

Dorking Town Area Action Plan: adopted 5th December 2012

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environment Assessment Statement:

required under Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

and the

Requirement to make the Sustainability Appraisal Report (SAR) available

after the adoption of a plan: required under Regulation 26 of the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Mole Valley District Council adopted the Dorking Town Area Action Plan (DTAAP) on 5th December 2012. The Plan has been subject to sustainability appraisal¹ throughout the process of its preparation. The Inspector's Report into the Plan comments that the sustainability appraisal has been carried out and is adequate. The Sustainability Appraisal Report (SAR) published in January 2012 sets out how the sustainability appraisal of the Plan has been undertaken and that the approach of the Plan is the most appropriate to deliver the vision for Dorking.
- 1.2. Councils are required by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 to publish a statement (ie an assessment statement) setting out how sustainability appraisal has been incorporated into plan preparation. This is set out in Section 4. Additionally this statement draws together the documents which form the SAR following the adoption of the Area Action Plan.

2. THE REQUIREMENT TO PUBLISH THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STATEMENT AND THE REQUIREMENT TO PUBLISH THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT AFTER THE ADOPTION OF A PLAN

- 2.1. Councils are required to undertake strategic environmental assessment of Plans under the European Parliament Directive 2001/42/EC. This has been incorporated into the process of preparing Plans under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Advice on carrying out sustainability appraisal was published in government guidance in November 2005. This has since been superseded by a sustainability appraisal advice note published by the Planning Advisory Service in June 2010. However this has not been updated since the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012.
- 2.2. Article 9 of the European Directive states that when a Plan is adopted authorities must inform the consultation bodies and the "public consultees" with a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan, how the environmental report (ie Sustainability Appraisal Report) and the result of consultations on the report have been taken into account, and the reason for choosing the plan in the light of other reasonable alternatives. In this context, the specific environmental consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, English Heritage, and Natural England.

¹ Where this statement uses the term sustainability appraisal this incorporates the requirement to undertake strategic environmental assessment within the meaning of the European Directive.

- 2.3. The terms of Article 9 of the Directive have been transposed into the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 which require that following adoption of a Plan, a statement setting out the following is published:
- how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan;
 - how the environmental report has been taken into account;
 - how opinions expressed in response to the invitation to consultees to comment have been taken into account;
 - set out how relevant documents have been made available for inspection;
 - why the plan has been adopted rather than other reasonable alternatives;
 - how the significant environmental effects of implementing the plan will be monitored.
- 2.4 Regulation 26 of the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 requires that as soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of a Plan the local planning authority must make the sustainability appraisal report available.
- 2.4. This statement sets out the Council's responses to the above and identifies the documents that form the final SAR.

3. THE FINAL SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT

- 3.1. The DTAAP Sustainability Appraisal Report was published in January 2012 prior to the publication of the Draft Plan in March 2012. The hearing sessions of the examination into the soundness of the DTAAP were held between 16th and 18th July 2012. The Inspector's report, dated 21st November 2012, does not make any recommendations for revisions to the January 2012 SAR.
- 3.2. ***As the Inspector did not recommend any changes which would affect the Sustainability Appraisal Report published in January 2012 this now becomes the Final Sustainability Appraisal Report.*** For the sake of completeness regard should be had to the following documents which formed part of, or commented on, the wider sustainability appraisal of the Plan:
- Mole Valley Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Report
 - DTAAP SA/SEA Scoping Report – February 2010
 - DTAAP SA/SEA Scoping Report – February 2011 (being a republished version of the February 2010 Scoping Report)
 - Reigate Road Area and Pippbrook Site Consultation – September 2011. This includes site specific sustainability appraisal assessment.
 - DTAAP Site Appraisal Report – January 2012. This document assesses each site proposed for development using a “cut down” set of the sustainability objectives appropriate for the assessment of individual sites.
 - DTAAP Draft Plan Supporting Document – January 2012. This document provides the detailed background for the preparation of the policies in the Area Action Plan itself. The use of the sustainability appraisal process is referenced throughout the document.
 - DTAAP Regulation 30 (1) (d) Statement - January 2012. Chapter 8 sets out the summary of comments on the SA/SEA Scoping Report.

