



South Bucks Local Development Framework

Sustainability Appraisal Report Addendum

July 2010



South Bucks
District Council

South Bucks Proposed Submission Core Strategy -

Addendum to the Sustainability Appraisal Report (March 2010), taking into account the Schedule of Proposed Changes

Introduction

- 1.1 A Sustainability Appraisal Report was prepared to accompany publication of the Proposed Submission Core Strategy (March 2010). The Report summarised the sustainability appraisal work undertaken in preparing the Core Strategy, and considered the likely significant social, environmental and economic effects of implementing the proposed Core Policies.
- 1.2 Representations were invited on the Proposed Submission Core Strategy for a six week period between 31st March and 12th May 2010. A total of 62 representors, made a total of 220 representations. Officers have reviewed these representations, and upon Submission will be suggesting some minor changes to the Core Strategy.
- 1.3 This short addendum Report considers whether any of the suggested changes will have any significant sustainability implications - that would alter the conclusions drawn in the Sustainability Appraisal Report on the Proposed Submission Core Strategy (March 2010).

Proposed Changes

- 1.4 A Schedule of Proposed Changes has been prepared for Submission alongside the Core Strategy. Many of the suggested changes are very minor - and either aid clarity, provide updated information or correct factual inaccuracies. It is not considered that these changes warrant further sustainability appraisal work.
- 1.5 All of the other changes are considered in Table 1 below.

Table 1 - Sustainability Appraisal Review

| Core Strategy Page / Para | Proposed Change | Commentary - Sustainability Implications |
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| Page 40-41, Core Policy 1 (and paragraph 3.2.8 / Appendix 8) | References in Core Policy 1 (and paragraph 3.2.8 and Appendix 8) to the District aiming to provide at least 95% of all new residential development on Previously Developed Land (PDL), in accordance with PPS3 (Housing), will need to be amended or deleted. | <p>This proposed change arises from the changes made to the definition of previously developed land (see PPS3: Housing). The intention to focus a high proportion of residential development in the three principal settlements remains. The three Opportunity Sites still all constitute previously developed land.</p> <p>The new definition of PDL will principally affect the monitoring of the Core Strategy. Existing permissions may need to be reclassified for monitoring purposes, although there will be no change in what happens on the ground, with suitable development schemes involving residential garden land contributing to the supply of housing land, but not to the monitoring of how much housing occurs on PDL.</p> <p>No change in the significant SA effects (as noted in the Sustainability Appraisal Report - March 2010).</p> |
| Page 46, Core Policy 3 | Amend Core Policy 3 to read: "A minimum of <u>350-500</u> affordable dwellings will be provided in South Bucks District between 2006 and 2026." With a new footnote as follows: " <u>The lower end of the range is based upon neither of the Opportunity Sites (Wilton Park and Mill Lane) coming forward for development. The upper end of the range assumes both of these sites are developed during the Plan period.</u> " | <p>This proposed change to Core Policy 3 seeks to address representations from GOSE and a Consortium of landowners (South of Farnham Royal). Its purpose is to recognise that if the Opportunity Sites at Wilton Park and Mill Lane do not come forward for development during the Plan period, less affordable housing is likely to be delivered.</p> <p>Although the change acknowledges the possibility of less affordable housing coming forward (as a matter of consistency with other aspects of the spatial strategy), it does not change the overall effect of the policy, which seeks to maximise the delivery of new affordable housing</p> |

