

Horsham District Council
Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment
Adoption Statement

Horsham District Council adopted the Local Development Framework (LDF) Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on 29th June 2007.

This statement has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (16) (3) and (4), which require a statement to be produced on adoption of a plan or programme, to detail;

1. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
2. How the Environmental Report has been taken into account;
3. How opinions expressed through public consultation have been taken into account;
4. The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with;
5. The measures that are taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

Planning Policy Statement 12 widens these considerations from environmental, to broader sustainability issues, so that this statement provides information on the wider sustainability appraisal process.

This statement examines each of these points in turn.

1. How sustainability considerations have been integrated into the plan

The process of Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment enabled sustainability issues to be incorporated into the Planning Obligations SPD. This was achieved by examining the requirements of plans and policies influencing the Planning Obligations SPD, which enabled the identification of a number of issues the document would need to address. Baseline data was also collected, which identified key facts about the District and the implications for the future. Much of the baseline data for the Planning Obligations SPD was based on information collected for the SA/SEA of the Core Strategy, as the data collected as part of the earlier SA/SEA remained relevant.

By examining the requirements of the plans and policies influencing and the baseline data, the following sustainability issues were identified.

- Pressure for housing development and a lack of affordable housing
- Difficulties for rural residents without a car reaching services and facilities
- The need to provide new services and facilities in areas of population growth
- High levels of car ownership and use, and a lack of public transport
- Fear of crime, despite low crime levels

- Development pressure threatens to affect the character, biodiversity and historical environment
- The potential for development in the District to contribute to and be affected by climate change, including the increased risk of flooding
- Increased demand for resources including energy and water, and the need to continue to recycle, to minimise this demand
- The need to maintain the mainly high and stable economy which enhancing it in rural areas
- The need to maintain and enhance town and village centres

From the identification of these issues it was possible to develop requirements for planning obligations that addressed these problems. This includes seeking developer contributions for a range of facilities, transport and the environment. This clearly demonstrates that sustainability considerations have been incorporated into the Planning Obligations Document.

2. How the Sustainability Appraisal has been taken into account

The findings of the SA/SEA process were taken into account at all stages of the preparation of the Planning Obligations SPD. The final SA/SEA published alongside this document provides a formal statement and audit trail of the assessment process.

The process began with publication of the “Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Planning Obligations SPD - Scoping Report”. This report provided a summary of the baseline data and plans and programmes influencing the SPD, based on a review of information collected as part of the Sustainability Appraisal work undertaken for the Core Strategy (adopted 2007). The report also summarised the sustainability issues affecting the District, as identified during the earlier sustainability appraisal work. The document also set out the Council’s initial thoughts on the likely issues that the Planning Obligations document should cover, and the different options for the document. The document also set out the objectives against which it was proposed that the sustainability of the proposed policy options / policies would be measured against.

The findings from the next stage in the Sustainability Appraisal process were set out in the “Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment - Interim Report on the Planning Obligations SPD”. This report updated the baseline data and sustainability issues and objectives set out in the earlier scoping report. The document also set out the results of the assessment of the different options for the SPD and assessed the cumulative and synergistic effects. It set out means by which potential sustainability or environmental problems identified could be mitigated.

Findings of the final stage of the assessment of the Planning Obligations document were set out in the “Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Planning Obligations SPD - Final Report”. This report set out the information contained in the draft final report, updated to take into account the responses from the public consultation held in summer 2006. It also set out the mitigation measures proposed and incorporated into the document.

The Sustainability Appraisal of the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document 2007 has been published as a background document that accompanies the SPD.

3. How consultations entered into have been taken into account

Key Environmental Bodies

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive requires that authorities referred to in Article 6(3) shall be consulted when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the Environmental Report. In England the key bodies are the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England.

Consultation with these key bodies and West Sussex County Council was carried out firstly in March 2006 on the "Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Planning Obligations SPD – Scoping Report". The consultation enabled these bodies to comment on the appropriateness of the objectives, indicators, baseline information, issues/problems and plans and policies influencing the document. A response to the Scoping report was received from West Sussex County Council, although no specific change to the SA/SEA was needed in light of their reply. Following this consultation, statutory bodies were given a further opportunity to comment as part of the wider consultation on the draft SPD and accompanying SA/SEA in July 2006. A comment on the SA/SEA was received from the Environment Agency, and the SA/SEA was updated to take these remarks into account.

Public Participation

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive requires early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames for members of the public to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying Environmental Report, before the adoption of the plan or programme or its submission to the legislative procedure. The Council undertook a programme of public participation on the plan and its SA/SEA prior to its adoption, with a 6 week consultation on the draft SPD and accompanying SA/SEA which began on 2nd July 2006. In addition to the response by the Environment Agency outlined above, a further two comments were received relating specifically to the SA/SEA. These comments were reviewed and the SA/SEA updated as appropriate.

4. Reasons for choosing the document as adopted in light of other reasonable alternatives

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (12) (2) requires environmental reports to examine reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme.

It is requirement that this statement sets out the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with.

Options considered for inclusion in the Planning Obligations SPD were limited as a result of higher level plans and programmes. Many of the options were predetermined by the approach taken in the Council's Core Strategy, which was itself subject to a SA/SEA.

The options selected for inclusion in the Planning Obligations SPD were firstly based on the outcome of the SA/SEA process, but also in light of wider planning issues. More detail on the scoping and selection of options is documented fully in the "Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Planning Obligations SPD – Final Report."

5. Monitoring

The SA/SEA of the Planning Obligations SPD has been published as a background document alongside the adopted SPD. The SA/SEA process does not, however, finish with the publication of this document; and the effects of the Planning Obligations document on the Sustainability Objectives will be monitored on an annual basis. The results of this monitoring will be included in the Annual Monitoring Report on the Local Development Framework. The results will feed into subsequent reviews of the Local Development Framework documents and will also help ensure that any unforeseen effects can be acted upon quickly.

The Horsham District Annual Monitoring Report is available to view on the Council's website www.horsham.gov.uk/strategic_planning