- DTAAP Sustainability Appraisal Report – January 2012. This is the main SAR document.
 - DTAAP Examination Document MVDC/Matter 1 – Legal Requirements and Overall Approach (16th July 2012). This document responds to the Inspector’s question whether sustainability appraisal has been carried out satisfactorily.
 - DTAAP Inspector’s Report – Assessment of Legal Compliance (para 54). This confirms that Sustainability Appraisal has been carried out and is adequate.
- 3.3 Copies of the Adopted Plan, Sustainability Appraisal Report (and related documents above) and this environmental statement may be viewed at:
- The Council Offices, Pippbrook, Dorking
 - Dorking Library

And on the Council’s website at www.molevalley.gov.uk/ldf

4. THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL / STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

4.1 This section sets out the work that has been done on the sustainability appraisal of the Plan and how this has been taken into account. Much of this is already set out in other documents and is therefore not repeated here. Instead the relevant sections of these documents are signposted.

a) How Environmental Considerations Have Been Integrated Into The Plan:

4.2 The NPPF maintains the requirement to produce a sustainability appraisal report for all plans. The Council has undertaken a proportionate approach to the sustainability appraisal of the Plan. The Council considered the DTAAP to be a "daughter" document to the Core Strategy which did not introduce new strategic matters or policies. It addressed matters which had previously been considered in the Core Strategy. That is, the broad thrust of the policy approach of the DTAAP had already been assessed in the sustainability appraisal of the reasonable alternatives, options and goals in relation to Dorking and retail matters in the Core Strategy. Consequently the Council limited detailed appraisal to the individual sites which were considered for allocation and the cumulative impact of those sites. The Inspector who undertook the examination of the DTAAP considered this approach adequate (ie sound).

4.3 Chapter 2 of the DTAAP Sustainability Appraisal Report (January 2012) therefore sets out why detailed appraisal, which would have repeated previous assessment, was not required and how the work undertaken was proportionate to the need to carry out assessment and produce an SAR for the DTAAP. This was undertaken by showing in the SAR for the Area Action Plan the linkages to work already done for the preparation and sustainability appraisal of the Core Strategy. This is explained in Chapter 2 of the SAR and is shown at Annex 2 of that document as an audit trail, being a comparison of the DTAAP delivery measures with the Core Strategy Goals and Core Strategy SAR.

- 4.4 The Core Strategy SAR assessment statement set out the work that had been carried out for the sustainability appraisal of that document from inception to adoption. As the DTAAP is a “daughter” document to the Core Strategy this is relevant background information to the sustainability appraisal process of the DTAAP. This work is set out in paras 4.1 and 4.2 of the Core Strategy SA/SEA Statement and is not repeated here.
- 4.5 The DTAAP Supporting Document – Jan 2012 sets out the background information for the DTAAP policies. This includes national and local policy context, the evidence base and other background documents. Sustainability issues are integral with this. The role of sustainability appraisal is set out in paras 4.15 - 4.20 of the Supporting Document and especially in Chapter 7 which assesses the sustainability appraisal work with regard to specific sites.

b) How the Environmental Report Has Been Taken Into Account

- 4.6 The process of sustainability appraisal (ie the SAR) helped develop and refine the Area Action Plan. As a “daughter” document to the Core Strategy the sustainability appraisal process has not been required to assess reasonable strategic alternatives. It has been used to assess issues and options on a site level. This has enabled:
- the allocation of the most sustainable sites.
 - the need to consider mitigation to address effects and achieve more sustainable outcomes especially on a site specific basis.
- 4.7 This assessment process is integral with each of the relevant documents of the DTAAP. In certain documents (and especially the Site Appraisal Report - Jan 2012) this is by the use of an appraisal matrix which uses the suite of sustainability objectives to assess the potential sustainability impacts of sites on an individual and cumulative basis. This assisted the allocation of sites and the formulation of the related policy wording in the DTAAP.

