

CD11/22

South Bucks District Council

Sustainability Appraisal - Sites

1. The Council has undertaken sustainability appraisal work in preparing the Core Strategy. At each key stage of the plan making process, the Council has published a Sustainability Appraisal Report alongside the emerging Core Strategy.
2. In March 2009, the Council published the Core Strategy: Emerging Approach document (CD1/32). This set out four development scenarios for the District, and included a comparative assessment of the four scenarios, informed by the Sustainability Appraisal work at that time (see page 22 of CD1/32).
3. In accordance with the guidance in Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents (ODPM, March 2005), the Sustainability Appraisal work (see CD1/16) initially focused on the likely significant effects of "strategic options".
4. It is important to note that at the time of publishing the Core Strategy: Emerging Approach document (CD1/32) in March 2009, the housing land supply position was very different to now. Housing figures were only available to March 2008 and the final SHLAA Report (CD2/01) had not been completed. The housing land supply position at the time is summarised in a table on page 41 of CD1/32. There was a demonstrable supply of between 1,872 and 1,972 units over the Plan period (which included an allowance for 300-400 units on the Strategic Sites).
5. In view of the housing land supply position at the time, the Council was giving consideration to the identification of 'contingency locations'. These sites were to be held in reserve, and released for development should issues arise with housing land supply. Three of the four development scenarios outlined in CD1/32, included provision for contingency land to be identified. For example, Scenario 4 (Focus on Settlements Near and Adjacent to Slough) recognised the potential need to release Green Belt land near Slough.
6. The Council was mindful of the sites that had been put forward by landowners and developers at previous stages of the Plan making process, when it was developing the four development scenarios. This helped to ensure that each of the development scenarios under consideration at that time, were capable of implementation.
7. The Sustainability Appraisal report (CD1/16) that accompanied the Emerging Approach document outlined the Council's intended process for identifying and appraising potential contingency locations (including the sites put forward by landowners and developers). For ease of reference, the relevant text from CD1/16 is copied below:

“Future Work

- 7.3 *Further sustainability appraisal work will be required over the coming months to consider the scope for further mitigation of the adverse impacts associated with the preferred spatial strategy. The findings of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment will be particularly important, as this will provide a better understanding of the distribution of development opportunities, the development densities required to avoid development in the Green Belt and the potential impact of future development on settlement character.*
- 7.4 *In addition, once the preferred Spatial Strategy has been agreed, further work will be needed to determine which areas of land should be identified as “contingency locations”. The current intention is to briefly review all of the Green Belt sites submitted by landowners and developers, but focus in on those areas that would fit best with the emerging Spatial Strategy (i.e. the potential greenfield sites around Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and Burnham). Further work will also be required on the potential impact of seeking to accommodate more housing than the South East Plan minimum requirement of 1,880 dwellings. ”*
8. The Council had already begun undertaking more detailed sustainability appraisal work on all of the sites submitted to the Council, anticipating the potential need to consider the identification of contingency land in the District. An example of this work is attached at **Appendix 1**. Also attached (at **Appendix 2**) is a Briefing Note prepared in Summer 2009, which fed into an LDF Panel Paper on development of the Core Strategy.
9. For a number of reasons, between publishing the Emerging Approach document (March 2009) and publishing the Proposed Submission Core Strategy (March 2010, CD1/01), the Council’s housing land supply position had strengthened significantly.
10. Taking into account all the evidence, advice from a Senior Inspector as part of the PINS Frontloading Programme, and advice from leading Counsel, the Council decided not to proceed with the contingency land concept, and took the view that there was no need to consider releasing Green Belt land to meet the District’s South East Plan housing requirement, or indeed the proposed dwelling range of 2,200-2,800 units.
11. As a consequence, having undertaken sustainability appraisal work on the four development scenarios, and then subsequently determining that there was no need to release Green Belt land to meet the South East Plan housing requirement, the Council did not finalise the site specific sustainability appraisal work.

Appendix 1

Example of Site Specific Sustainability Appraisal Work

Site Figure	Q
Site Name	Land south of Farnham Royal
Description	6 hectares in Green Belt. Could deliver up to 180 dwellings at average 30dph. Suggested by R Watkins & Consortium
Status	<i>Rejected site – poor location/ coalescence</i>
Possible Uses to Test	Housing

Access into Site

Possible access off A355 or off Church Road. If access off Church Road may need modification of Church Road/A355 junction to accommodate extra traffic.

Local Road Network

Impact would need to be assessed. Capacity of Church Road to take extra traffic would need to be assessed.

