess the social, economic and environmental effects of the Core Strategy

8. Each of the policies within the Core Strategy were appraised at the Revised Preferred Options Stage and these individual appraisals were updated for the Publication SA. This was to take account of the updated SA Objectives and changes to the policies following consultation. It is the finding of the Publication SA that the Core Strategy is overall a sustainable plan. The Core Strategy has been subjected to the Sustainability Appraisal process throughout its entire development (including versions, some of which have not been published) hence many of the negative issues and or impacts have been addressed in earlier stages of the plan’s development.

Positive Effects

9. The majority of the Core Strategy policies are likely to result in mainly positive effects, particularly in relation to the following:

Economically

- Sufficient land to enable economic growth and support the retention of existing employment sites.
- A strong focus on tackling flooding at a local level protecting Doncaster’s residents, its assets and environment.
- Further development of Robin Hood Airport unlocking national and international areas of trade and bringing economic diversity to the borough.
- High quality design encouraging a mix of uses capable of maintaining and improving the vibrancy of town centres.

Environmentally

- To steer development away from designated sites and support the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment.
- Promote the protection of the borough's Green Belt and countryside, and allow for rural diversification.
- The protection and enhancement of the borough's built and natural heritage assets.

Socially

- A sustainable settlement hierarchy that will locate development where it can do most good, especially in deprived communities.
- It will create access to jobs and job related opportunities such as training, and learning new skills.
- Facilitate sustainable development to ensure that local and village centres are protected, sustaining their viability, cultural value and local identity whilst supporting employment growth and training opportunities.
- Ensure that new development is accessible by public transport and have strong cycling and walking facilities.

10. Due to the very strategic nature of the Core Strategy it is difficult to be precise and quantify what form the cumulative effects will take. The Cumulative Impact assessment has been based upon the SA appraisal matrices, base line information and officer opinion. In the appraisal some broad assumptions and conclusions have been made and these have been clearly stated. It is assumed that if all the policies are implemented and the level of proposed growth is delivered through the plan period that there will be some positive and negative environmental, social and economic cumulative effects. Table 7 of the Publication Version SA summarises the potential duration and type of cumulative effects that have been identified.

11. Following publication a number of minor amendments were made to produce a submission version. These were not considered significant and so were not subject to further SA. At the Examination in Public (EIP) the inspector agreed that these changes were not significant and that the submission version could be the basis of the EIP. Following the EIP the inspector required two changes to the document, and in correspondence with the inspector during January 2012 it was confirmed that, because these changes will not alter the amount, distribution or type of development, they are not sufficient to require the Sustainability Appraisal, Equalities Impact Assessment or Habitats Regulation Assessment to be revisited.

How the results of the various consultation stages have been taken into account

12. Throughout the development of the Publication Version of the Core Strategy there has been extensive consultation on both the Core Strategy and its SA's. In addition to consulting the statutory SEA consultees (Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency) a much wider audience has been consulted.

13. Each SA report has been subject to consultation, and this has informed later appraisals. The most significant issue arising from the consultation on the SA Report which accompanied the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options has been the updating of the SA Objectives to inform the appraisal of the final Publication Version

14. Following the public consultation of the Revised Preferred Options of the Core Strategy some key issues were identified. These issues can be summarised as:

- Delivery of Finningley and Rossington Regeneration Route Scheme

- Hatfield/Stainforth and approach to DN7
- Employment Numbers and Sectors
- Housing Numbers
- Housing Mix and Affordable Housing
- Design and Sustainable Construction
- Countryside and Flooding
- Protecting the Built and Natural Environment

15. These key issues were discussed at a LDF workshop held on 17th November 2010. Representatives invited to the workshop included all Ward Councillors, Members of the Enterprising Doncaster Board and some key representatives from the house building industry. The workshop debated how we can deliver our priorities under the current political and economic climate, focusing on the main areas highlighted by the consultation.

16. Following the workshop recommendations were made through the Council's approval process and these changes were incorporated within the Publication Version of the Core Strategy and the policies of the Core Strategy were appraised.

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

17. The Scoping Report sets out the baseline situation and identifies a number of issues. In considering whether or not to implement the Core Strategy, it is important to consider the likely evolution of the baseline situation without it. Assuming that either the Unitary Development Plan remains in force or is revoked without a replacement, the effect would still be that there would be no up-to-date statutory development plan, compliant with national policy and legislative requirements and reflective of local aspirations as set out in the Borough Strategy.

