place services

Essex County Council

Braintree District Council Draft Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

Environmental Report: Annex C – Sustainability Framework

January 2013

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Braintree District Council commissioned Place Services (formerly part of Essex County Council's Spatial Planning Group) to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA), on the proposed draft Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan.

Place Services are acting as consultants for this work; therefore the content of the SA/SEA should not be interpreted or otherwise represented as the formal view of Essex County Council.

This document is Annex C to the Environmental Report and sets out the Sustainability Framework for the draft Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan.

1.2 Sustainability Framework

A Sustainability Framework is an important tool of the SA/SEA process that is developed during the scoping phase in line with the Planning Advisory Service's best practice guidance for Sustainability Appraisals. It provides the context against which the options and policies of the draft Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan can be assessed and sets out the sustainability objectives; the key questions that should be asked to decipher whether the draft Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan adheres to the principles of sustainability; and indicators which can monitor the impact of the documents.

The SA/SEA of the draft Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan will adopt an objectives based approach, with each objective combining to form the Sustainability Framework. The use of sustainability objectives to appraise a plan or programme is a theme of the Planning Advisory Service's best guidance practice for Sustainability Appraisal. It allows individual issues, policies and proposals within a plan or strategy to be appraised separately against each objective within the overall Sustainability Framework. In this way, beneficial or adverse impacts relating to each individual objective may be readily identified and reported. It also allows for alternatives and/or mitigation measures to be identified and subsequently appraised in similar fashion.

The sustainability objectives have been derived from the Stakeholder Workshop (January 2012), a review of plans and programmes and a strategic analysis of the baseline information. Objectives are based on policy advice and guidance and related to the assessment of the current state of the plan area. The appraisal is then able to evaluate, in a clear and consistent manner, the nature and degree of impact and whether significant effects are likely to emerge from the plan's proposed policies. It also means that indicators established for use in the appraisal process itself can be carried forward into subsequent monitoring of the implementation and delivery of policies and proposals. Recognising which indicators can be used to assess the impact of policies being appraised is important and points towards the specific monitoring which will need to be carried out. Collection of this information over a period of time will result in data trends being established, which will show if the policies appraised have a positive or negative impact on the social, economic or environmental factors they influence.

The sustainability objectives identified for the appraisal of the draft Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan are tabulated below. The table presents each sustainability objective, together with its source and the sustainability topics to which it relates. The scope of the sustainability objectives has been derived from Annex 1(f) of the European SEA Directive, 2001/42/EC with other topics, of relevance to the document being appraised also included.

It is important to assess the impact of the SA/SEA objectives on social, environmental and economic factors. Table 1 shows how these three pillars of sustainability are integrated into the SA/SEA objectives.

Table 1: Relationship of SA/SEA Objectives to Economic, Social and Environmental Factors

	Economic	Social	Environment
1) Create safe environments which improve quality of life and community cohesion	✓	✓	
2) To provide everyone with the opportunity to live in a decent home		✓	
3) To improve the health of the Districts' residents and mitigate/reduce potential health inequalities		✓	✓
4) To promote the vitality and viability of all service centres throughout the District	✓	✓	
5) To achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth	✓	✓	
6) To conserve and enhance the biological and geological diversity of the environment			✓
7) To promote more sustainable transport choices and uptake		✓	✓
8) Promote accessibility and ensure the necessary transport infrastructure to support new development	✓	✓	
9) To improve the education and skills of the population	✓	✓	
10) To maintain and enhance cultural heritage and assets within the District	✓		✓
11) To reduce contributions to climatic change			✓
12) To improve water quality and address water scarcity and sewerage		✓	✓
13) To reduce the risk of flooding		✓	✓
14) To improve air quality		✓	✓
15) To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes	✓	✓	✓

2 Sustainability Framework

The Sustainability Appraisal Framework was produced from analysis of all the information obtained during the scoping phase and shows the relationship between:

- each of the SA/SEA objectives;
- where each of the objectives has been sourced from;
- which topics refer to each objective;
- what key questions have to be asked of each policy objective (in this instance separating between the policy options document and the site allocations document) to assess its relationship with each of the objectives; and,
- what data sources can be monitored to see if policies accord with the objectives.