Strategic Highway Network

A355 Strategic Route

A355 Route Strategy has been developed and work undertaken on this. Consideration should be given to this strategy when assessing impact on this route.

Public Transport Network

74 High Wycombe – Slough via Beaconsfield and Farnham Road: Core Inter Urban Route (operating at least hourly, 6 or more days a week) Pedestrian link needed from development to A355 on route

40 Hedgerley – Slough – Wexham Park – Langley: Core Inter Urban Route (operating less frequently, or during part of the day, 5 days a week)

Walking & Cycling Network

Walking and cycling provision could be provided within settlement for access to local services.

Provision should be provided for integration with Slough across the border, to key facilities and services

Accessibility Issues

Cross border issues would need to be addressed. Key services and facilities would be provided by Slough. Frequent bus service to Slough available.

School Travel Planning

Residents of development would not qualify for home-to-school transport (less than 3 miles from local primary schools).

Children would be expected to walk or cycle to school – reinforces need for walking and

cycling facilities.
 Cross boundary co-ordination needed, especially for secondary education.

Local Area Issues (Beeches)

The need for cross-border collaboration of bus companies

Other Comments

Environmental Impact

Green Belt location
 Coalescence needed with St. Mary's Church

Overall Assessment

Very close border location. Impact on local road network would need to be assessed.

Level of Assessment Required

Transport Statement	
Transport Assessment	Y
Developer Travel Plan Required	Y

South Bucks Core Strategy DPD: Site Assessment Criteria

Site Q Land south of Farnham Royal

Sustainability Objective		Assessment Criteria	Policy Issues
1	To provide residents of South Bucks with the opportunity to live in a decent home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site has the potential to deliver affordable housing to meet identified needs [++] • The site is less able to deliver affordable housing to meet identified needs (for example, there may be substantial abnormal costs associated with development) [--] <p>Information Source - Site area and no. of proposed dwellings at 30dph. The net development capacity of landowner or developer promoted sites will be taken from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). SBDC officers to indicate whether, in their judgement, the site is likely to involve substantial abnormal development costs.</p>	There are a few potential contamination sources identified for the site. However, no detail is available and it is down to the detailed site investigation to determine if the site is a contaminated land. From the data we had in hand, It is believed that no substantial development cost would be involved in terms of contaminated land for this site.
2	To reduce anti-social activity, including crime and the fear of crime, through the creation of safer places to live and work.	There are no site/location specific issues to be considered in relation to this SA Objective.	

South Bucks Core Strategy DPD: Site Assessment Criteria

Site Q Land south of Farnham Royal

Sustainability Objective		Assessment Criteria	Policy Issues
3	To improve accessibility to essential services and facilities to provide opportunities to obtain good access to high quality health, education, and recreation and other community facilities and services.	<p>Distance from the edge of the site to the shopping area (either primary or secondary frontage or edge of centre) of a settlement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.5km from a District Centre (++) • 1km from a District Centre or 0.5km from a Local Centre (+) • 1km from a Local Centre or 0.5km from a Neighbourhood Centre (0) • 1km from a Neighbourhood Centre or adjacent to a Small Village Hamlet (-) • More than 1km from any of the above (--) <p>Information Source – Settlement Hierarchy Study. The settlement hierarchy study is based on the availability of infrastructure (education, community facilities, health facilities, retail and employment) within or close to that settlement.</p>	250m from neighbourhood Centre
4	To encourage the use of sustainable and integrated methods of transport to reduce negative effects on the environment	<p>At least part of the site is shown in the Accessibility and Infrastructure Study mapping (composite access to all facilities) as being within:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels 10 (most accessible) or 9 [++] • Levels 8 or 7 [+] • Levels 6 or 5 or 4 [0] • Levels 3 or 2 [-] • Levels 1 (least accessible) or 0 (not at all accessible) [--] <p>Information Source - Accessibility and Infrastructure Study mapping (composite access to all facilities). This mapping shows the relative access to infrastructure (education, community facilities, health facilities, retail and employment) by walking, bus and train.</p>	