18. It would be unrealistic to assume that there would be no improvement to the baseline situation without the Core Strategy. As highlighted throughout the document itself, the success or otherwise of the policies is often dependent on other interventions – for example the need for softer interventions to improve skill levels is important to enable local residents to be able to benefit from any new employment opportunities that are created. However, it is likely that without the Core Strategy there are two main impacts which would undermine any attempts to address the sustainability issues:

- Firstly, as one of the most important functions of planning policy is to provide a level of certainty for investors and developers, confidence may be reduced if the Core Strategy were not progressed. The Core Strategy, to reflect the Borough Strategy, places an emphasis on improving the economy to achieve not just economic, but social and environmental outcomes. A loss of investment would therefore seriously undermine the delivery of the Borough Strategy
- Secondly, the Core Strategy shows how a positive approach towards development can facilitate social and environmental aspirations, such as providing support for projects that provides community and environmental improvements. The comments from Natural England and English Heritage in response to the summer 2010 consultation were broadly supportive of the emerging policies in relation to the Historic and Natural Environment. Without the Core Strategy, any investment which is achieved may be less likely to make a positive contribution to social and environmental issues.

19. The Council has developed many options in preparing the Core Strategy, some of which have been generated from public consultation, workshops and targeted consultation with key stakeholders. A stand alone Core Strategy Consultation Statement has been produced which briefly summarises the terms and types of consultation carried out for each version and development stage of the Core Strategy. The assessment of options was dealt with in particular detail at the Core Strategy Options stage and the Core Strategy Further Options stage, and SA reports were produced. Section 4.6 of the Publication SA sets out how SA has informed each stage of the production of the Core Strategy.

Main Impacts of the Core Strategy

20. The Core Strategy will ensure that development is carried out in a sustainable way whilst still allowing the plan to deliver its economic objectives for the borough, and wider region. The appraisal has identified that on the whole, the effects of the Core Strategy over the long term will be mainly positive with some negative effects which will need to be mitigated over the plan period. However, it is very difficult to say at this stage, what the full range of cumulative effects will be and more information will become available as and when lower tier plans are implemented and the policies within the plan are monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report.

21. At this stage it is unrealistic to assume that the level of growth proposed will not have some environmental impact at some stage within the plan period. Clearly, some impacts may be temporary as sites are developed and mitigation is implemented and as technologies change. Some impacts may be permanent (e.g. the loss of agricultural land to major development). It is important therefore, to take a balanced view considering all the tensions which exist between economic growth, environmental protection and social deprivation.

22. The greatest challenge which this appraisal has had to address is how to predict, and quantify, the impacts of climate change considering that climate change is a global event and a big challenge. Government guidance makes it clear, that planning has a fundamental and important role to play in delivering sustainable development and tackling climate change. However, it is difficult at this stage of the LDF to predict what the full impact of Policy CS6 (Robin Hood Airport and Business Park) will be. The Coalition Government regards aviation as a key driver in securing economic growth and recognises the role of Britain's regional airports. The proposed growth of the airport is aimed at supporting the wider Sheffield City Region economy. It is important to recognise that the airport will create impacts associated with aviation (increase in CO2 emissions), however this must be considered in a wider context at a regional/national level and the associated benefits of reducing vehicular travel to other regions airports.

23. Taking this into consideration, the sustainability appraisal process of the Core Strategy can robustly demonstrate that climate change has been taken into account at every opportunity to ensure that the policies contained within the strategy address, consider and where possible influence those types of development which contribute to climate change and its associated impacts (air quality, CO2 emissions, flooding, loss of biodiversity) by ensuring that:

- New development both residential and business is energy efficient (Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM)
- Encouraging the development of renewable energy sources
- Reductions in the amount of energy consumed by transport by locating development near public transport and local services
- Protecting, enhancing the natural environment and allowing biodiversity to adapt

to climate change through green corridors and green infrastructure

- Reductions in the amount of emissions generated by development

24. Significantly, the work on the Core Strategy and SA has made sure that climate change is embedded throughout the policies of the plan. This approach should further the deliverability of the plan towards reducing carbon emissions. It is considered on balance, that the broad strategic nature of the Core Strategy has gone as far as it can at this stage (using the broad strategic approach) to tackle climate change. The document sets the direction and principles for the lower tier plans, such as the Allocations DPD and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and these documents are considered to be the most appropriate means of considering measures to tackle climate change as it is these documents that facilitate actual development.

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

25. The Publication SA Report sets out recommendations for monitoring the social, environmental and economic impacts of implementing the Core Strategy. This monitoring will be undertaken after the plan has been adopted.