

**Eden District Council**  
**Sustainability Appraisal**  
**Non-Technical Summary**  
**September 2015**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This document builds on previous Sustainability Appraisals (SA) which have been used to inform the Eden Local Plan. It is necessary to inform any potential impacts that may arise as a result of the Plan.
- 1.2 The Council is required to appraise the sustainability of its proposed policy framework at each stage of development. This is done by carrying out a comparative assessment of sites and policies in the plan against social, economic and environmental criteria. Whilst this may not provide absolute answers on whether we have exactly the right planning strategy for Eden it can help us gauge which options, sites and policies perform best against the criteria used. It also helps highlight any particular issues with sites and helps in improving policy wording. Sustainability Appraisal also incorporates the key themes of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which we are legally required to carry out as part of the plan-making process.
- 1.3 The document has been sent to key environmental stakeholders in previous iterations and these stakeholders will be consulted again through the Submission Draft consultation process. It is also open to comment generally whilst the Submission Draft Local Plan is out to consultation.

## **2. The Draft Local Plan**

- 2.1 The Council has been working on its Submission Draft Local Plan for a number of years. Prior to this version, two draft allocations strategies were published for comment considering the potential suitability of housing and employment sites. This was brought together and became the Preferred Options Plan and then the Submission Draft Local Plan.
- 2.2 The Submission Draft Local Plan contains the following:
  - Strategic policies directing development within the District;
  - Land allocations to support the growth strategy of the Plan (both housing and employment); and
  - A number of detailed development management policies.

## **3. Purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal**

- 3.1 The Council is required to undertake an SA of the Local Plan to ensure that the social, economic and environmental considerations of every aspect are fed into each stage of the production of the Plan. The SA has been designed to be compliant with the requirements of the European SEA Directive as well.
- 3.2 The main objectives of SA are as follows:
  - Ensure that the Local Plan considers impacts on and of policies, plans and programmed on an international, national and local scale;
  - Establish a baseline assessment of Eden, outlining environmental, social and economic characteristics and raising any issues the Plan needs to focus on;

- Create a framework to assess the sustainability of the Plan;
- Test sites and policies against the sustainability framework to assess the impacts and suggest alterations if necessary;
- Ensure that realistic alternative options are tested as part of the process.

#### **4. Conclusions on the Performance of the Local Plan**

- 4.1 The SA is an ongoing iterative procedure and has been carried out throughout the Plan preparation and informed policy writing and site selection on an ongoing basis. This inclusive, iterative process resulted in minimal requirements for alteration of the Submission Draft Plan. The SA broadly supports the Submission Draft Plan in relation to housing and employment targets, distribution and the choice of allocated sites within the Submission Draft. A number of alternatives were subjected to SA at the Preferred Options Stage in order to consider the impacts of the Plan. The Submission Draft Local Plan includes targeted policies to protect the natural environment and promote economic and social development.
- 4.2 The SA process has been carried out as an integral part of the plan making process. At the Preferred Options stage a number of alterations were made to policy wording in order to make this Submission Draft more robust and ensure it has a positive impact on the development of the District. Alterations have been ongoing through the process and previous alterations are contained with the SA which accompanied the Preferred Options document.

#### **Sustainability Appraisal Recommendations and Actions**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Amended Wording</b>
AL2 - Renovation in Alston Moor	Add in biodiversity	Point 6 has been added: "It can be demonstrated that there is no significant impact on local biodiversity including protected habitats and species."
RUR2 - Re-Use of Existing Buildings in Rural Areas	Change wildlife species to biodiversity	Point 5 has been amended: "It can be demonstrated that there is no significant impact on local biodiversity including protected habitats and species."

RUR3 - Employment Development and Farm Diversification in Rural Areas	Add in good design to point 6	Point 6 has been amended "Would respect and reinforce local landscape character and built heritage and not cause harm to the natural environment, through the use of good design."
DEV2 - Water Management and Flood Risk	Remove wording in relation to FRAs	Wording in relation to FRA requirements for sites over 1 ha has been removed.
DEV5 - Design of New Development	Remove 10 dwelling reference	Wording in relation to number of dwellings has been removed and the policy is now relevant to all developments.
HS3 - Essential Dwellings for Workers in the Countryside	Include reference to profitability of businesses in order to ensure that dwellings will be required into the future	Point 2 was amended "Where the agricultural or rural business is profitable and has been in operation for at least three years and can financially support the construction of a dwelling."
EC2 - Protection of Employment Sites	Queries were raised over whether the benefits which would outweigh the loss of employment should be expanded	The policy has been left as originally written as the benefits will be bespoke to each site.
EC3 - Employment Development in Existing Settlements	Either include expected ratings to be achieved or remove	Reference to BREEAM has been removed.

<p>EC6 - Telecommunications Structures</p>	<p>Move point 3 to point 1 and reword new point 3</p>	<p>Point 1 now reads “Proposals should make use of existing sites and structures wherever possible”.</p> <p>Point 3 now reads “Equipment should respect sensitive areas, including: areas of ecological interest or areas designated for their nature conservation interest; archaeological sites; conservation areas; building of architectural or historic interest; and areas of landscape importance, especially the north Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.”</p>
<p>EC7 - Town Centres</p>	<p>SA suggested reordering and rewording for clarity</p>	<p>All suggestions were incorporated at Preferred Options Stage.</p>
<p>ENV2 - Protection and Enhancements of Landscapes and Trees</p>	<p>SA suggested rewording for more positive policy and some layout changes for clarity</p>	<p>All suggestions were incorporated at Preferred Options Stage.</p>
<p>ENV4 - Green Infrastructure Networks and Recreational Land</p>	<p>SA suggested defining green infrastructure types</p>	<p>The policy has been significantly reworded for clarity following the Preferred Options Stage. Definitions of green infrastructure have been inserted into the policy explanation text.</p>
<p>ENV5 - Environmentally Sustainable Design</p>	<p>SA suggested incorporating waste disposal into the policy</p>	<p>Policy now includes “Providing well-designed and visually unobtrusive outdoor waste storage areas to promote recycling.”</p>

COM1 -Principles for Services and Facilities	SA suggest some wording changes	In line with SA, point 2 now reads: "It respects the local built environment, character and conservation interests", point 3 now reads "It is compatible with residential amenity."
COM2 - Open Space, Sport, Leisure and Recreation Facilities	SA raised issues over clarity of policy and aim of such	Policy has been rewritten and split into two in line with the findings of the SA to refine the requirement and enhance the clarity of the policy.

4.3 In terms of the spatial and distribution options, these were tests and it is considered that they are acceptable in terms of social, environmental and economic objectives.

5.1 If you would like further information on the Sustainability Appraisal, please see the main Sustainability Appraisal Report. This is available:

- on the Council's website at [www.eden.gov.uk](http://www.eden.gov.uk);
- by emailing [loc.plan2015@eden.gov.uk](mailto:loc.plan2015@eden.gov.uk); or
- by telephoning 01768 817817