Please note that the Sustainability Framework in Table 2 contains those criteria that were included at the Scoping stage for which to assess the sites within the draft Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan. These have been superseded by the criteria contained in the Site Proforma in Annex D – Site Appraisals.

Table 2: Sustainability Framework

Sustainability Objective	Sustainability Issues	Key Questions - Policy	~~Key Criteria - Sites~~	Potential Indicators
1) Create safe environments which improve quality of life and community cohesion	- Percentage increases in the offences of violence against the person, burglary of dwellings, theft from a motor vehicle, and sexual offences between 2009/10 and 2010/11. - Lack of community facilities for young people - Lack of cultural facilities	- Does it seek to improve / supply community facilities for young people? - Does it seek to increase cultural activities or suitable development to stimulate them? - Does it seek to reduce inequalities between areas and support cultural identity? - Will there be measures to increase the safety and security of new development and public realm?	~~- Community facilities for young people~~ ~~- Cultural activities or suitable development to stimulate them~~ ~~- Crime levels~~	- Recorded key offences - KSI casualties for adults and children - Public perceptions on leisure / community facilities - Street level crime statistics
2) To provide everyone with the opportunity to live in a decent home	- Lack of social housing - 0.1% of housing stock owned by the Local Authority (7.6% nationally). - Housing should respond more to demographics in population growth - Lack of care homes and capacity in existing care homes - Rural affordable housing is currently not	- Will it increase the range and affordability of housing for all social groups? - Does it respond to the needs of an ageing population? - Does the site respond to a housing type shortage as identified in the SHMA and responding to demographics in population growth?	(Only applicable for employment sites) ~~- Delivery of affordable housing~~ ~~- Delivery of rural affordable housing~~ ~~- Additional capacity in or of care homes~~	- House Prices - Indices of Multiple Deprivation Score – particularly Housing and Services Domain and the Living Environment Deprivation Domain

Sustainability Objective	Sustainability Issues	Key Questions - Policy	~~Key Criteria - Sites~~	Potential Indicators
	suitable for rural areas and those who require them	- Does it seek to provide appropriate rural affordable housing? - Does it seek to provide additional capacity in or of care homes? - Will it promote an increase in social housing?		- Number of affordable dwelling completions - Annual dwelling completions - Population projections and forecasts
3) To improve the health of the District's residents and mitigate/reduce potential health inequalities	- Increases in obesity in Year 6 children and adult obesity higher than the national average - Uptake of sports and leisure facilities. - 35% of households within Braintree District do not have any access to natural greenspace - Greenspace in urban areas to be safeguarded against development for other means - Lack of walking and cycling infrastructure	- Will it improve access to high quality health facilities? - Will it increase access to sport and recreation facilities, open space and/or SANG? - Will it encourage access by walking or cycling, and will it increase the overall rates of walking and cycling?	~~- Accessible healthcare facilities~~ ~~- Distances to:~~ ~~- accessible natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size?~~ ~~- 20ha accessible natural greenspace?~~ ~~- 100ha accessible natural greenspace?~~ ~~- 500km accessible natural greenspace?~~ ~~- Loss of recreation or open space~~ ~~- Provision of greenspace~~ ~~- Health Deprivation and Disability IMD sub-domain~~ ~~- Capacity of local / nearby health care facilities including GPs and dentists~~ ~~- Walking and cycling~~	- Life Expectancy - Indices of Multiple Deprivation – Health and Disability sub-domain scores - Residents opinion on availability of open space/leisure facilities - Natural England Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) - Location and extent of recreational facilities to development

