

South Bucks Local Development Framework

South Bucks Core Strategy (February 2011)

Sustainability Appraisal - Post Adoption Statement

Introduction

- 1.1 South Bucks District Council adopted the South Bucks Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) at a meeting of Full Council on 22nd February 2011. The Core Strategy now forms part of the South Bucks Local Development Framework.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Section 19 (5), the Core Strategy has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal process, which assesses the likely significant economic, social and environmental effects of the Plan.
- 1.3 The Sustainability Appraisal of the South Bucks Core Strategy fully incorporates the requirements of the European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004).
- 1.4 As set out in Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12), the Sustainability Appraisal process performs a key role in providing a sound evidence base for the Plan. The Sustainability Appraisal informs the evaluation of alternative options, and helps to ensure that the chosen strategy and policies are the most appropriate, given reasonable alternatives.
- 1.5 The Sustainability Appraisal work undertaken in support of the South Bucks Core Strategy can be viewed [here](#).

Post Adoption Statement

- 2.1 Upon adoption of the Core Strategy, the District Council must issue a Sustainability Appraisal - Post Adoption Statement, which summarises:
 - How Sustainability considerations have been integrated into the Core Strategy.
 - How any consultation responses received on the Core Strategy and Sustainability Appraisal reports (at all stages) have been taken into account.
 - The reasons for choosing the Core Strategy as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives considered.
 - The measures to be taken to monitor the significant sustainability effects of implementing the Core Strategy.
- 2.2 This Sustainability Appraisal - Post Adoption Statement, considers each of the above matters in turn.

How Sustainability considerations have been integrated into the Core Strategy.

- 3.1 The key stages in the South Bucks Sustainability Appraisal process are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1 - Key Stages in the Sustainability Appraisal Process

Sustainability Appraisal Stage	When
Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives.	Included in the Scoping Report (May 2005). An update is provided in Section 3 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report (March 2010).
Collecting Baseline information.	Included in the Scoping Report (May 2005). In December 2007, all consultees were contacted again, asking whether there was any additional evidence or new issues they wanted to bring to the attention of the Council.
Identifying sustainability issues and problems.	Included in the Scoping Report (May 2005). Information refined and updated, and incorporated in the 'Context' section (Section 1) of the Adopted South Bucks Core Strategy.
Developing the Sustainability Appraisal Framework	Included in the Scoping Report (May 2005).
Consulting on the Scope of the Sustainability Appraisal	May to June 2005.
Testing the Core Strategy Objectives against the SA Framework	Included in the Scoping Report (May 2005). Updated and amended Core Strategy Strategic Objectives assessed against the SA Framework in the Sustainability Appraisal Report (March 2010) (see Section 4 and Appendix 5).
Developing the Options	Core Strategy Issues and Options (published January 2006). Core Strategy Preferred Options (published September 2006). Core Strategy Emerging Approach Document (published March 2009).
Predicting and evaluating the effects of the Core Strategy, and considering ways of mitigating the adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects.	Initial Appraisal of Issues and Options published December 2005. Appraisal of the Preferred Options published July 2006. Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy Emerging Approach published March 2009. An appraisal of the Proposed Submission Core Strategy policies is included in the March 2010 Sustainability Appraisal Report.
Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of the DPD.	Potential indicators included in the Scoping Report (May 2005). Monitoring measures contained in the March 2010 Sustainability Appraisal Report (see Section 7 and Appendix 4).

- 3.2 Sustainability Appraisal has been an integral part of the Core Strategy preparation process, with the findings of the sustainability appraisal work informing both the drafting of Core Strategy documentation, and Member decisions.

- 3.3 The initial scoping exercise collated baseline information and helped to identify key sustainability issues in the District. These issues have been refined and further developed, and are incorporated in the 'Context' section (Section 1) of the Adopted South Bucks Core Strategy. The scoping exercise also helped to identify the other plans, programmes and strategies to be taken into account in preparing the Core Strategy.
- 3.4 A sustainability appraisal framework was developed, with a range of sustainability objectives to be used in assessing the Core Strategy options, and likely significant effects of the chosen strategy and related Core Policies. A range of options were considered and appraised in preparing the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation document (January 2006), the Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation document (September 2006) and the Core Strategy Emerging Approach document (March 2009). Sustainability Appraisal Reports were prepared to accompany each of these consultation documents.
- 3.5 The sustainability appraisal work undertaken in association with the Core Strategy Emerging Approach document played a very important role in identifying the advantages and disadvantages of different strategies for accommodating future development in South Bucks. These advantages and disadvantages were reported to Members, helping to ensure the Council made an informed decision on its preferred strategy.
- 3.6 The main findings of the Sustainability Appraisal were incorporated in the Core Strategy Emerging Approach consultation document (March 2009), allowing local residents and other stakeholders to understand the likely significant effects of alternative options, and the Council's emerging (preferred) approach.
- 3.7 The Sustainability Appraisal Report (March 2010) that was prepared to accompany the Proposed Submission Core Strategy, helped demonstrate that the chosen strategy and related policies were the most appropriate, given the reasonable alternatives. The Sustainability Appraisal work helped to ensure that the likely significant effects of each Core Policy were understood, with changes made to the Core Policies where appropriate, ensuring that the sustainability benefits were optimised, and the disbenefits minimised.
- 3.8 The monitoring framework will enable the significant sustainability effects of the Core Strategy to be monitored. Where Core Policies are not having the intended effects, changes may need to be made to the South Bucks Local Development Framework (with additional or amended policy and guidance).

