

Horsham District Council
Brinsbury Centre of Rural Excellence Supplementary Planning
Document

Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment
Adoption Statement

Horsham District Council adopted the Local Development Framework (LDF) Brinsbury Centre of Rural Excellence Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on 20th February 2009. This document and its accompanying Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment report are available to view at the Horsham District Council offices or on the Council's website at www.horsham.gov.uk/strategic_planning

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, and this statement therefore provides information on the wider sustainability appraisal process.

This statement examines each of these points in turn.

1. How environmental / sustainability considerations have been integrated into the plan

The process of Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment enabled a range of sustainability issues to be incorporated into the Brinsbury centre of Rural Excellence SPD. This was achieved by examining the requirements of plans and policies influencing the document, which enabled the identification of a number of issues the document would need to address. Baseline data was also collected for the SPD area, which identified key facts and environmental conditions about the existing Brinsbury Campus area. The information collected also examined the implications for the future without the Masterplan.

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

- Access to the site may be difficult for those without some means of private transport
- There is a need to enhance the existing facilities on the site for it to remain an attractive site to attend for educational purposes
- There is a need to enable the site to expand in order to enhance the rural economy of the area and wider sub-region.
- Development on the site has the potential to harm
 - i) the historic environment (and in particular possible Roman remains)
 - ii) landscape character
 - iii) biodiversity (and in particular the watercourse and SNCI in the north west of the site)
- Development on the site has the potential to be affected by the current and future flood plain. Development on the site could also increase the risk of flooding downstream.
- Activities on the site have the potential to affect soil and water quality
- Development can contribute to, and be affected by, climate change.

From the identification of these issues it was possible to develop the SPD addressing these sustainability issues. This includes environmental criteria to help guide development on the site. This clearly demonstrates that sustainability considerations have been incorporated into the Brinsbury Centre of Rural Excellence SPD.

2. How the Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment has been taken into account

The findings of the SA/SEA process have been taken into account at all stages of the preparation of the Brinsbury Centre of Rural Excellence SPD, and the final SA/SEA published alongside this document provides a formal statement and audit trail of the assessment.

The process began with preparation of the “Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Brinsbury Centre of Rural Excellence SPD Scoping /Draft Report”, which was published in October 2008”. This report provided a summary of the baseline data and plans and programmes influencing the SPD, which was based on a review of information collected as part of the work on the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Core Strategy (then at the Examination stage), and updated to incorporate more local level data for the proposed development area. The report also set out the sustainability issues for the Brinsbury Campus, based on the findings of the baseline data and plans and programmes. This led to the identification of sustainability objectives against which the sustainability of the SPD could be tested. Finally, the document also identified preliminary options and approaches for the SPD that were to be tested against the sustainability objectives.

The report also set out the results of the sustainability appraisal of the different options for the development. It considered impacts in the short, medium and longer term, and where appropriate identified cumulative and synergistic effects. It set out means by which potential sustainability or environmental problems identified could be mitigated.

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 was carried out during the consultation on the draft SPD and SA/SEA Scoping Draft Report in November / December 2008. The consultation was to enable these bodies to comment on the appropriateness of the objectives, indicators, baseline information, issues/problems and plans and policies influencing the SPD. No responses were received on the Scoping / Draft Report from these organisations.

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.

Comments were invited from members of the public as part of the consultation period on the draft Brinsbury Centre of Rural Excellence SPD. No specific comments were received from the public in relation to the SA/SEA.

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 Brinsbury Centre of Rural Excellence SPD were limited as a result of higher level plans and programmes. For example the principle of development at the Brinsbury Campus is already set out in policy AL15 of the adopted Site Specific Allocations of Land DPD. The policy, in line with the Inspector's report into the document, includes a requirement for a Supplementary Planning Document to be produced, outlining these development principles in greater detail. It was not therefore possible to consider many other alternatives, other than the 'do nothing' approach of enabling development proposals for the site to be judged against policy DC15 alone.

The option of producing an SPD for the Brinsbury Centre of Rural Excellence was assessed as being the most sustainable, and selected as the chosen approach.

5. Monitoring

The Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Brinsbury Centre of Rural Excellence SPD has been published alongside the adopted SPD. The SA/SEA process does not, however, finish with the publication of this document; and the effect of the Brinsbury Centre of Rural Excellence SPD 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 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