Sustainability Objective	Sustainability Issues	Key Questions - Policy	~~Key Criteria - Sites~~	Potential Indicators
			~~infrastructure~~	site - Location and extent of accessible greenspace to development site - Proximity of site to healthcare facilities - Percentage of population obese - Number of GPs and dentists accepting new patients
4) To promote the vitality and viability of all service centres throughout the District	- Lack of retail and non-commercial office floorspace in relation to the total proportion of commercial and industrial floorspace – significantly lower than county and national averages	- Does it prevent further loss of retail and other services in rural areas? - Does it promote and enhance the viability of existing centres by focusing development in such centres? - Will retailing in town centres be enhanced in areas of identified need? - Does it seek to increase the proportion of retail and non-commercial office floorspace (as a proportion of total	~~- Retail and non-commercial office floorspace.~~ ~~- Provision of shopping, leisure and local services~~	- Amount of retail, leisure and office floorspace in town centres. - Implemented and outstanding planning permissions for retail, office and commercial use - Number and type of services from Rural Services Study - Number of post offices closed

Sustainability Objective	Sustainability Issues	Key Questions - Policy	~~Key Criteria - Sites~~	Potential Indicators
		commercial and industrial floorpspace) in the district?		down - Number of village shops closed down - Pedestrian footfall count
5) To achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth	- Braintree District has a lower job density than both the region and Britain - The District displays a significantly higher percentage of employment in 'manufacturing' and 'construction' in comparison to the region and the country and significantly lower employees in the 'finance, IT and other business activities' sector. - Factories and warehouses account for the majority of industrial and commercial floorspace in 2008. - Too much employment land being developed for other uses, particularly housing - Lack of focus on	- Will new housing be supported by adequate local employment opportunities? - Does it support small businesses to grow and encourage business innovation? - Will it make land and property available for business development? - Will it enhance the Districts potential for tourism? - Will it encourage the rural economy and diversification of it? - Will it lead to development having an adverse impact on employment for existing facilities? - Does it seek to increase broadband coverage / bandwidth, especially in rural area?	~~- (Only applicable for employment sites)~~ ~~- Loss of high quality agricultural land~~ ~~- Opportunities for job creation~~ ~~- Amount of employment land~~ ~~- Maximise tourism~~ ~~- Mixed-use development, or with the potential~~ ~~- Highly skilled jobs~~ ~~- Rural employment opportunities / rural diversification in employment~~ ~~- Expansion of small businesses~~ ~~- Broadband facilities / bandwidth~~	- Employment land availability - Typical amount of job creation (jobs per ha) within different use classes. - Percentage change and comparison in the total number of VAT registered businesses in the area - Businesses by industry type - Amount of vacant industrial floorspace - Amount of high quality agricultural land - Travel to work flows - Employment

Sustainability Objective	Sustainability Issues	Key Questions - Policy	~~Key Criteria - Sites~~	Potential Indicators
	tourism - Need for rural diversification and increased rural employment opportunities - Need to promote and aid the expansion of small businesses - Broadband inequalities across the district meaning home working and rural employment is stifled			status by residents and job type - Job densities - Economic activity of residents - Average gross weekly pay - Proportion of business in rural locations - Implemented and outstanding planning permissions for retail, office and commercial use
6) To conserve and enhance the biological and geological diversity of the environment	- There are 4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). 5% of the Bovingdon Hall Woods SSSI is 'unfavourable no change'. Parts of both Belcher's & Broadfield Woods and Glemsford Pits SSSIs are in a state of 'unfavourable recovering'. - There are approximately 251 Local Wildlife Sites	- Will it conserve and enhance natural/semi natural habitats? - Will it conserve and enhance species diversity, and in particular avoid harm to indigenous BAP priority species? - Will it maintain and enhance sites designated for their nature conservation interest? - Will it maintain and	~~- Impact on:~~ ~~- SSSI~~ ~~- NNR~~ ~~- LoWS~~ ~~- Ancient Woodland~~ ~~- Protected lanes~~ ~~- TPOs~~ ~~- Green infrastructure~~ ~~- Fragmentation of habitats~~	- Spatial extent of designated sites within the District - Achievement of Biodiversity Action Plan targets - Ecological potential assessments - Distance from site to nearest: • SSSIs • NNR