How any consultation responses received on the Core Strategy and Sustainability Appraisal reports (at all stages) have been taken into account.

- 4.1 All consultation responses received on the Core Strategy and Sustainability Appraisal Report were very carefully considered. The [Consultation Statement](#) submitted with the Proposed Submission Core Strategy (March 2010) summarises the consultation methods used, the main issues raised, and how these issues were addressed by the Council.
- 4.2 For example, some of the main issues raised by local residents, stakeholders and landowners and developers, included:
- The existing pressure on local community infrastructure (particularly schools and health care facilities), and the importance of ensuring that new development is accompanied by appropriate new infrastructure provision.
 - Increasing traffic congestion and the related impacts on quality of life. Also, the need for better public transport services.
 - Buckinghamshire County Council expressed concern about the ability of local schools to accommodate the scale of development planned at Beaconsfield.
 - The importance of protecting the Green Belt and our natural environment.
 - The adverse impact of HGV movements in and around Iver Village and Richings Park and a suggestion of an Iver Relief Road.
- 4.3 These comments were taken into account, and helped to develop and refine the policy approaches in the Proposed Submission (and adopted) Core Strategy. In particular:
- The need for protection and provision of local infrastructure is emphasised in Core Policy 6. An Infrastructure Schedule is included in Appendix 6, which sets out infrastructure projects to support delivery of the Spatial Strategy.
 - Core Policy 7 on Accessibility and Transport seeks to improve accessibility to services and to support sustainable transport.
 - It is acknowledged that additional school places are needed in the District, including at Beaconsfield, in the Infrastructure Schedule at Appendix 6 of the Core Strategy.
 - Findings of further Evidence Base Studies suggested that future development needs in the period to 2026 can be accommodated without the need for release of Green Belt land. The Spatial Strategy strongly protects the Green Belt. Core Policy 9 aims to conserve and enhance the natural environment.
 - Core Policy 7 was updated to include reference to the scope for provision of a relief road or other alternative means of access to the Iver/Richings Park area, if this proves necessary in the future.

- 4.4 The Sustainability Appraisal Report prepared to accompany the Core Strategy: Emerging Approach consultation (March 2009), was amended in June 2009, to take account of comments received.

The reasons for choosing the Core Strategy as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives considered.

- 5.1 In developing and writing the South Bucks Core Strategy, Officers and Members have been mindful of the need to strike an appropriate balance between securing a sustainable form of development, protecting the Green Belt and protecting settlement character.

- 5.2 The Core Strategy: Emerging Approach Document (March 2009) considered four alternative development scenarios, each with their own advantages and disadvantages. The preferred strategy, as taken forward and included in the adopted Core Strategy, incorporates elements of each of the four alternative development scenarios, and has the following principal merits:

- Protection of the Green Belt boundary.
- Protection of Burnham Beeches, with the enhanced recreational facilities at Wilton Park and Mill Lane, going some way to reducing the public use pressure on Burnham Beeches.
- Delivery of biodiversity enhancements and gains.
- Continued focus on the re-use of previously developed land.
- Protection of settlement character, particularly those areas with special townscape character.
- More affordable housing provision and a better mix of housing types.
- Some limited new housing development in smaller settlements (including on Rural Exception sites) to support local communities.
- Scope to address public open space deficiencies in Beaconsfield. The Mill Lane Opportunity Site will also provide opportunities for new and improved parkland and rights of way. More generally, the scale of development proposed within existing settlements will not necessitate development on existing areas of open space.
- Improvement in the range of shops and services in Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and Burnham, with qualitative improvements to Burnham and Iver Village.
- Development in larger settlements will ensure residents have good access to the widest range of facilities and services.
- Most existing employment sites protected from redevelopment. Some new employment provision on the Opportunity Sites.
- A local economy that remains diverse, but with an increasing focus on higher-value added activities.
- Potential to encourage more sustainable travel (for example, greater use of the rail stations at Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross, Taplow and Burnham).
- The appropriate consideration of climate change issues in planning and delivering new developments.

- 5.3 The Council did not favour the alternative options considered, as their potential advantages were more than outweighed by their likely disadvantages.

The measures to be taken to monitor the significant sustainability effects of implementing the Core Strategy.

- 6.1 The significant effects of the Core Strategy will be monitored and reported annually in the South Bucks Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). Appendix 7 of the adopted South Bucks Core Strategy sets out the delivery and monitoring framework that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the South Bucks Core Strategy (in terms of delivery of the Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives - see Part 1 of the Adopted Core Strategy).
- 6.2 The monitoring framework set out in the Core Strategy will be supplemented by a series of significant sustainability effects indicators. These are listed in Table 2 below (see also Appendix 4, [Sustainability Appraisal Report](#), March 2010).