c) How the Relevant Documents Have Been Made Available for Inspection

- 4.8 At each stage of the preparation of the DTAAP all consultees, those submitting representations and the public have been made aware of the publication of new documents. Hard copies of documents have been made available at the Council Offices and Dorking Library. All documents have been placed on the Council's website.

d) How Opinions Expressed In Response to Consultation Have Been Taken Into Account

- 4.9 The main purpose of the Regulation 30 (1) (d) Statement - January 2012 is to set out the responses to the consultations and how these have been taken into account. This includes responses on all issues and not just those explicitly with regard to sustainability. Appendix C of the Statement sets out the specific consultation bodies, additional consultees and statutory consultees who were consulted at the stages of plan preparation. The three statutory environmental consultees were invited to comment on the Council's approach to the consideration of the DTAAP as a “daughter” document to the Core Strategy and for which specific sustainability appraisal of the issues and options for the Plan were not required. No comments were submitted with regard to this approach.

- 4.10 Chapter 8 of the Regulation 30 (1) (d) Statement sets out the summary of comments received on the SEA/SA Scoping Report.
- 4.11 Chapters 3 to 5 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report sets out how consultation responses and representations have been taken into account at each stage of the preparation of the DTAAP. Para 5.1.1 of the SAR identifies the additional documents which focused on specific issues. Reference to the SA/SEA process was made in all the consultation documents. Paras 5.1.5 and 5.1.6 of the SAR indicate the comments made by the three statutory environmental consultees and how these have been incorporated into the Plan.

e) Why the Plan Has Been Adopted Rather Than Other Reasonable Alternatives

- 4.12 The DTAAP takes forward the vision for Dorking Town Centre as set out in the adopted Core Strategy and the delivery of the vision as set out in Core Strategy Policy CS6. Para 6.2.11 of the Core Strategy specifically states that the proposals for the delivery of this strategy will be brought forward through an Area Action Plan for the town centre. The DTAAP therefore takes forward the “reasonable alternative” which has already been established in the adopted Core Strategy. This alternative was one of concentration which emphasised that provision for new development should be only on previously developed land within built-up areas.

f) How the Significant Environmental Effects Of Implementing the Plan Will Be Monitored.

- 4.13 Article 10 of the European Directive sets out the requirement to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans, to identify unforeseen adverse effects and to take remedial action. It acknowledges that existing monitoring arrangements may be used, if appropriate, with a view to avoid duplication of monitoring.
- 4.14 The Core Strategy DPD includes a monitoring framework which provides the basis for the authority monitoring report (AMR). This focuses on the achievement of delivering sustainable development, and the other impacts and trends of policy delivery. Specifically the monitoring framework has regard to:
- whether the strategy and policies of the Core Strategy and subsequent Plans are delivering the intended outcomes;
 - the Council’s Community Strategy targets which have a ‘spatial’ context;
 - the Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal indicators;
 - the monitoring requirements of the South East Plan; and,
 - the Government’s Core Output Indicators (COI’s) and National Indicators (NI’s) applicable at that time.
- 4.15 The AMR comprises of a ‘bundle’ of indicators which monitor the significant environmental, social, and economic effects of the Core Strategy within the overall themes of the Goals of the Plan. The intention is to monitor whether sustainable development is being delivered and whether the policies are achieving their intended “direction of travel”.
- 4.16 The DTAAP includes a chapter, and table, on monitoring and delivery. This sets out indicators related to the policies of the DTAAP. In most cases it applies the monitoring of the Core Strategy to the more local Dorking context through the use of the existing AMR indicators. The table acknowledges where these require further development to meet the need to monitor the more local context of the DTAAP. It

also indicates where new monitoring will be required. This will be incorporated into subsequent AMR's.