Sustainability Objective	Sustainability Issues	Key Questions - Policy	~~Key Criteria - Sites~~	Potential Indicators
	(LoWS) - A need to increase the green infrastructure of the district - The fragmentation of habitats	enhance the connectivity of habitats and their ability to deliver ecosystem services?		• LoWS • Ancient Woodland • Protected lanes • Other sensitive designated or non-designated receptors • Other special landscape features - Condition of the nearest sensitive receptors (where viable) - Site visit surveys on typical abundance and frequency of habitats (DAFOR scale)
7) To promote more sustainable transport choices and uptake	- Higher car ownership in Braintree District compared to county and national levels. - Lack of parking at public transport interchanges, particularly Witham train station - Lack of walking and	- Will it increase and/or improve the availability and usability of sustainable transport modes? - Will it seek to encourage people to use alternative modes of transportation other than private vehicle?	~~- Distance of existing public transport node (bus stop / railway line)~~ ~~- Walking / cycling distance of a:~~ ~~- School?~~ ~~- Convenience shopping?~~ ~~- Primary health care facilities?~~	- Access to services and business' by public transport - Indices of Multiple Deprivation - Travel to work methods and

Sustainability Objective	Sustainability Issues	Key Questions - Policy	~~Key Criteria - Sites~~	Potential Indicators
	cycling infrastructure - Lack of public transport infrastructure	- Will it lead to the integration of transport modes? - Will it improve rural public transport? - Does it seek to increase the uptake of public transport through parking standards at destinations? - Does it seek to increase the uptake or viability of walking and cycling as methods of transportation, through new infrastructure or integration?	~~- Provide or require new infrastructure or integration thereof that will benefit the wider community~~	flows - Car ownership - Network performance on roads - Public transport punctuality and efficiency
8) Promote accessibility and ensure the necessary transport infrastructure to support new development	- Large commuting outflow of Braintree District residents. - In-commuters filling jobs in the District. - Accessibility of GPs by either walking or using public transport. - Accessibility to employment sites and retail centres - Lack of public transport infrastructure - Lack of major roads, and lack of quality in	- Will it contribute positively to reduce social exclusion by ensuring access to jobs, shopping, services and leisure facilities for all? - Does it seek to concentrate development and facilities in town centres or where access via sustainable travel is greatest? - Will it assist in reducing the number of road casualties and ensure	~~- Barriers to Services IMD sub-domain~~ ~~- Mixed-use development~~ ~~- Settlement hierarchy~~ ~~- Highways access~~ ~~- Parking standards~~ ~~- Congestion at key destinations~~ ~~- Supporting transport infrastructure in an area of identified need~~	- Residents opinion on availability of open space/leisure facilities - Access to services by public transport - Indices of Multiple Deprivation – sub-domain scores - Recorded traffic flows

Sustainability Objective	Sustainability Issues	Key Questions - Policy	~~Key Criteria - Sites~~	Potential Indicators
	smaller roads	ease of pedestrian movement especially for the disabled? - Will it improve parking conditions at destinations, particularly for commuters? - Does it seek to minimise congestion at key destinations / areas that witness a large amount of vehicle movements at peak times? - Would the scale of development require significant supporting transport infrastructure in an area of identified need? - Will planning controls seek to retain garages to reduce conversion to living space to reduce on-street parking?		- KSI casualties for adults and children - Car ownership - Location of site with regards to areas of high deprivation - Transport Assessments
9) To improve the education and skills of the population	- 4 LSOAs are in the top 5% most deprived nationally in regards to education, skills and training deprivation: 1 in Halstead, 1 in Braintree and 2 in Witham. - Lack of highly skilled jobs in the District	- Does it seek to improve existing educational facilities and/or create more educational facilities? - Does it seek to improve existing training and learning facilities and/or create more facilities?	~~- Distance of a primary school~~ ~~- Distance of a secondary school~~ ~~- Capacity in nearby primary schools to support the size of development~~ ~~- Capacity in nearby~~	- Additional capacity of local schools - GCSE or equivalent performance - Level 2 qualifications by working age