South Bucks Core Strategy DPD: Site Assessment Criteria

Site Q Land south of Farnham Royal

Sustainability Objective		Assessment Criteria	Policy Issues
5	To provide for sustainable levels of water use, supply and management.	<p>Whether the site is in an area which the Environment Agency has indicated is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over extracted already [-] • Over licensed for extraction, but is not actually over extracted at present [0] • Not over licensed or over extracted [+] 	.
6	To maintain and enhance biodiversity	<p><i>Designated Sites</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site contains or lies adjacent to an internationally or nationally designated site (e.g. SSSI or Burnham Beeches SAC) [--] • The site is within 400m¹ of an internationally or nationally designated site (e.g. SSSI or Burnham Beeches SAC) or contains or lies adjacent to a locally designated site [-] • The site is unlikely to have an adverse impact on any site designated for its ecological importance [0] <p>Information Source – SBDC GIS mapping</p>	1695m from SAC
		<p><i>Protected Habitats and Species</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this a site that contains a known protected habitat or species? Yes [-] No [0] <p>Information Source – SBDC GIS mapping</p>	

South Bucks Core Strategy DPD: Site Assessment Criteria

Site Q Land south of Farnham Royal

Sustainability Objective		Assessment Criteria	Policy Issues
7	To conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape character of South Bucks and in particular, those areas of designated importance.	<p>Is the site:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • within The AONB [--] • within 400m of the AONB or an existing AAL [-] • More than 400m from the AONB and not within an AAL [0] <p>Information Source – SBDC GIS – AONB, AAL and damaged land designations.</p>	8620m from AONB 1650m from AAL
8	To conserve and enhance the historic environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site includes all or part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument SAM or Registered Historic Park & Garden (--) • The site is part of or contains a Conservation Area or Listed Building, or is within 400m of a SAM or Registered Historic Park & Garden (-) • The site does not contain a Conservation Area or Listed Building and is not within 400m of a SAM or Registered Historic Park & Garden. (0) <p>Information Source – SBDC GIS</p>	30m from CA 30m from RHP&G 685m from SAM 3 LBs on site
9	To reduce contributions to climate change through: a) Sustainable building practices b) Maximising the potential for renewable energy and energy conservation.	There are no site/location specific issues to be considered in relation to this SA Objective.	

South Bucks Core Strategy DPD: Site Assessment Criteria

Site Q Land south of Farnham Royal

Sustainability Objective		Assessment Criteria	Policy Issues
10	Minimise waste and then re-use or recover it through recycling, composting or energy recovery.	There are no site/location specific issues to be considered in relation to this SA Objective.	
11	To conserve soil resources & quality	<p>Is the site:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade 1 agricultural land [--] Grade 2 agricultural land [-] Not Grade 1 or 2 agricultural land [0] <p>Information Source – Agricultural Land Classification Maps.</p>	Urban + Non Agricultural
12	To improve the efficiency of land use through the reuse of existing buildings and developing on previously developed land (PDL).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is either largely or entirely previously developed land [++] The site is within 500m of District or Local Centre or a substantive part of the site comprises PDL [+] The site is not within 500m of a District or Local Centre and is on greenfield land [-] <p>Information Source – SBDC GIS mapping</p>	1250m from Slough Centre 2050m from Local Centre Greenfield
13	To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new and existing development including existing infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site or part of the site is situated in Flood Zone 3 and has a high probability of flooding [--]. The site or part of the site is situated in Flood Zone 2 and has a medium probability of flooding [-]. The site is not liable to flood or is in within Flood Zone 1 and has a low probability of flooding [0]. <p>Information Source – SFRA mapping.</p>	

South Bucks Core Strategy DPD: Site Assessment Criteria

Site Q Land south of Farnham Royal

Sustainability Objective		Assessment Criteria	Policy Issues
14	To reduce pollution of the air, water and soil and also combat sources of noise and light pollution.	<p>The site is within:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Air Quality Management Area [--] • 500m of an Quality Management Area [-] • Not within 500m of an Air Quality Management Area (0) <p>Information Source – SBDC GIS mapping</p>	3160m from AQMA
15	To encourage economic growth and competitiveness, whilst achieving a broad balance in the distribution and growth of housing, population & employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site would lead to a loss of employment [-] • There would be no loss or gain in employment on the site [0] • The would be a gain in employment on the site [+] <p>Information Source – GIS and developer proposals.</p>	
16	To encourage a diverse economy which is focused on higher value added, lower impact activities	There are no site/location specific issues to be considered in relation to this SA Objective.	
17	To develop and maintain a skilled workforce to support long-term competitiveness of the District	There are no site/location specific issues to be considered in relation to this SA Objective.	

Appendix 2

Briefing Note - Contingency Land (Summer 2009)

1. The following text provides a summary of the contingency land options. The site reference numbers relate to plan attached at **Appendix 1**.

