

EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan Development Plan Document Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Statement

1. Introduction

1.1 East Cambridgeshire District Council adopted the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan Development Plan Document (DPD) on 21 April 2015. This adoption statement has been prepared in accordance with Regulations 16(3) and (4) of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which require that a statement be produced on adoption of a plan or programme which sets out the following 'particulars'.

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
- How the environmental report has been taken into account;
- How opinions expressed during public consultation have been taken into account;
- The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

1.2 The significant environmental effects referred to above have been broadened out to include the appraisal of economic and social sustainability in accordance with S.19 (5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Planning Act 2008, S.180). The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process also incorporates the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with European Union Directive 2001/42/EC and removes the need to carry out a separate SEA.

1.3 Therefore, for the sake of clarity, a combined SA/SEA of the Local Plan DPD has been undertaken which satisfies all relevant obligations. Where the Council is required by The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 to produce a statement on 'environmental effects', it has expanded on this in relation to each of the aforementioned 'particulars' to include economic and social considerations/effects as well.

2 Background

2.1 The Council's SA Report was submitted with the Submission East Cambridgeshire Local Plan DPD to the Secretary of State (SoS) for Communities and Local Government on 29 August 2013. SA has been undertaken alongside the development of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan DPD, and the SA Report was published for consultation at the same time as the Pre Submission East Cambridgeshire Local Plan DPD (February - March 2013) to provide the public and statutory bodies with an opportunity to express their opinions and to use it as a reference point in commenting on the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan DPD.



2.2 The East Cambridgeshire Local Plan DPD sets out an overarching vision, strategy, and policies against which development proposals will be assessed to deliver growth for the district up to 2031. The SoS appointed Michael Hetherington BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI, an Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate, to conduct an independent public examination into the soundness of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan DPD and its supporting documents.

2.3 The Inspector's conclusion, reached in March 2015, is that the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan DPD and supporting documents are sound (subject to some major changes). He specified in the table at paragraph 117 of the report under "Assessment of Legal Compliance" that "SA has been carried out and is adequate."

3 How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Local Plan DPD

3.1 SA has been carried out at a number of key stages in the preparation of the Local Plan DPD. SA aims to test a plan or programme, and each policy it contains, against sustainability objectives which have been agreed for this purpose. The strategy and policies can then be subjected to further testing (if necessary), altered if desired, or justified if not.

3.2 The SA is undertaken in parallel with development of the plan, so that all reasonable alternatives for achieving the plan's objectives are assessed for their sustainability effects, and stakeholders are given frequent opportunities at each stage to express their views which are also used to guide and inform the appraisal and plan preparation process. In this way, the most sustainable strategy and policies should emerge and be included in the final adopted plan. This is therefore an iterative and inclusive process.

3.3 The SA framework was used to develop the assessment criteria to identify the most appropriate sites to be included in the final version of the plan.

4 How the Environmental Report has been taken into account

4.1 The SA process has contributed to the development and refinement of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan DPD by providing an independent assessment of the sustainability of the Council's proposed options and policies throughout the plan preparation process. Each SA Report demonstrates how sustainability objectives have been taken into account at each stage, and integrated into the development of the DPD.

4.2 This process has facilitated, amongst other things:

- The most appropriate options to be selected at each stage in an open and transparent way;
- Some options, where necessary, to be revised or subjected to more in-depth analysis; and
- The establishment of requirements for mitigation to address certain effects and achieve more sustainable outcomes.



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5 How consultation responses have been taken into account

- 5.1 Minimum requirements for consultation and public participation are set out in the relevant regulations – The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Each Local Planning Authority (LPA) is required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) to set out how and at what stages different parts of its community can take part in, and influence, the plan-making process, in order to meet, and if possible, exceed, the minimum requirements of the Regulations. Under the provisions of the 2004 Act, the Council is required to prepare a statement setting out the public consultation and participation that has been undertaken throughout its preparation.
- 5.2 The Statement of Consultation fulfils this requirement in accordance with Regulation 22 (1) (c) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 5.3 Regulation 22 (1) (c) requires a LPA, when submitting a Development Plan Document to the Secretary of State, to also submit a statement setting out, if representations were made in accordance with Regulations 18 and 20 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the number of representations made, and a summary of the main issues raised in those representations.
- 5.4 In summary, the documents referred to above provide details on the following:
- How and at what stages different parts of the community can take part in, and influence, the plan-making process;
 - A statement setting out the public consultation and participation that has been undertaken throughout the preparation of the Local Plan DPD, including how the representations and main issues raised have been taken into account.
 - A statement setting out the number of representations made and a summary of the main issues raised at Proposed Submission Stage.

6 The reasons for choosing the Local Plan DPD as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with

- 6.1 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (12) (2) requires 'environmental reports' (SA/SEA) to consider any reasonable alternatives, taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme.
- 6.2 As part of the iterative SA process, the alternative options for the Local Plan were individually tested against the sustainability objectives and consulted upon widely. The results of this were used at each stage in the process to inform the decision on which options should be taken forward as policies and which would require amendments or further mitigation measures, ultimately culminating in the adopted Local Plan DPD.
- 6.3 Each SA Report demonstrates how sustainability objectives have been taken into account at each stage, and integrated into the development of the Local Plan DPD.



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6.4 The Local Plan DPD (with its supporting documents) has been found sound following examination by an independent Inspector and represents a sustainable approach to key planning issues in the District.

7 The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Local Plan DPD

7.1 The Council has identified a series of monitoring indicators and targets for monitoring the significant sustainability effects of the Local Plan policies (see section 6 of the SA report).

7.2 Monitoring outcomes will normally be reported on an annual basis for a year which begins on 1 April and ends on 31 March, unless data is not available for such a time period. The key delivery vehicle for reporting the outcome of monitoring the Local Plan DPD will be the East Cambridgeshire Authorities' Monitoring Report, which will be published annually.

8 Further information

8.1 A full copy of the SA Report, the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan DPD and related documents are available on our website: www.eastcambs.gov.uk.