Table 2 - Significant Sustainability Effects Indicators

Sustainability Objective - 1. To provide residents of South Bucks with the opportunity to live in a decent home.
1. Proportion of vulnerable people in decent homes.
2. House price / earnings affordability ratio.
3. Number of households on the housing register.
4. Number of homeless households.
Sustainability Objective - 2. To reduce anti-social activity, including crime and the fear of crime, through the creation of safer places to live and work.
1. Recorded crimes per 1,000 population for domestic burglaries, violent offences and vehicle crimes.
2. Number of fatal and serious road accidents occurring in a particular year.
Sustainability Objective - 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.
1. Percentage of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of a GP, hospital, schools, employment and a major shopping centre.
2. Total amount of floorspace for 'town centre uses'.
Sustainability Objective - 4. To encourage the use of sustainable and integrated methods of transport to reduce negative effects on the environment.
1. Annual average flow (per 1,000km) of traffic on the principal roads in South Bucks.
2. Percentage of new housing that is within 400m (in urban areas) or 800m (in rural areas) of a half hourly bus or train service.
3. Percentage of commuters who travel by car.
4. Percentage of major developments with a Travel Plan.

Sustainability Objective - 5. To provide for sustainable levels of water use, supply and management.
1. Water leakage rate and amount of water use (National and Regional level data).
Sustainability Objective - 6. To maintain and enhance biodiversity.
1. Achievement of Buckinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan targets, delivered through the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.
2. Condition and area of SSSIs and SACs (hectares).
3. Area of the District covered by Ancient Woodland and covered by Woodland Grant Schemes (hectares).
4. Extent of Local Nature Reserves, Local Wildlife Sites, National nature reserves and Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological Sites.
Sustainability Objective - 7. To conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape character of South Bucks and in particular, those areas of designated importance.
1. Number of developments permitted in the AONB.
2. Number of relevant actions implemented in the Colne Valley Action Plan.
3. Proportion of schemes granted planning permission which affect the setting of the River Thames and which bring about improvements to that setting.
Sustainability Objective - 8. To conserve and enhance the historic environment.
1. Listed buildings and conservation areas (total).
2. Loss or damage to scheduled ancient monuments (number) & historic parks and gardens (hectares).
Sustainability Objective - 9. To reduce contributions to climate change through: a) Reducing energy consumption, b) Sustainable building practices c) Maximising the potential for renewable energy.
1. Per capita reduction in CO ₂ emissions in the District.
2. Energy use per household (gas and electricity).
3. Commercial and industrial energy usage (gas and electricity).
Sustainability Objective - 10. Minimise waste and then re-use or recover it through recycling, composting or energy recovery.
1. Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting.
2. Per capita household waste per year.
Sustainability Objective - 11. To conserve soil resources and quality.
1. Loss of best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a) to development.
2. New and converted dwellings on previously developed land.
Sustainability Objective - 12. To improve the efficiency of land use through the re-use of existing buildings and developing on previously developed land (PDL).
1. New and converted dwellings on previously developed land.
2. Percentage of new dwellings completed at different densities, in different areas (for example, townscape character areas, town centres etc).
3. Total amount of employment floorspace on previously developed land by type.

Sustainability Objective - 13. To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new and existing development including existing infrastructure.
1. The number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding (and water quality grounds).
2. New housing development built in Flood Zone 1.
Sustainability Objective - 14. To reduce pollution of the air, water and soil and also combat sources of noise and light pollution.
1. Number of sites in the District where there was an exceedance of the UK Annual Mean objective for Nitrogen dioxide.
2. Amount of pollution sensitive development granted planning permission in AQMA.
3. Rivers and chalk streams of 'Good' or 'Fair' chemical and biological water quality.
4. Number of incidents of major and significant water pollution occurring in a particular year.
5. Potentially contaminated sites investigated and remediated.
6. Number of noise and light complaints received from members of the public.
7. The number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on (flooding and) water quality grounds.
Sustainability Objective - 15. To encourage economic growth and competitiveness, whilst achieving a broad balance in the distribution and growth of housing, population & employment.
1. Net change in the total number of VAT registered businesses in the District.
2. Commuting flows and the balance between local employment opportunities and the resident workforce.
3. Total amount of additional floorspace by type.
4. Employment land available - by type.
Sustainability Objective - 16. To encourage a diverse economy which is focused on higher value added, lower impact activities.
1. Number and proportion of employees in knowledge based sectors.
Sustainability Objective - 17. To develop and maintain a skilled workforce to support long-term competitiveness of the District.
1. Percentage of 15 year old pupils in schools maintained by the local education authority achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* - C or equivalent.
2. Percentage of population qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 or equivalent.
3. Percentage of adults with no qualifications.
4. Proportion of people of working age who are unemployed.
5. Proportion of people of working age out of work for more than a year.

Conclusion

- 7.1 The Sustainability Appraisal work has helped to ensure that the South Bucks Core Strategy contributes to the delivery of more sustainable development, and is the most appropriate strategy, given reasonable alternatives.

If you have any queries regarding the above, please contact the Planning Policy Team on 01895 837315, or e-mail LDF@southbucks.gov.uk.