Beaconsfield

2. Seven alternative sites have been put forward at Beaconsfield. In broad terms, these are located to the south of the town, between the A40 and M40 (sites 1 and 2), to the south east of the town (sites 3 and 53) and to the east of the town, east of the A355 (sites 4 (42), 45 and 48).
3. The initial sustainability appraisal work suggests that these are the best locations for greenfield development adjacent to Beaconsfield, and it doesn't therefore matter that no sites have been proposed to the west and north of the Town.
4. Land to the south of Beaconsfield is contained to the south by the M40. Whilst not recognised for its landscape value, the land does serve as a buffer between Beaconsfield and the M40. Residential development to the south of Beaconsfield would be severed from the town by the A40, and may experience some noise and air quality issues (associated with traffic movements along the M40). Depending upon the area selected for release, access to the facilities and services in the Old Town would be very good (site 2) / reasonable (site 1) - although the wider range of facilities and services in the New Town are more distant.
5. Employment development to the south of Beaconsfield would have merit, well served by public transport running along the A40, and with good access to the strategic road network.
6. Land to the south east of Beaconsfield has similar issues to the land to the south. Whilst access to facilities and services in the Old Town would be good, achieving an acceptable means of vehicular access may prove difficult. Unless an alternative and improved means of access can be delivered, sites 3 and 53 are unlikely to be suitable for any large scale employment development.
7. The potential sites to the east of Beaconsfield need to be considered separately. Site 45 lies adjacent to the AONB and would result in a detached form of development. The A355 severs the site from Beaconsfield, although the facilities and services in the New Town are theoretically in reasonable walking distance.
8. Site 4 (42) is adjacent to Wilton Park. It is also severed by the A355, although has reasonable access to the facilities and services in both the New and Old Towns. Importantly, the land area proposed is quite large (providing some flexibility) and could provide a critical mass of development to the east of Beaconsfield (along with Wilton Park), both in terms of supporting new community infrastructure and delivering a relief road. Site 4 (42) would be suitable for accommodating both housing and employment development.

9. Site 48 is also adjacent to Wilton Park. It is more distant from Beaconsfield than site 4 (42), but has some merit as a location for housing and / or employment development, if planned and effectively integrated with the redevelopment of Wilton Park.

Gerrards Cross

10. The only Green Belt site proposed for development at Gerrards Cross lies to the north east of the town (site 5).
11. It is considered unsuitable for identification as an area of contingency land. It is a relatively small site, it has been proposed for a very specific range of uses (including older people's accommodation and affordable housing) and delivery could be dependent upon Chiltern District Council agreeing (at the appropriate time) to the release of their part of the land for development.
12. More appropriate contingency land provision at Gerrards Cross would require Officers to assess and identify areas of land not put forward by landowners and developers.



Burnham

13. Seven sites have been proposed adjacent or near to Burnham. Sites 13 and 40 are to the west of Burnham, immediately north of Taplow Station. Sites 51 and 28 (the Bishop Centre) also lie to the west of Burnham. Site 54 is detached from the built-up area, and site 37 is the existing Wyeth Laboratories site. Site 6 lies to the north of Burnham (off Wymers Wood Lane).
14. Sites 13 is currently a playing field, is detached from the built up area of Burnham and lies some distance from the facilities and services in Burnham village centre. The site does however have good access to public transport services. Site 6 is also quite distant from the facilities and services in Burnham village centre. The general location and nature of the local road network make this site unsuitable for any significant employment development.
15. Sites 40, 51 and 54 are too small to be considered as potential contingency sites.
16. Site 28 is the Bishop Centre. The Core Strategy: Emerging Approach document provides for redevelopment of this site, providing there is no significant adverse impact on Burnham Town Centre.
17. Site 37 is currently occupied by Wyeth Laboratories. As the Council has no control over when the site could become available for redevelopment, it is not considered a suitable contingency site.
18. None of the proposed sites are considered to be particularly suitable as contingency land. Site 6 is preferable to Site 13, but there are certainly other locations adjacent to Burnham (not proposed by landowners and developers) that would be more suitable contingency land areas.

Other Options

19. There are many other sites put forward by landowners and developers that are not adjacent to the three main settlements. Whilst some of these have merit, in terms of access to local facilities and public transport services, they do not fit with the emerging spatial strategy. Accordingly, it is not proposed to pursue these areas of potential contingency land.
20. Site assessment work is underway, to look at the merits of all the sites put forward for development. This work will be used to demonstrate that the contingency land finally selected has been chosen, having regard to robust evidence on the alternative options.

Key

-  District boundary
-  Major roads

