

# **Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Statement**

## **Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plan and Programmes Regulations 2004**

### **Introduction**

This statement has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. This statement outlines how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Local Plan, how the Sustainability Appraisal has been taken into account, how consultation responses have been taken into account, the reasons for choosing the adopted Local Plan policies in light of alternative options and the measures that will be taken to monitor the effects of the Local Plan.

Waveney District Council (soon to be East Suffolk Council) adopted the Local Plan on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Further details on the development of the Local Plan can be found on the Councils website at: [www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/localplan)

### **How environmental and sustainability considerations have been integrated into the new Local Plan**

The Sustainability Appraisal has been conducted in such a way that it meets the requirements of the EU Strategic Environment Assessment Directives and UK Government guidance on the preparation of Sustainability Appraisals.

As required by the regulations, the Sustainability Appraisal has been developed through an iterative process and has informed decision making at every stage of developing the Local Plan.

The first stage involved the development of a Scoping Report. The Scoping Report included a review of the policy context in which the Local Plan would be based. This included a review of existing plans and strategies at local, national and international levels that would influence the Local Plan. The social, environmental and economic baselines of the District were established to outline the existing sustainability of the District. This formed a baseline in which the potential effects of the Local Plan could be based. The report was subject to consultation between the 10<sup>th</sup> July and the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2015.

The Council considered all of the responses received during the consultation on the Scoping Report and published a response to the issues raised during the consultation in December 2015.

In Spring 2016, the Council published an Initial Sustainability Appraisal of Emerging Options as part of the Issues and Options consultation for the new Local Plan. This report included updates on the Scoping Report based on the responses received during the Scoping Report consultation. Additional information relevant to the baseline situation for the District and additional scoped programmes were also included. This report also included initial appraisals of the emerging options that were

emerging for the Local Plan. The Issues and Options consultation took place between 22<sup>nd</sup> April and 17<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

Following the Issues and Options consultation, work took place to establish the Preferred Options for the new Local Plan. This included the creation of a Draft Sustainability Appraisal which evaluated all of the policies and proposals that were being considered for the Local Plan. Each option was assessed against a variety of social, environmental and economic objectives in order to establish whether they would have a positive or negative impact on sustainability and how significant this effect would be. The cumulative effect of the policies and proposals was also considered to establish the overall effect of the Local Plan. These appraisals were then used to help with decision making over which options to take forward in the new Local Plan. The Draft Sustainability Appraisal was published with the First Draft Local Plan and subject to consultation between 28<sup>th</sup> July and 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017.

Following the consultation on the First Draft Local Plan, further work was undertaken to refine the Local Plan and further options were assessed. The Sustainability Appraisal was refined after considering the comments received and the new options were assessed against the sustainability criteria. The Sustainability Appraisal Report was published with the Final Draft Local Plan as part of the Regulation 19 consultation and was subject to consultation between 29<sup>th</sup> March and 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The Sustainability Appraisal Report outlined all options and their appraisals and made clear the reasons why alternative options had been discounted. The report analysed the overall effects of the plan and identified six significant effects, five of which were positive significant effects. The report included proposals for monitoring these effects.

Following the Regulation 19 consultation, the Sustainability Appraisal Report was submitted with all other relevant Local Plan documents to the Secretary of State for examination on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018.

Following the completion of the public hearings between the 9<sup>th</sup> October and 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2018, the Inspector concluded that 'Main Modifications' would be required to make the Local Plan sound. An Addendum to the Sustainability Appraisal was produced in order to assess whether any of these Main Modifications had an effect on the Sustainability Appraisal Report. The Main Modifications and the Addendum were consulted on between 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018 and 28<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

## How the Sustainability Appraisal has been taken into account

As outlined previously, the potential policies and sites of the Local Plan have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal throughout the development of the Local Plan. The Appraisal has assessed each policy and proposal against various social, environmental and economic objectives in order to establish the positive and negative effects on sustainability. Any effects that were considered to be significant included any potential mitigation measures that would be required. The results of the Appraisal were then used in the decision making process to establish the most sustainable options to take forward into the new Local Plan.

Each stage of developing the Local Plan has included undertaking Sustainability Appraisal to take account of new evidence and new policy options. These updates helped further refine the best options to include in the Local Plan.

The Sustainability Appraisal Report included the individual appraisals for each policy option taken forward into the Local Plan as well as all of the alternative options considered. Each policy option included in the Local Plan, when compared to the alternative options, was concluded to be the most appropriate after considering the results of the appraisals. Reasons alternatives were discounted are clearly set out in section 6 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

The Report also included an overview of all of the policies included in the Local Plan to show the cumulative impact of the policies in the Plan. In almost all cases, the cumulative impact on each sustainability objective was concluded to be either a minor or significant positive effect.

## How the results of consultation have been taken into account

The SEA Directive requires that opinions expressed by consultees be taken into account during the development of a plan before the plan is adopted. As stated previously, the Sustainability Appraisal was consulted on at every stage of the Local Plan development process. All comments and representations were taken into account and used to further refine the Sustainability Appraisal.

At each stage, each revision of the Sustainability Appraisal was made available on the Councils website.

After consulting on the Scoping Report, comments received on this during the consultation informed the revised Initial Sustainability Appraisal of Emerging Options which was published in Spring 2016 along with the Issues and Options for the Local Plan. A Council response to each issue raised during the consultation on the Scoping Report was sent to consultees who had responded in December 2015.

Following the Issues and Option consultation, the Sustainability Appraisal was revised again following the comments received during the Issues and Options consultation with new options being considered. The Draft Sustainability Appraisal was published with the First Draft Local Plan and was again subject to consultation between 28<sup>th</sup> July and 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017. The Council published individual responses to each issue raised in the consultation, including those raised in relation to the Sustainability Appraisal, following the conclusion of the consultation.

After considering the comments received during the First Draft Local Plan consultation and the new evidence and options that came from it, the Sustainability Appraisal was refined once again. The Sustainability Appraisal Report was published with the Final Draft Local Plan as part of the Regulation 19 consultation and was subject to consultation between 29<sup>th</sup> March and 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

The comments received for the Sustainability Appraisal at the Regulation 19 stage were forwarded on to the Inspector as part of the submission of the Local Plan on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018.

Following the completion of the public hearings as part of the Local Plan Examination, an Addendum to the Sustainability Appraisal was published with the Main Modifications for the Local Plan and was subject to consultation between 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018 and 28<sup>th</sup> January 2019. Responses to this consultation were then forwarded on to the Inspector.

## The reasons for choosing the plan as adopted, in light of reasonable alternatives considered

The various stages of developing the Sustainability Appraisal have provided an iterative and rational method for refining the options considered throughout the Local Plan process. The various Sustainability Appraisal reports published during the preparation of the plan have shown that all reasonable and alternative options have been considered and evaluated. The reports have clearly set out the objectives that each option has been evaluated against and the process of selection and rejection.

The full assessments and their results are included in the appendices of the Sustainability Appraisal Report. Section 6 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report makes clear the reasons each alternative option was discounted. The alternative options considered generally performed less well against the sustainability appraisal framework than the proposed options.

## Measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan

A monitoring framework is proposed in the Sustainability Appraisal Report for the significant effects identified in the report. The framework outlines that it is more appropriate to assess various indicators at different times due to the various rates of change that they can experience. Some will take longer to react than others and therefore these may need to be monitored at less regular intervals. The results of each indicator will be published in the Authority Monitoring Report when this is appropriate.