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| | | <p>(within the overall dwelling range set in Core Policy 1). The conclusions from the Sustainability Appraisal Report (March 2010) remain relevant, including that “provision of more affordable dwellings will provide more South Bucks residents with the opportunity of living in a decent home”. Amended Core Policy 3 will still have a positive effect on economic growth, by providing accommodation for key workers that deliver essential services.</p> <p>No change in the significant SA effects (as noted in the Sustainability Appraisal Report - March 2010).</p> |
| Page 46, Core Policy 3 | <p>Amend the second sentence of the fourth paragraph of Core Policy 3 to read: However, where <u>there are sound planning or other reasons, and the developer and Council agree</u>, a financial contribution (or off site provision) in lieu of on-site provision, may be acceptable.”</p> | <p>The purpose of the suggested change is to make explicit reference to the need for sound planning or other reasons, and encourage a more collaborative approach between developers and the Council.</p> <p>Core Policy 3 still states that affordable housing should normally be provided on site - thus helping to deliver mixed communities. The proposed requirement for a more collaborative approach, is an operational matter, and should not directly impact upon the amount of affordable housing delivered through application of Core Policy 3.</p> <p>No change in the significant SA effects (as noted in the Sustainability Appraisal Report - March 2010).</p> |
| Page 47, paragraphs 3.2.26-3.2.27 and Core Policy 4 | <p>For the proposed changes to paragraphs 3.2.26-3.2.27, see Schedule of Proposed Changes.</p> <p>Amend the first sentence of Core Policy 4 to end - “...in accordance with <u>agreed needs (as defined in the advice submitted to the Regional Planning Body jointly by the</u></p> | <p>The changes to Core Policy 4 (and its supporting text) are proposed in order to reflect revocation of the South East Plan.</p> <p>The changes are necessary to acknowledge that the source or process for identifying gypsy and traveller pitch</p> |

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| | <p><u>Buckinghamshire authorities and any future Assessments, and taking into account any reappportionment between the Buckinghamshire authorities).</u>”</p> | <p>requirements has changed. This does not alter the main purpose of the policy, which is to provide criteria for assessing the suitability of potential new sites. The overall conclusion (from the March 2010 Sustainability Appraisal Report) remains pertinent - “Core Policy 4 should enable more gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople to have the opportunity to live on appropriate, safe and sustainability located sites, with good access to local services”.</p> <p>No change in the significant SA effects (as noted in the Sustainability Appraisal Report - March 2010).</p> |
| <p>Pages 54 and 56, paragraph 3.2.49, Core Policy 7</p> | <p>Replace second sentence of paragraph 3.2.49 with the following: <u>This concluded that whilst the development proposed in the Core Strategy will exacerbate some existing traffic problems, for example in the Beaconsfield and Iver areas, with appropriate mitigation in place, it could be delivered without an unacceptable impact on the local road network. Furthermore, planned development in South Bucks is not expected to have a significant impact on the motorway links in the District, although it will contribute to traffic pressures at Junction 1 of the M40, which is already experiencing some congestion. Together with the anticipated growth in background traffic levels, and the impact of planned development in locations outside of the District (including in Slough and Uxbridge), the potential number of vehicle movements at Junction 1 of the M40 may result in the need for improvements to the junction. Traffic impacts on the junction will be kept under review, and mitigation measures, including infrastructure upgrades, may be required later in the Plan period (see Appendix 6).</u></p> | <p>This change addresses an objection from Highways Agency. It more accurately reflects the final conclusions from the Transport Evaluation undertaken by Atkins.</p> <p>The broad sustainability effects of potential new transport infrastructure have already been appraised in the March 2010 Sustainability Appraisal Report. This notes that the construction of new transport infrastructure (or improvements in existing infrastructure) could have a direct (but localised) adverse impact on the landscape, biodiversity and soil resources. More positively, the benefits of reduced traffic congestion and good quality public transport services will support economic growth and competitiveness.</p> <p>No change in the significant SA effects (as noted in the Sustainability Appraisal Report - March 2010).</p> |

