



SCOTT WILSON Planning & Environment
Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment
Guildford Borough Council Guildford Development Framework

Core Strategy Preferred Options
Sustainability Appraisal Non-technical Summary

June 2006





**SA / SEA Guildford Borough Council
Guildford Development Framework
Core Strategy Preferred Options**
Sustainability Appraisal Report Non-technical Summary
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Scott Wilson was commissioned in 2006 by Guildford Borough Council to undertake the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Guildford Development Framework (GDF) Core Strategy Preferred Options Development Plan Document (DPD).

1.1.2 This document summarises the findings of the SA / SEA process so far using non-technical language.

1.2 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.2.1 SEA involves the identification and evaluation of the environmental effects of a plan or programme. In 2001, the EU legislated for SEA with the adoption of Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the 'SEA Directive').

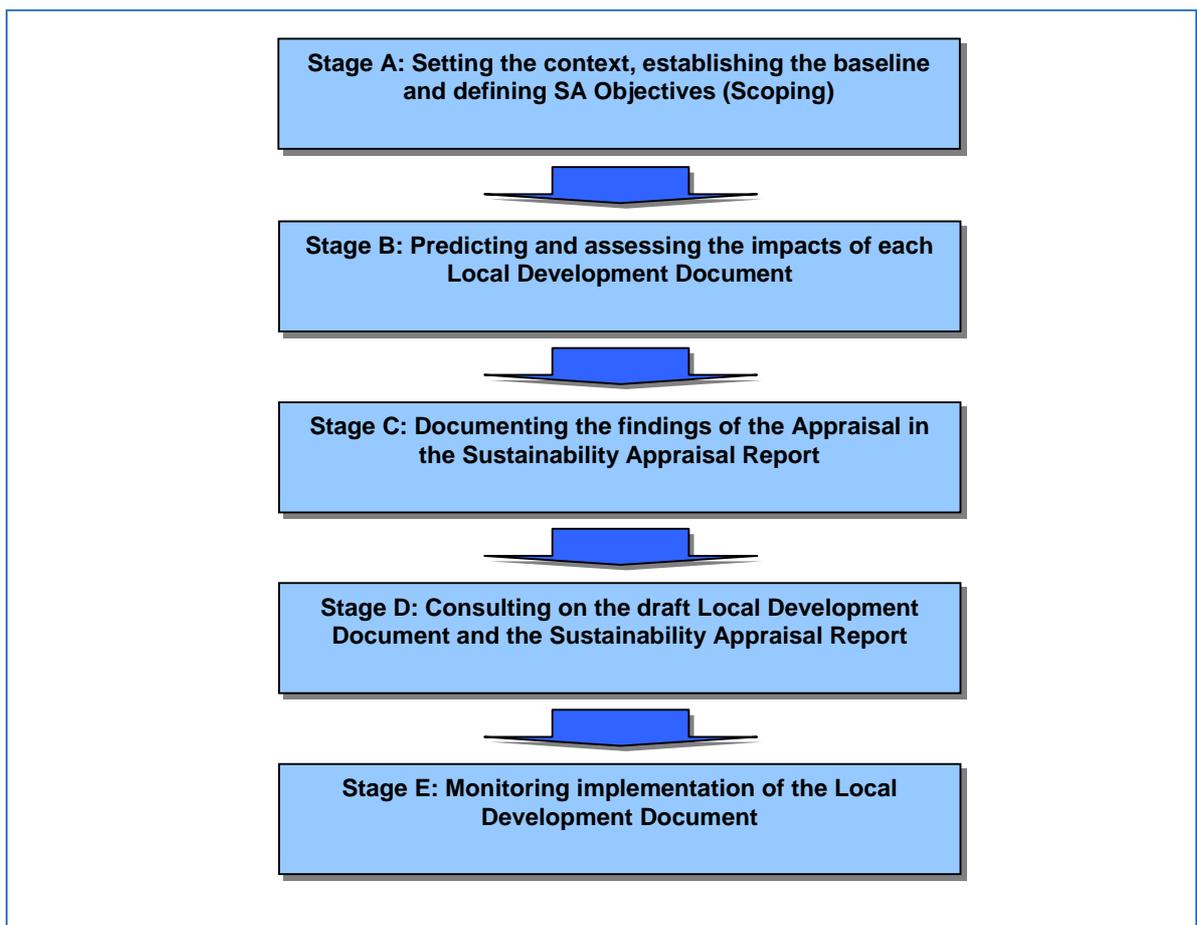


Figure 1.1: Five-stage approach to SA/SEA

- 1.2.2 The aim of the SEA Directive is “*to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes, with a view to promoting sustainable development*”.
- 1.2.3 SA extends the concept of SEA to encompass economic and social concerns. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA), Local Authorities must undertake SA for each of their DPDs and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) – the constituent parts of the LDF. SA is therefore a statutory requirement for LDFs along with SEA.
- 1.2.4 Government guidance advocates a five-stage approach to undertaking SA (see Figure 1.1, above). The SA / SEA of the Core Strategy is currently at Stage D and this Non-technical Summary is being made available to facilitate public consultation on the Council's Preferred Options for the Core Strategy.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Core Strategy objectives and contents

2.1.1 The Core Strategy DPD sets out how the Borough is likely to change in the next few years, and how this change will happen. It defines the strategic criteria against which decisions about the use of land can be made.

2.1.2 The Core Strategy supports the spatial vision for Guildford, which is: "*a borough that protects and enhances its high quality environment, whilst meeting the community's housing, economic, transport, recreational and social needs in the most sustainable way possible*".

2.1.3 The Core Strategy contains the following Preferred Options (in **bold** text) and Indicative Policies:

- **Location and Pace of Development**

- Policy CP1 Location of Development

- **Housing**

- Policy CP2 Housing Provision
- Policy CP3 Housing in Urban Areas and Village Settlements
- Policy CP4 Replacement dwellings in the countryside
- Policy CP5 Extensions to dwellings in the countryside
- Policy CP6 New Residential Development
- Policy CP7 Mix of Dwellings in Residential Development
- Policy CP8 Affordable Housing
- Policy CP9 Exception Sites for Affordable Housing for Local Needs in Rural Areas