Sustainability Objective	Sustainability Issues	Key Questions - Policy	~~Key Criteria - Sites~~	Potential Indicators
	- Attainment is an issue across all levels	- Will the employment opportunities available be mixed to suit a varied employment skills base? - Will new housing be supported by school expansion or other educational facilities where necessary?	~~secondary schools to support the size of development~~	residents - Level 4 qualifications and above by working age residents - Employment status of residents - Average gross weekly earnings - Standard Occupational Classification
10) To maintain and enhance cultural heritage and assets within the District	- 3,192 designated listed buildings within the District - 40 Scheduled Monuments located throughout the District	- Will it protect and enhance sites, features and areas of historical, archaeological and cultural value in both urban and rural areas? - Does it seek to enhance the range and quality of the public realm and open spaces? - Will it reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land? - Does it encourage the use of high quality design principles to respect local character? - Will any adverse impacts be reduced through	~~- Impact on:~~ ~~- Scheduled Monument~~ ~~- Listed Building~~ ~~- Conservation Area~~ ~~- Historic Park or Garden~~ ~~- Other historic or cultural feature (inc. archaeological value)~~	- Proximity to nearest (including its setting): • Scheduled Monument? • Listed Building? • Conservation Area? • Registered Historic Park or Garden? • Site identified in the Historic Environment Record? • Building of

Sustainability Objective	Sustainability Issues	Key Questions - Policy	~~Key Criteria - Sites~~	Potential Indicators
		adequate mitigation?		local interest? • Other historic feature? - Number and spatial extent of listed buildings - Number and spatial extent of scheduled monuments - Buildings At Risk Register - Heritage at risk surveys - Percentage of conservation area demolished or otherwise lost. - Amount of derelict properties and/or vacant land - Numbers of buildings being removed from the buildings at risk register - Amount of damage to listed

Sustainability Objective	Sustainability Issues	Key Questions - Policy	~~Key Criteria - Sites~~	Potential Indicators
				buildings or scheduled monuments
11) To reduce contributions to climatic change	- In 2008 Braintree District consumed more energy than the county average, largely associated with road transport. - Road transport in Braintree District produces the 3rd highest amount of CO_2 per capita across the county's local authorities	- Will it reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by reducing energy consumption? - Will it lead to an increased proportion of energy needs being met from renewable sources? - Does it ensure more sustainable modes of travel are provided? - Will it encourage greater energy efficiency? - Will it improve the efficient use of natural resources? - Will it seek to adhere to the Code for Sustainable Homes?	~~- Sustainable energy generation methods~~ ~~- Code for Sustainable Homes~~	- Carbon Dioxide emissions - Energy consumption GWh/households - Percentage of energy supplied from renewable sources. - Code for Sustainable Homes certificates
12) To improve water quality and address water scarcity and sewerage	- The majority of water bodies within Braintree District are given a 'moderate' current overall potential. However the River Blackwater and the River Chelmer are both given a 'poor' current status.	- Will it lead to no deterioration on the quality of water bodies? - Will water resources and sewerage capacity be able to accommodate growth? - Does it ensure the reinforcement of	~~- Groundwater protection zone.~~ ~~- Water supply.~~ ~~- Wastewater treatment arrangements.~~ ~~- Water cycle study – capacities in sewage network.~~	- Percentage of water bodies at good ecological status or potential - Percentage of water bodies assessed at good or high biological status

