



Cheshire East Council Local Plan Strategy

Sustainability (integrated) Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Adoption Statement

July 2017

enfusion



Cheshire East Borough Council: Local Plan Strategy (LPS) Sustainability (Integrated) Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): SA Adoption Statement

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This SA Adoption Statement

- 1 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a systematic process that must be carried out during the preparation of a Local Plan relating to development. SA incorporates the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and this Sustainability Appraisal/Environmental Statement for the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy has been prepared in accordance with the following requirements:

- Regulation 35 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 ("The 2012 Regulations")
- Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004
- Paragraph 165 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012

For the purpose of this Statement, that complies with planning and environmental assessment Regulations, the integrated appraisal will be referred to as the Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

- 2 The SA process comprises a number of stages that are designed to comply with the requirements of the SEA Regulations and as guided through Government Planning Practice¹. This SA Adoption Statement satisfies the requirements for post adoption (Stage E) and demonstrates compliance with the requirements of the SEA Regulations as follows:

- (a) how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;*
- (b) how the environmental report has been taken into account;*

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

- (c) how opinions expressed in response to— (i) the invitation referred to in regulation 13(2)(d); (ii) action taken by the responsible authority in accordance with regulation 13(4), have been taken into account;*
- (d) how the results of any consultations entered into under regulation 14(4) have been taken into account;*
- (e) the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and*
- (f) the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme*

Development of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (LPS)

- 3 The Cheshire East Local Plan will set out planning policies and allocate sites for development up to 2030; once completed, it will be comprised of three key documents - The Local Plan Strategy, the Site Allocations & Development Policies Document, and the Minerals & Waste Development Plan Document. The LPS is the overarching element of the Plan, setting out strategic priorities for the development of the area along with planning policies and proposals. The Site Allocations & Development Policies Development Plan Document will allocate the remaining sites needed for future development and set out further detailed planning policies to be used when considering planning applications. The Minerals & Waste Document will set out policies for dealing with minerals and waste, and identify sites.
- 4 Considerable work and consultation has been undertaken since 2009 to prepare the Local Plan Strategy, including SA/SEA in accordance with the NPPF (2012) and planning practice guidance. Various studies were undertaken to provide the evidence base to inform decision-making, including housing and employment needs, transport and accessibility assessments, open space and recreational studies, landscape sensitivity, historic environment, and assessments of potential site options. The LPS was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent Examination on 20 May 2014. Public Hearings were held through 2014- 2016 and the proposed Main Modifications to the Plan arising from discussions at the Examination were subject to public consultation during February – March 2017. The Planning Inspector's Final Report issued on the 20 June 2017 concluded that the LPS is sound, subject to the Main Modifications, and could be adopted.
- 5 At each stage of the development of the LPS, public consultation was undertaken to help ensure that stakeholders views were taken into consideration in the next steps of plan preparation. Issues raised and responses prepared have been documented during the development of the LPS and published on the Council's website².

²

http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/local_plan_consultations/local_plan_consultations.aspx

How environmental & sustainability considerations have been integrated into the LPS; How the Sustainability/Environmental Report has been taken into account

- 6 During the plan-making process, SA (incorporating SEA) has been carried out as an iterative and ongoing process to inform decision making for the developing LPS. The SA was undertaken in accordance with government guidance^{3 4} for a staged approach that integrates appraisal to consider the effects of the emerging plan on socio-economic as well as environmental factors. Since late 2013, independent specialist consultants were appointed to advise the Council and then carry out the SA during the examination of the Local Plan Strategy for the Council. They worked closely with the plan-making team in an iterative and ongoing way, such that the findings and recommendations from the SA were integrated into each developing stage of the LPS.
- 7 The SA of the submitted LPS used the same SA Framework developed during the SA scoping process (set out in the Revised SA Scoping Report 2012) as the basis for assessing the emerging LPS - and as explained in Section 2 of the submitted SA Report (March 2014). Enfusion reviewed and utilized the SA framework as part of the iterative and ongoing SA work following the submission of the Plan and during its public examination. Relevant plans/programmes had been reviewed; baseline information regarding the character of the area and its likely evolution collated and analysed; and sustainability problems, issues and opportunities had been identified during the SA scoping to compile a Framework of Objectives and Decision-Aiding Questions that seek to resolve the sustainability issues identified and relevant to the plan and the Cheshire East area. The assessment used both quantitative and qualitative assessments, including defined thresholds of significance, where possible.
- 8 The SA considered the likely significant effects of the implementation of the LPS on the sustainability objectives for the Cheshire East area. For each aspect of the LPS, the assessment against the SA Objectives was recorded with a narrative provided describing any significant effects identified mitigation of any significant negative effects, and any suggestions for enhancing potential beneficial effects. In line with requirements of the SEA Regulations, the appraisal considered effects including short, medium and long term, permanent, and temporary, positive and negative, secondary, cumulative and synergistic, wherever possible and relevant. Any gaps or difficulties were also reported.
- 9 The findings and recommendations of the SA informed plan-making and were integrated into the further development of the LPS - as set out in the Submitted SA Report (March 2014) and SA Addendum Reports (September 2015, February 2016, and February 2017) accompanying the Proposed Changes and Main Modifications to the LPS. The SA Reports recorded that overall, the mitigation

