

**PLANNING
FOR OUR FUTURE**



**HORSHAM DISTRICT
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
TO 2018**

**NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY OF THE
Sustainability Appraisal and
Strategic Environmental
Assessment
of the
Reserve Housing Sites
Preferred Options
Development Plan Document
INTERIM REPORT
June 2008**

This document can be made available in large print or as audio tape on request. Please call (01403) 215549.

Introduction

Horsham District Council is preparing a series of documents that will help to guide development within the District. It will contain advice and guidance on how development should take place, and set out locations where housing, employment and leisure development should be built over the next few years.

One document that is currently being prepared is the Reserve Housing Site document. This document will identify sites that could be used for development if other housing sites that have already been selected for development cannot be built at a rate that was first planned, leaving a housing shortage in the District.

When preparing the Reserve Housing Site document, it has been important to consider the impact that it will have on sustainable development. This involves considering the effect that the document will have on society, the economy and the environment both now and in the future. To ensure these issues have been taken into account, a process known as Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment has been undertaken.

This document summarises the results of this process.

Background Research

The first stage in the process of the sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment (SA/SEA) was to collect information about the District as it is today which helps to identify the sort of pressures that the area is facing. Key features of the District today are

- An increasing, and aging population
- High house prices
- Low levels of deprivation, although pockets do exist
- Low crime levels, but high levels of fear of crime
- Good levels of health
- Good levels of education
- Generally good provision of leisure and recreation facilities
- High levels of car ownership and use, and low provision and use of public transport
- Low levels of unemployment
- A rich and varied historical and cultural environment including listed buildings and Conservation Areas
- A District that supports a range of wildlife, including protected habitats and species
- A varied landscape, some of which is of national importance, and some of which is highly sensitive to change
- A generally good level of water quality, but this is under pressure from increased pressure on water resources
- Flood risk may increase in the future as a result of climate change

Another piece of background research that was undertaken was to identify the requirements set out in other documents that influence the content of the Reserve Housing Site document. The main documents identified are the Council's Core Strategy (2007) and Site Specific Allocations of Land (2007) documents which set out the number of houses that need to be built in the District in the period to 2018, and the main locations where this development should take place. If these housing sites and numbers do not come forward as planned, it may be necessary for Reserve Housing Sites to be brought forward for development.

Sustainability Issues and Objectives

From the background information and the requirements set out in other documents it was possible to identify the sustainability issues affecting the District. These are set out below:

Sustainability Issues

- There is pressure for housing development, high house prices and a lack of affordable housing
- Access to services and facilities can be difficult for those in rural areas without transport
- New services and facilities will need to be provided in areas of population growth
- Car ownership and use is high, contributing to congestion and climate change; at the same time public transport in the District is fairly limited
- Although crime levels are low, fear of crime is an issue
- Development pressure is threatening the character, biodiversity and historical features of the District
- Development in the District can contribute to, and be affected by, climate change. The potential for increased flooding is of concern
- There is increasing demand for resources including fuel and water supplies
- There is a need to continue to recycle and the problem of fewer waste disposal options
- The overall high and stable economy needs to be maintained
- The rural economy needs to be enhanced
- There is a need to maintain and enhance town and village centres.

From the sustainability issues, a number of objectives have been developed against which the effects of the Reserve Housing Site could be assessed. These are set out below:

Sustainability Objectives

- To ensure that everyone has access to a good quality affordable home that meets their needs
- To ensure that everyone has access to the health, education, leisure and recreation facilities that they require
- To reduce crime and the fear of crime
- To conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape character of the District
- To conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the district
- To conserve and enhance the historical and cultural environment of the district
- To maintain a high quality environment in terms of air, soil and water quality
- To reduce car journeys and promote alternative methods of transport
- To reduce the risk of flooding
- To make the most efficient use of land by prioritising brownfield land for development
- To minimise the use of resources, particularly water, energy and materials
- To seek to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, in particular by encouraging the provision and use of renewable energy
- To maintain the high and stable economy of the District
- To Maintain and enhance the vitality of Horsham town and village centres

Assessment of Options for the Reserve Housing Site Document

There are a number of different approaches that could have been followed when producing the Reserve Housing Sites document. These options were tested against the sustainability objectives to compare the effects of the different options. From this process it was possible to identify the most sustainable approach to be followed when writing the Reserve Housing Site document. A summary of the results of this assessment process is set out below, together with the measures suggested to mitigate against any predicted problems, and therefore improve the sustainability of the document.

Sustainability Option	Summary of Findings	Suggested Mitigation Measures
The overall impacts of producing a Reserve Housing Site Document	The document will enable housing development to take place to meet the needs of the residents of the District. It will however lead to the loss of greenfield sites and adversely affect the environment e.g. landscape and biodiversity	Select sites for inclusion in the reserve housing sites document that are in the least environmentally sensitive locations, and located in adjoining Category 1 settlements.
<u>The timescale for the release of Reserve Housing Sites</u> Should housing sites be released: a) annually b) bi-annually c) five yearly	In general the timing of the release of any particular site would not have a major impact on most of the sustainability objectives over and above the impacts already identified as a result of allocating reserve housing sites.	
<u>The level of shortfall that would trigger the release of housing sites</u> What scale shortfall should trigger the release of a housing site: a) marginal e.g. <10 b) 50 homes c) 100 homes d) Greater than 100 homes	A marginal shortfall would have a negative effect on the environmental objectives, as it could result in the development of sites that are not needed. This could occur if there is a larger number of housing completions in a subsequent year, balancing out the shortfall.	The potential for adverse effects to arise from the unnecessary development of reserve housing sites can be mitigated by accurate monitoring of housing completions.
<u>The size of reserve housing sites that should be released</u> a) Release only sites smaller than 50 dwellings for development b) Release only sites larger than 50 dwellings for development c) Release sites that are a mix of sizes for development	Larger sites are more likely to have negative effects on the environmental objectives. However, as most of the reserve housing sites are generally fairly small scale, the overall difference is likely to be relatively small.	Care will need to be taken to mitigate any specific issues that may affect the individual sites that are allocated.