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| | <p>Add new sentence at end of penultimate paragraph of Core Policy 7: <u>"Impacts on Junction 1 of the M40 will be kept under review, with mitigation measures, including infrastructure improvements, potentially being needed later in the Plan period."</u></p> | |
| <p>Page 58, Core Policy 8 and 9</p> | <p>Re-title Core Policy 8 as "Built and Historic Environment" (amending also other references to the policy title throughout the document). Move the penultimate paragraph of Core Policy 9 to the end of the second paragraph of Core Policy 8, and add <u>"and its setting"</u> after "The historic landscape...".</p> <p>Also see Proposed Changes to pages 61-62 and Core Policy 9, below.</p> | <p>This proposed change is largely presentational. It responds to a representation from Buckinghamshire County Council. The thrust of the approach set out in Core Policies 8 and 9 remains unaltered, although the addition of the phrase "and its setting" will give greater protection to the historic landscape in appropriate circumstances.</p> <p>Although previously addressed under the heading of Core Policy 9, the statement in relation to protection and enhancement of the historic landscape (as proposed to be included in Core Policy 8), will have the same strongly positive effect on the environmental objective of conserving and enhancing the historic environment, as already recorded in the Sustainability Appraisal Report (March 2010).</p> <p>No change in the significant SA effects (as noted in the Sustainability Appraisal Report - March 2010).</p> |
| <p>Page 58-59, Core Policy 8</p> | <p>Amend last sentence of the first paragraph of Core Policy 8 to - <u>"Locally important heritage features and their settings</u> also make an important contribution to the creation of distinctive and sustainable places and will also be protected, conserved and enhanced where appropriate".</p> | <p>The inclusion of the phrase "and their settings" seeks to acknowledge that the setting of heritage features can also be important. This gives a slightly broader application to the implementation of the policy approach, which reinforces the already strongly positive impact on environmental objectives, as recorded in the Sustainability Appraisal Report (March 2010).</p> |

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| | <p>Amend the first sentence of the penultimate paragraph of Core Policy 8 to read: <u>"On land excluded from the Green Belt, new housing should be built at an average density of between 25 and 35 dwellings per hectare."</u></p> | <p>The suggested change with reference to average densities is proposed to reflect amendments made to PPS3: Housing - in particular the removal of the national indicative minimum density requirement of 30 dph. The proposed new policy wording provides a little more flexibility, by seeking an average density (on land excluded from the Green Belt) of between 25 and 35 dph. The range will afford even greater scope to conserve and enhance townscape character, by helping to ensure that new development (including in terms of its development density) is in keeping with its surroundings.</p> <p>The proposed policy wording will have a slightly less positive effect on the objective of encouraging the efficient use of land - although the overall thrust of the policy remains to ensure that average development densities (on land excluded from the Green Belt) are not unacceptably low.</p> <p>No major change in the significant SA effects (as noted in the Sustainability Appraisal Report - March 2010).</p> |
| Page 61-62, Core Policy 9 | <p>Add a new second sentence in the first paragraph of Core Policy 9 to read: <u>"The conservation and enhancement of the Chilterns AONB and its setting will be achieved by ensuring that all development complies with the purposes of the AONB and its Management Plan."</u></p> <p>Amend the fourth line onwards of the first bullet point to read: <u>"...harm caused, the Council is satisfied that the development cannot reasonably be located on an alternative site that would result in less or no harm and appropriate mitigation or compensation is provided resulting in a net gain in</u></p> | <p>A number of minor changes have been proposed to Core Policy 9, by organisations including the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Chilterns Conservation Board.</p> <p>The broad thrust of Core Policy 9 has been retained, but with greater protection given to biodiversity interests. In particular, where an adverse impact on a biodiversity resource is unavoidable, Core Policy 9 now requires mitigation or compensation that results in a net gain in Biodiversity. The importance of avoiding habitat</p> |