- Policy CP10 Supporting an Ageing Population
- Policy CP11 Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites
- Policy CP12 Sites for Travelling for Show People

- **Economy**

- Policy CP13 Economy

- **Shopping**

- Policy CP14 Retail Development

- **Public Services / Facilities**

- Policy CP15 New Recreation, Leisure, Culture and Community Facilities

- **Environment**
- Policy CP16 Loss of Sport and Recreational Facilities and Open Space
- Policy CP17 Recreational Open Space Provision in Relation to New Residential Developments
- Policy CP18 Recreational Open Space Provision in Relation to New Commercial Developments
- Policy CP19 Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Policy CP20 Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBHSPA)
- Policy CP21 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- Policy CP22 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)
- Policy CP23 Farm diversification (including farm shops) and reuse and adaptation of rural buildings
- Policy CP24 Development and Flood Risk
- Policy CP25 Energy Conservation, Efficiency and Design

- **Movement**
- Policy CP26 Parking Provision

- **Planning Benefits**
- Policy CP27 Planning Benefits

- **Site Acquisition and Assembly**
- Policy CP28 Site Assembly and Land Acquisition

3 LIKELY EFFECTS, MITIGATION AND MONITORING

3.1 Likely significant effects

- 3.1.1 The SA Report discusses the likely significant sustainability effects of the Core Strategy in detail. These are summarised below using the SA Objectives set out in the Scoping Report, which outlines the scope and level of detail of the SA. The Scoping Report can be found at:

<http://www.guildford.gov.uk/GuildfordWeb/Planning/PlanningPolicy/Sustainability+Appraisal.htm>

To provide sufficient housing to enable people to live in a home suitable to their needs and which they can afford

- 3.1.2 The Housing Preferred Option maintains the rate of new house building in the Borough but requires an increased minimum of 35% of new dwellings to be affordable. This is likely to be of significant benefit in terms of this objective.
- 3.1.3 On the other hand the Housing preferred option also introduces a new requirement for a proportion of new development on larger sites to be easily adaptable for the elderly. This, together with the requirement for increased energy efficiency in new housing (Environment Preferred Option), is likely to increase the overall costs of new development.

To facilitate the improved health and well-being of the population

- 3.1.4 Some 20% of new build is to be adaptable for the elderly (so-called "Lifetime Homes"), which should contribute to the well-being of older people with disabilities.

To reduce the risk of flooding

- 3.1.5 The preferred approach is to avoid development within the flood plain, unless there are no other viable alternatives and appropriate flood mitigation is provided. Any future development would need to meet the stringent requirements of the Environment Agency.

To create and maintain safer and more secure communities

- 3.1.6 The Core Strategy Preferred Options are unlikely to significantly influence this objective.