Selection of Reserve Housing Sites

The final part of the sustainability appraisal of the Reserve Housing Site document was to identify the most sustainable sites for selection as a reserve housing site. To do this environmental, social and economic data was collected for each site. Then, depending upon the effect that the development of the site would have on each issue, a score was assigned. These scores were then added up to give an overall measure of the sustainability of each site, with higher scores being attained for the most sustainable sites. A summary of the results is set out in the table below.

Site Name	Summary of Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Score
Land at Trollslund, Southwater	The site is located on land previously used as a nursery. Consequently it is considered that negative effects on landscape, biodiversity and the historical environment are likely to be minimal.	13
Land South of Roman Way, Billingshurst	Billingshurst has a good range of services, facilities and employment. It also has good public transport including a railway station. Development of the site would have relatively few environmental impacts, e.g. on the landscape and water quality.	12
Godden Land (north of High Seat Copse), Billingshurst	Billingshurst has a good range of services, facilities and employment land. It also has good public transport including a railway station. Development of the site would have relatively few environmental impacts, e.g. on the landscape and water quality.	12
Land at Shipley Road, Southwater	Southwater has a good range of services and facilities. The site is well screened from the surrounding landscape, and few environmental constraints have been identified as affecting the site.	11
Land East of Manor Close, Henfield	Henfield has a good range of services and facilities, and bus services to a wide range of destinations. The site is relatively free from environmental constraints.	10
Land at Oddstones, Pulborough	The site is located close to services, and the village has good public transport facilities including a railway station. The site is well screened and relatively free from other environmental constraints.	8
Land North of Smugglers Lane, Upper Beeding	The village has a good range of facilities locally and slightly further afield in Steyning. The site is relatively well screened in landscape terms, and development would help to meet the high need for affordable housing that has been identified in the village.	8
Land West of Southwater	The proposed site is large and development would therefore have a greater impact on the settlement character, landscape and biodiversity.	5

Site Name	Summary of Sustainability Issues	Sustainability Score
Land North of Glebelands, Pulborough	Although Pulborough has a good range of facilities and public transport services, the site performs poorly in landscape terms, as there is limited screening along the site boundary and the site does not relate well to built area of Pulborough.	5
Land at Stane Street, Pulborough	The proposed site is large and development would have a large scale impact on the settlement character as well as the surrounding landscape.	5
Land at Millfield, Southwater	Although Southwater has a reasonable range of services and facilities, the proximity of the site to the A24 gives rise to concerns about noise and air quality. Other environmental constraints including biodiversity may also be affected by development of the site.	4
Land at New Town Road, Storrington	Located on the edge of the village the site is distant from services and facilities. Development of the site also poses a risk to water quality. Development of the site would also increase pressure on the local sewage works which are at capacity, and contribute to the already poor air pollution levels that have been recorded in the village.	3
Land at Water Lane, north of Storrington	Located on the edge of the village the site is distant from services and facilities. Part of the site may be contaminated from past land filling activities. Development of the site would also increase pressure on the local sewage works which are at capacity, and contribute to the already poor air pollution levels that have been recorded in the village.	3
Land at Storrington Glebe	Storrington Glebe is an important area of open space within the village, and its development would harm the character of the village, and result in the loss of a greenspace area used for recreation. Development of the site would also increase pressure on the local sewage works which are at capacity, and contribute to the already poor air pollution levels that have been recorded in the village.	1
Browns Lane Allotments, Storrington	Development of the site would result in the loss of a local amenity. The site is also close to the Sussex Downs AONB. Development of the site would also increase pressure on the local sewage works which are at capacity, and contribute to the already poor air pollution levels that have been recorded in the village.	1
Land at West Glebe, Pulborough	Site is important in historical and townscape terms providing a setting for the church and conservation area. The site may also be of importance to biodiversity.	0

From the results set out in the table, it can be seen that no site attained a negative score. This is a result of all the sites being located in settlements where there is a range of services and facilities. Some sites had lower scores, which arose for a number of reasons. Some of the larger sites (West of Southwater and Land at Stane Street), were found to have a greater impact on many of the environmental objectives, as development would take place over a larger area. Other sites have performed poorly as there were a number of different constraints affecting a particular site/s. This was particularly the case for sites in Storrington, where the sewage treatment works are already at capacity. The settlement is also located over an aquifer, with development posing a threat to groundwater quality. There are also poor air quality levels in parts of the settlement. These factors, combined with site specific issues such as the loss of a local amenity or proximity to the AONB resulted in lower scores..

In order to ensure that it is the most sustainable sites that are selected for development, it was considered that only the sites with the highest scores should be included in the Reserve Housing Site Preferred Options document. **At this stage, sites with a score of 7 or below are not considered suitable for allocation as a reserve housing site in terms of their overall sustainability**, and are not therefore included in the Reserve Housing Site document. Of the sites that have been included in the Preferred Options documentation, it should be noted that in the event that it becomes necessary to bring them forward for development, mitigation will be required to ensure that the development to meet with the aims of sustainable development as far as is possible.