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

⁴ <http://www.pas.gov.uk/guidance>

provided by the LPS policies would address identified likely significant negative effects. Where relevant, the SA made recommendations for lower level planning, for example, as follows:

- Development proposals for certain strategic sites should be accompanied by construction plans, Transport Assessments and Travel Plans to address potential negative effects on health
- Directing the location of development away from areas of flood risk if a site contains a Flood Risk Zone
- Preparation of action plans to manage the risk of potential contamination and address the effects of pollution
- Promoting mixed-use development to include employment areas to reduce commuting and associated vehicle movements and address potential negative effects on the cause and effect of climate change
- Promoting potential new employment uses for sites to mitigate job losses and address potential negative impacts on jobs and employment opportunities
- More detailed policies relating to waste management, contaminated land, recycling and reuse of water, resilience to extreme weather events and longer term rising temperatures and site remediation are needed for the Site Allocations & Development Policies and Minerals and Waste Development Plan Document(s).

- 10 The Proposed Changes and Main Modifications to the LPS arising from the Examination and issues discussed at the Hearings were subject to SA, reported, and subject to consultation. Generally, the SA found that the changes to the LPS strengthened the positive effects that had been identified, particularly for housing objectives. The modifications strengthen and confirm implementation of mitigation measures, particularly through inclusion of site-specific development requirements. This improved the overall sustainability of the LPS, including mitigating potential negative effects previously identified through the SA, especially regarding landscape/visual amenity. It further confirmed mitigation and potential enhancement for effects on biodiversity and the historic environment.
- 11 The SA reports have been available on the Council's website and at each stage, the responses to comments made and issues raised have been reported. Throughout, the appraisals have been proportionate and appropriate to the stages of plan-making. Thus, environmental and sustainability considerations have been integrated and the SA Reports taken into account throughout the plan-making process.

How the results of consultation have been taken into account

- 12 Consultation is an important aspect of SA and there was statutory and public consultation at each key stage of the LPS preparation and the SA as follows:

Local Plan Strategy Documents & Consultation	SA Documents & Consultation
Evidence gathering and consultation exercises	SA Scoping Report (April 2009) Prepared by CEC Public consultation 27 April to 1 June 2009 SA Scoping Report (Sept 2009) Prepared by CEC, Incorporated changes as a result of previous consultation
Issues and Options Paper Public consultation 8 Nov -20 December 2010	SA Report (Nov 2010) Prepared by CEC Public consultation 8 November - 20 December 2010
Considering representations on Issues and Options and developing policies	Revised Scoping Report (March 2012) Prepared by CEC Public consultation 2 March to 10 April 2012
	Revised Scoping Report (Sept 2012) Prepared by CEC, Incorporated changes as a result of previous consultation
Town Strategy Phase 1 Consultations (Alsager, Congleton, Middlewich and Sandbach) 2 March and 2 April 2012	Draft Alsager TS SA Report (originally published March 2012 then revised in Aug 2012) Draft Congleton TS SA Report (March 2012) Draft Middlewich TS SA Report (originally published March 2012 then revised in Aug 2012) Draft Sandbach TS SA Report (originally published March 2012 then revised in Aug 2012) All reports prepared by CEC Public consultation 2 March and 2 April 2012
Town Strategy Phase 2 Consultation (Wilmslow) 1 April 2012 until 31 May 2012	Draft Wilmslow TS SA Report Prepared by CEC Public consultation 3 May to 31 May 2012
Town Strategy Phase 3 Consultations (Crewe, Macclesfield, Nantwich, Knutsford, Poynton, and Handforth) 31 August & 1 October 2012	Draft Crewe, Macclesfield, Nantwich, Knutsford, Poynton, and Handforth TS SA Reports All reports prepared by CEC Public consultation 31 August and 1 October 2012
Development Strategy and Policy Principles Public consultation 15 January to 26 February 2013	SA Report (Jan 2013) Prepared by CEC Public consultation 15 January to 26 February 2013
Possible Additional Sites Consultation To provide stakeholders with opportunity to comment on possible additional sites without analysis or judgment from the Council 3 - 30 May 2013	
Pre-Submission Local Plan Core Strategy 5 November to 16 December 2013	Sustainability (Integrated) Appraisal Report (Nov 2013) Prepared by CEC with specialist independent advice from Enfusion Public consultation 5 November -16 December 2013