To reduce poverty and social exclusion

- 3.1.7 The Core Strategy Preferred Options are unlikely to significantly influence this objective.

To create and sustain vibrant communities

- 3.1.8 The Core Strategy Preferred Options are unlikely to significantly influence this objective.

To make the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

- 3.1.9 There is a stronger focus within the Location and Pace of Development Preferred Option on building new development on previously developed land. The Core Strategy is therefore likely to have increasingly significant beneficial effects on this objective over time.

To ensure air quality continues to improve and noise/light pollution is reduced

- 3.1.10 The Housing Preferred Option proposes that most of the new dwellings will be concentrated in urban areas and in Guildford Town Centre in particular. Air quality in the town is currently good but there is a risk that additional traffic generated by the new development could cause a marginal deterioration in air quality, however, this is not likely to be a significant effect.

To conserve and enhance biodiversity within the plan area

- 3.1.11 Although the Housing Preferred Option anticipates an increase in the number of houses in Guildford Borough, which could result in important adverse impacts on biodiversity, the Environment Preferred Option proposes measures to offset these effects and preserve the Borough's sites of nature conservation and biodiversity importance.

To protect, enhance, and make accessible the natural, archaeological and historic environments and cultural assets of Guildford

- 3.1.12 The Core Strategy Preferred Options are unlikely to significantly influence this objective.

To reduce road congestion and pollution levels

- 3.1.13 The Core Strategy Preferred Options are unlikely to significantly influence this objective.

To reduce land contamination and safeguard soil quality and quantity

- 3.1.14 The Location and Pace of Development Preferred Option focuses new development on previously developed land, some of which may be contaminated. If this is the case, it could indirectly assist in clear up of contaminated land and have a significantly beneficial effect in terms of this objective. The option will also ensure that agricultural land is protected from development.

To address the causes of climate change and ensure that the Borough is prepared for its impacts

- 3.1.15 The Environment Preferred Option includes a substantial new commitment to renewable energy and energy efficiency in new development. This will have a beneficial effect in reducing the Borough's contribution to the causes of climate change. It is possible that the indicative policy concerning flooding may allow - suitably mitigated - development in areas prone to flooding, in comparison to the existing Local Plan position. It is recognised that there is a need to be sensitive to the uncertainties of climate change and it may be necessary to adapt to these in the longer term.

To reduce the global, social and environmental impact of consumption of resources

- 3.1.16 The Core Strategy Preferred Options are unlikely to significantly influence this objective, although the long-term effect on reducing energy consumption proposed by the Environment Preferred Option is likely to be important in the context of Guildford Borough.

To reduce waste generation and disposal, and achieve the sustainable management of waste

- 3.1.17 The Core Strategy Preferred Options are unlikely to significantly influence this objective.

To maintain and improve the water quality of the region's rivers and groundwater, and to achieve sustainable water resources management

- 3.1.18 New development envisaged by the Housing Preferred Option is likely to increase the demand for water in an already stressed water environment, resulting in a significantly adverse impact, cumulatively with other local authorities (a regional issue, recognised through the draft South East Plan).

To increase energy efficiency and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources

3.1.19 The Environment Preferred Option includes a substantial new commitment to renewable energy and energy efficiency in new development. This is likely to have a beneficial effect in reducing the Borough's overall use of energy.

To maintain low rates of unemployment and high levels of economic activity, by improving skills, training and education

3.1.20 The Core Strategy Preferred Options are unlikely to significantly influence this objective.

To provide for appropriate commercial development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy

3.1.21 The Core Strategy Preferred Options are unlikely to significantly influence this objective.

3.2 Mitigation

3.2.1 Mitigation measures, designed to offset adverse effects or enhance beneficial effects, are shown in Table 3.1. These have already been considered by the Council or will be considered along with the responses received from the current round of public consultation on the Preferred Options.

Table 3.1: Proposed Mitigation

Preferred Option	Proposed Mitigation	Reason
Location and Pace of Development	Allow development only on previously developed land unless no alternative exists (or the site is a rural exception site)	Possibly stronger than "focussing" on previously developed land
Economy	Mention the Town Centre specifically as strategic employment land	Addresses conflict with the Town Centre AAP
Shopping	None	None
Public Services / Facilities	Replace "suitably located" with "sustainably located" in last bullet point	The sustainability of a location should decide its suitability
Movement	Add walking and cycling to the first bullet point? (Provided this does not weaken the commitment to public transport)	These are also sustainable forms of transport
Environment	Delete "the best of" in bullet point three	The whole natural environment should be protected from inappropriate development, not just the best of it