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| | <p><u>Biodiversity.</u>"</p> <p>Second bullet, add after "non-designated land", "<u>, on rivers and their associated habitats</u>"</p> <p>Add a new bullet, after the second bullet, to read: '<u>Maintaining existing ecological corridors and avoiding habitat fragmentation.</u>'</p> <p>Change the second to last paragraph to read: "The historic landscape <u>and its setting</u> (<i>arising from Representation No. 2091, as above</i>), including archaeological sites, <u>Historic Parks and Gardens and Ancient Woodland</u> will also be strongly protected and enhanced where possible, informed by the Bucks Historic Landscape Characterisation Study <u>and other evidence.</u>" Move this paragraph to the end of the second paragraph of Core Policy 8.</p> <p>In the last sentence of Core Policy 9, add "<u>and enhancement</u>" after "protection".</p> | <p>fragmentation is also explicitly acknowledged.</p> <p>The overall conclusion from the Sustainability Appraisal Report (March 2010) remains pertinent - "Core Policy 9 will have a significant positive effect on the environmental objectives, in particular those relating to biodiversity, landscapes and the historic environment".</p> <p>No change in the significant SA effects (as noted in the Sustainability Appraisal Report - March 2010).</p> |
| Page 65, Core Policy 10 | <p>Amend Core Policy 10 to read: "<u>Important employment sites</u> will be retained in employment use (B Use Class). <u>A subsequent Development Management DPD will identify the important employment sites in South Bucks District.</u> <u>There will be a general presumption that other employment sites (B Use Class) will also be retained in employment use (B Use Class). Where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the permitted purpose¹, or where the site is creating significant amenity issues, the priority will be for the site or premises to be reused or redeveloped (where appropriate) for an alternative economic use (i.e. a use which</u></p> | <p>The suggested changes to Core Policy 10 seek to address representations from Legal and General Properties Ltd, and Land Securities. The changes also seek to take account of recently amended PPS4.</p> <p>Whilst the broad thrust of Core Policy 10 remains unaltered (i.e. to retain employment sites in employment use) - the suggested changes would differentiate between important employment sites (to be retained in B Use Class) and other employment sites (where consideration may be given to alternative economic uses). The amended policy might therefore do more to encourage the efficient use of land,</p> |

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| | <p><u>provides employment opportunities, generates wealth or produces an economic output or product).</u></p> <p><u>The change of use of employment land and floorspace (B Use Class) to retail use will not be permitted outside of the District and Local Centres defined in Core Policy 11.</u></p> <p><u>Should a significant imbalance between local job opportunities and the size of the resident workforce arise, the District Council will identify any employment land to be released for alternative uses, or the preferred location for new employment generating floorspace, through the LDF process".</u></p> <p>New employment development will be accommodated in the District and Local Centres, on the Opportunity Sites and through appropriate intensification on existing employment sites excluded from the Green Belt, where there is good access by a variety of transport modes.</p> <p>The Council will work with key stakeholders to improve access to high speed and next generation broadband throughout the District by supporting the provision of necessary new ICT infrastructure.</p> <p>The Council will seek to increase the presence of high value and knowledge based businesses in South Bucks. Support will be given to small-scale and start-up businesses, by promoting and supporting home-working (where there is no adverse impact on residential amenity) and encouraging the provision of managed workspace. The Council will also support rural diversification schemes, providing they benefit the local community.</p> <p>Further guidance on the application of this Core Policy will be</p> | <p>by permitting the reuse of "other employment land", in appropriate circumstances, for other economic uses.</p> <p>More generally, the overall conclusion from the Sustainability Appraisal Report (March 2010) remains relevant - "Core Policy 10 will have a significant positive effect on the economic objectives. The protection of existing employment land and premises will help to retain a range of employment accommodation for new and existing business - helping to encourage a diverse economy". Indeed, under the proposed new Policy wording, the scope for some "other employment sites" to be reused for other economic uses may do even more to encourage a diverse economy.</p> <p>No major change in the significant SA effects (as noted in the Sustainability Appraisal Report - March 2010).</p> |