Sustainability Objective	Sustainability Issues	Key Questions - Policy	~~Key Criteria - Sites~~	Potential Indicators
	- Water scarcity is a major issue in regards to significant development in particular - Sewage capacity	wastewater treatment works or the provision of alternatives (where required) to support growth?		- Percentage of water bodies assessed at good chemical status - Water cycle study capacity in sewerage and resources
13) To reduce the risk of flooding	- Potential for development in Flood Risk Zones - Surface water runoff in urban areas	- Does it promote the inclusion of Sustainable Drainage Systems in new developments? - Does it seek to avoid development in areas at risk of flooding (fluvial, surface water, groundwater)? - Does it seek to avoid increasing flood risk (fluvial, surface water, groundwater) in areas away from initial development? - Will developer contributions be utilised for the provision and maintenance of flood defences?	~~- Is the site within:~~ ~~- Flood Zone 2~~ ~~- Flood Zone 3 (a/b)~~ ~~- Flooding from other sources~~ ~~- SFRA recommendations and Flood Risk Management Plans~~	- Spatial extent of flood zones 2 and 3 - Residential properties flooded from main rivers - Planning permission in identified flood zones granted permission contrary to advice from the Environment Agency - Incidences of flooding and location - Distance of site to floodplains - SFRA results - Incidences of flood warnings in

Sustainability Objective	Sustainability Issues	Key Questions - Policy	~~Key Criteria - Sites~~	Potential Indicators
				site area - Distance to 'Areas susceptible to surface water flooding' – EA Maps
14) To improve air quality	- The main air quality issues in the district are found to be NO_2 and PM10 emissions from vehicles travelling on the A12 and A120. - Meeting National Air Quality Standards. - Five potentially significant junctions with a daily flow of greater than 10,000 vehicles (2004) at Newland Street, Witham; Cressing Road, Witham; Head Street, Halstead; Railway Street, Braintree and Rayne Road, Braintree.	- Will it improve, or not detrimentally affect air quality along the A12 or A120? - Does it ensure that National Air Quality Standards are met at relevant points? - Does it seek to improve or avoid increasing traffic flows generally and in particular through potentially significant junctions?	~~- Distance to:~~ ~~- A12,~~ ~~- A120.~~ ~~- Distance to a Potentially Significant Junction for Air Quality?~~	- Number and spatial extent of potentially significant junctions for air quality in the District - NO_2 emissions - PM10 emissions - Recorded traffic flows on A12 and A120
15) To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes	- Much of the District's landscape is sensitive to change and new development. - Open skylines with panoramic views - Strong historic integrity	- Will homes be designed to enhance the existing street scene creating a better cultural heritage & public realm? - Will areas of special landscape character be	~~- High sensitivity to change in the Landscape Character Assessment~~ ~~- Open skylines or panoramic views~~ ~~- Greenfield site or PDL~~	- Developments permitted contrary to Landscape Character Assessment 'sensitivities to

Sustainability Objective	Sustainability Issues	Key Questions - Policy	~~Key Criteria - Sites~~	Potential Indicators
	with dispersed historic settlement patterns and Conservation Areas - Coalescence between neighbouring settlements and beyond village envelopes - Continuation of development on Previously Developed Land (PDL)	protected? - Will it see a loss of Greenfield land / does it promote development on PDL? - Will development see a disruption in current field boundaries? - Will it lead to rural expansion or development outside development boundaries/limits that increases coalescence with neighbouring settlements? - Is the scale / density of development in fitting with the local townscape / landscape?	~~- Disruption in current field boundaries?~~ ~~- Rural expansion or development outside development boundaries/ coalescence with neighbouring settlements~~ ~~- Scale / density of development~~	change'. - Number and extent of field boundaries affected. - Development on PDL - Number of permitted developments within Conservation Areas.

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