	Could separate out SUDS from the energy efficiency issues?	Clarity - SUDS is not strictly about energy efficiency
	Add "protected species" to the list of designated sites	Protected species can exist outside designated sites
	Add "to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency" to the bullet point dealing with flood risk mitigation	This will strengthen the commitment to reducing flood risk
	Add paragraph concerning long-term direction of development away from flood plain	Adaptation to climate change
Planning Benefits	None	None
Site Assembly and Site Acquisition	None	None

Policy	Proposed Mitigation	Reason
CP17	The policy could refer to opportunities to enhance biodiversity in open space	This would help meet two objectives - provision of open space and the promotion of biodiversity
CP19	The policy should consider views of the AONB rather than just considering the location of development in relation to the AONB	Development 'adjacent' to the AONB is not necessarily the issue; there could be adverse effects from non-adjacent development that interferes with existing views of the AONB. Equally, adjacent development might have no impact, depending on topography / screening.
CP20	There is no general policy on biodiversity, except the saved policies from the Local Plan	The LDS does not appear to make provision for replacement of saved policies on biodiversity
CP21	There is no general policy on biodiversity, except the saved policies from the Local Plan	The LDS does not appear to make provision for replacement of saved policies on biodiversity

3.3 Monitoring

3.3.1 Proposals for monitoring the likely significant effects of the Core Strategy are set out in the SA Report. The indicators proposed are as follows:

Population

- Total population
- Population density per hectare
- Population structure by age
- Population structure by sex
- Population structure by ethnic background
- Population structure by social grade

Human Health

- Hospital Episode Statistics (from National Statistics), such as annual figures for Heart Disease, Stroke, Cancer, Coronary Bypass / Angioplasty or Accident
- Life expectancy at birth (also from National Statistics)

Economy

- Counts of VAT-based enterprises by broad industry group (from National Statistics)
- VAT registrations and de-registrations (from National Statistics)

Employment

- Employment by occupation (from NOMIS)
- Job Seekers Allowance claimants (from NOMIS)
- Gross weekly pay of Guildford residents (from NOMIS)
- Gross weekly pay of Guildford workers (from NOMIS)
- Qualifications of Guildford residents (from National Statistics)

Transport

- Number of permissions for developments generating significant numbers of trips in locations not highly accessible by sustainable means
- Annual average traffic flows on the principal routes
- Mode of travel to work
- Patronage on bus quality partnership routes
- Extent and use of cycle and pedestrian networks

Crime and Safety

- Total offences and offences per thousand population (from National Statistics)
- Fear of crime
- Road traffic casualties, including child casualties
- Casualties from other accidents

Housing

- Housing completions
- Completions of affordable housing
- Housing built on Previously Developed Land
- Average price of housing in the Borough (compared with the regional and national average)
- Energy efficiency of new housing
- Percentage of homes built to Lifetime Homes standards

Cultural Heritage

- Listed Buildings and Listed Buildings 'at risk'
- Scheduled Monuments and Scheduled Monuments 'at risk'
- Conservation Areas

Climate

- Estimated of carbon dioxide emissions for the Borough
- Percentage of energy generated from renewable sources in the Borough
- Percentage of new non-residential developments (over 1000m²) generating 10% of their energy from renewable sources
- Percentage of new residential developments generating 10% of their energy from renewable sources

Air

- National statutory air quality objectives
- Number and extent of Air Quality Management Areas in the Borough

Soil

- Number of sites known to be at risk of contamination
- Number of sites that undergo remediation as part of redevelopment

Water

- Chemical and biological water quality (available from the Environment Agency website)
- Number of development permitted in areas at risk of flooding
- Number of flooding incidents in the Borough

Biodiversity

- Condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (available from English Nature website) - this would also capture the condition of the Thames Basin Heaths
- Use of Thames Basin Heaths for recreation
- Extent of nature conservation sites (SPA / SAC / SSSI / SINC and Local Nature Reserves)

Landscape

- Percentage of planning applications within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty refused permission on grounds of potential adverse landscape effects

3.4 To comment on the Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.4.1 If you would like to comment on the Sustainability Appraisal, or to obtain a copy of the full report, please contact the Guildford Borough Council Planning Policy team:

- Planning Policy
Environmental Policy & Design
Guildford Borough Council
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Guildford
Surrey GU2 4BB
- By phone, on 01483 444464
- Or by e-mail, planningpolicy@guildford.gov.uk