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| | <p>provided in the Development Management DPD” .</p> <p>Footnote ¹ In seeking to demonstrate that <u>a B Use Class employment site is no longer suitable for such purposes</u>, the applicant will need to have undertaken a prolonged period of unsuccessful marketing, using details approved by the District Council.</p> | |
| Page 67-68, Core Policy 11 | <p>Add two new sentences at the end of paragraph 3 of Core Policy 11 to read: <u>“Redevelopment of the Bishop Centre is supported, although the actual form and scale of new retail provision will be subject to a more localised need, impact and sequential analysis, at the time a planning application is submitted. The Bishop Centre must maintain a scale and role which does not impact adversely on other centres, including Burnham, Slough and Maidenhead”.</u></p> <p>Delete the last paragraph of Core Policy 11 (included in the text above).</p> | <p>The suggested change seeks to address a representation from Land Securities. Whilst projections in the Joint Retail and Town Centre Study provide an indication of future requirements, proposals at the Bishop Centre in particular should be subject to localised assessment at the time a planning application is made.</p> <p>The proposed change is for clarification. It does not affect how any proposals for development or redevelopment of the Bishop Centre will be treated by the Council (i.e. a localised assessment of any scheme would have been required by the Council, even without the proposed amendments to Core Policy 11).</p> <p>The original conclusions in the Sustainability Appraisal Report (March 2010) remain relevant. Core Policy 11 will support the economic SA objectives by encouraging a diverse economy, by supporting new retail provision (in appropriate locations and circumstances) and by retaining retail expenditure within the District.</p> <p>No change in the significant SA effects (as noted in the Sustainability Appraisal Report - March 2010).</p> |
| Page 80-81, Core | In Core Policy 15, add to end of the second bullet: <u>“Elsewhere,</u> | These proposed changes address a representation from |

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| Policy 15 | <p><u>the height and massing of development should ensure a reduced visual impact</u>". In the eleventh bullet point, replace "positive" with "<u>measurable</u>".</p> | <p>Ellington and District Residents Association.</p> <p>The first change is one of clarification. To help ensure no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt, and retain the largely open character of the wider site (away from the former Mill building), the Council will be looking for the height and massing of new development to have a reduced visual impact. The second change is to ensure consistency with the wording in the Council's Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.</p> <p>The overall conclusion from the Sustainability Appraisal Report (March 2010) remains pertinent - the comprehensive redevelopment of the Mill Lane site would have a positive effect on the local environment of this sensitive area, providing scope for localised environmental improvements".</p> <p>No change in the significant SA effects (as noted in the Sustainability Appraisal Report - March 2010).</p> |
| Page 85, Core Policy 16 | <p>Amend the third bullet of Core Policy 16 to read: "Provide improved <u>pedestrian and cyclist access routes</u> to Iver High Street and Iver Station, to enhance the sustainability of the site."</p> | <p>The change is proposed in order to make it clear that Core Policy 16 is seeking improved pedestrian and cyclist access routes to Iver High Street and Iver station.</p> <p>The Sustainability Appraisal Report (March 2010) already notes the positive effect of Core Policy 16 on improving accessibility to essential services and facilities, and encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport.</p> <p>No change in the significant SA effects (as noted in the Sustainability Appraisal Report - March 2010).</p> |

Conclusion

- 1.6 In most cases, the proposed changes to the Core Strategy do not impact upon the likely significant effects of the Plan.
- 1.7 There are two exceptions. The proposed change to Core Policy 8 (in relation to development densities) may result in a slightly less positive impact on the objective of improving the efficiency of land use, but have a slightly more positive impact on the objective of conserving and enhancing townscape character. The proposed changes to Core Policy 10 (in relation to protection of employment land) might do more to support the objective of improving the efficiency of land use, and may also do more to encourage a diverse economy in South Bucks.
- 1.8 In conclusion, whilst two of the proposed changes to the Core Strategy have served to slightly soften or strengthen some of the previously identified significant effects - the general direction of travel, and therefore the headline significant effects, remain as set out in the Sustainability Appraisal Report (March 2010).



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