

Consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal Report for the draft Sustainable Development SPD

What is Sustainability Appraisal? The Government requires that **Sustainability Appraisal** is used to test the documents which the Council prepares for its Local Development Framework, to ensure that they do not conflict with the aims of sustainable development. **Sustainable development** is development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This means: living within environmental limits, protection and enhancement of the physical and natural environment; using resources and energy as efficiently as possible; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society that promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal well being; promoting good governance; using sound science responsibly; and achieving a sustainable, innovative and productive economy that delivers high levels of employment. The Council has prepared a **Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Framework**, which sets out 19 SA objectives. It has already, and will continue to, update this framework to ensure it is as relevant and effective as possible.

What is the Sustainability Appraisal Report? The updated SA Framework has been used to test the draft proposals ('options') of the draft 'Sustainable Development' Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and relevant policies from the Local Plan. The process and findings of this work are set out in a **Sustainability Appraisal Report**, which identifies the key likely impacts of each on social, environmental and economic interests.

These findings are helping the Council to understand which of the options are the most sustainable. There will also be other considerations in deciding which options to take forward to the next stage – including your comments received during the consultation – so the Report also highlights potential mitigation measures and monitoring, so that any of the options could be delivered in a more sustainable way and their performance can later be measured.

What does the Report recommend? The main conclusions can be summarised as follows:

The main significant **beneficial effects** of the SPD affect these SA objectives:

- **To facilitate the improved health and well-being of the population, including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health** - The SPD themes that perform very well against this objective are The Built Form, Movement and Landscape and Wildlife. The Movement objective encourages walking and cycling and should have very positive long-term benefits on health. Cumulative effects from the three objectives should significantly improve the quality of life of residents due to improvements in amount of daylight, south-facing gardens and areas of landscape and wildlife value.
- **To reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting detriment to public well-being, the economy and environment** - The SPD themes performing very well here are Water and Landscape and Wildlife. The Water objective should reduce the likelihood of flooding and ensure that sustainable drainage systems are used. Areas of floodplain rich in biodiversity will be protected and this protection will reduce the risk of future flood, as the vegetation will aid the drainage of the floodplain.
- **To protect, enhance, and where appropriate make accessible for enjoyment the natural, archaeological and historic environments and cultural assets of Guildford, for the benefit of both residents and visitors** - The SPD themes that perform very well against this objective are The Local Context and Landscape and Wildlife. The Local Context objective aims to integrate new development with its surrounds and protect the character of the environment, particularly historic and cultural assets.

- **To reduce road congestion and pollution levels** - The Movement theme performs very well against this objective, being designed to first reduce the need to travel and then promote sustainable modes of transport. This combination should help to reduce road congestion.
- **To address the causes of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and ensure that the Borough is prepared for its impacts** - The Energy and Movement themes perform well here.
- **To increase energy efficiency and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources** - The SPD theme that performs very well against this objective is Energy. These beneficial impacts will increase with time, as more and more renewable energy is generated and energy efficiency measures begin to reduce demand.

The main **negative effects** of the SPD would affect these SA objectives:

- **To provide sufficient housing to enable people to live in a home suitable to their needs and which they can afford** - The SPD themes of The Built Form and Energy place constraints on the achievement of this objective. The combined effect of the requirements within the Built Form and Energy topics for energy efficiency and 'Excellent' BREEAM building standards would make affordable housing more expensive to build, but this would be ameliorated by savings to the tenants in the longer term, over the life of the building. Renewable energy is a particular example of increased short-term costs.
- **To maintain low rates of unemployment and high levels of economic activity and To provide for appropriate commercial development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy** - The SPD themes that place constraints on the achievement of these two objectives are Water and Landscape and Wildlife. The result could be limitations on the identification of suitable sites for commercial development due to floodplain or biodiversity issues.

How have these recommendations influenced the process? The Sustainability Appraisal makes a series of recommendations about how the Sustainable Development SPD can be improved before its implementation. The Council has incorporated some of these mitigation measures into the draft SPD which precedes this briefing sheet. The other measures identified will be considered for inclusion in the future, when comments received during the consultation are also analysed and the SPD is updated prior to adoption.

The ultimate effectiveness of the SPD from the point of view of sustainable development will rely upon an effective partnership between the Council, prospective developers and the wider community.

How can I find out more?

- **Check out www.guildford.gov.uk** to view the SA Report in full
- **Email us** if you would like an electronic copy sent to you, or
- **Visit Planning Helpdesk**, Council Offices, Millmead, Guildford



Have your say

If you would like to **comment on the methodology or findings of this Sustainability Appraisal Report**, or **ask a question**, please contact us:

Email: planningpolicy@guildford.gov.uk

Write: Planning Policy, Environmental Policy and Design Services, Guildford Borough Council, Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey GU2 4BB

Or Phone: (01483) 444 464 Tracey Haskins, Principal Planner

Please ensure your comments reach us by 19th August 2005. Thank you.