Local Plan Strategy Submission Version 14 March to 25 April 2014	Sustainability (Integrated) Appraisal Report (March 2014) Prepared by CEC with specialist independent advice from Enfusion Public consultation 14 March to 25 April 2014
Local Plan Strategy Submission Submitted to the Secretary of State 20 May 2014	Sustainability (Integrated) Appraisal Report (May 2014) Prepared by CEC with specialist independent advice from Enfusion Submitted to the Secretary of State 20 May 2014 to accompany the Local Plan Strategy
Local Plan Strategy Cabinet Report including suggested revisions to Chapter 8 of the LPS Submitted to the Inspector 31 July 2015	Sustainability (Integrated) Appraisal Addendum Report (July 2015) Prepared by Enfusion Appendix 11 of the LPS Cabinet Report Submitted to the Inspector 31 July 2015
Local Plan draft Suggested Revisions Submitted to the Inspector September 2015	Sustainability (Integrated) Appraisal Addendum Report (September 2015) Prepared by Enfusion Submitted to the Inspector September 2015
Local Plan Proposed Changes for Strategic and Development Management Policies Public consultation 4 March to 19 April 2016	Sustainability (Integrated) Appraisal Addendum Report Volume 1 (February 2016) Prepared by Enfusion Public consultation 4 March to 19 April 2016
	Sustainability (Integrated) Appraisal Addendum Report Volume 2 (February 2016) Prepared by Enfusion Public consultation 4 March to 19 April 2016
Local Plan Proposed Changes for Local Plan Strategy Sites and Strategic Locations Submission to the Inspector July 2016	Sustainability (Integrated) Appraisal Addendum Report Volume 1 (July 2016) Prepared by Enfusion (responses to SA consultation comments in Appendix V) Submission to the Inspector July 2016
	Sustainability (Integrated) Appraisal Addendum Report Volume 2 (July 2016) Prepared by Enfusion (responses to SA consultation comments in Appendix V) Submission to the Inspector July 2016
Local Plan Strategy Resumption of Examination 12 September to 20 October 2016	SA Addendum Reports (Vols 1 & 2, July 2016) 12 September to 20 October 2016
Local Plan Strategy Main Modifications Consultation February – March 2017	SA Further Addendum Report (February 2017) Consultation February - March 2017
Local Plan Strategy Adoption July 2017	SA Adoption Statement July 2017

- 11 SA and consultation responses have been considered in an iterative and ongoing way with the plan-making process and in accordance with the requirements of the SEA Regulations. Representations have been recorded and the responses made to issues and concerns raised have been published, including at key statutory stages, as follows:
- Appendix D of Submission SA Report (May 2014) summarises comments received and the Council's responses including those made on the SA Scoping consultation
 - Appendix V of the Final SA Addendum Report (July 2016) reports the comments received and the Council's responses to the SA Addendum Report (February 2016) accompanying the Proposed Changes to the LPS consultation

Reasons for choosing the LPS as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives

- 12 The SEA Regulations requires assessment of the likely significant effects of implementing the plan and "*reasonable alternatives*" taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan; and the reasons for selecting alternatives should be outlined in the Report. Extant SA/SEA guidance advises that the term "*reasonable alternative*" should be taken to mean "*realistic and relevant*" i.e. deliverable and within the timescale of the plan.
- 13 At each stage of the development of the LPS, all options and any reasonable alternatives to policy and allocation proposals have been considered and assessed. Options for the level of growth and spatial distribution were considered at the Issues & Options stage in 2010. This included consideration of low, medium and high growth strategies and three options for the spatial distribution of development around the Borough as well as a Rural Dispersal variant.
- 14 Further alternatives were considered for policies and strategic site allocations as part of the Development Strategy and Policy Principles stage in 2013. These included consideration of policies that seek to protect and enhance the environment, promote economic prosperity, create sustainable communities and reduce the need to travel. The reasons for progressing or not progressing options are provided in Sections 4, 5, and 6 of the Submission SA report (May 2014). The do-nothing scenario is not an option for a Local Plan as councils are required to provide for identified development needs; however, this was considered by the SA process and the SA reported that significant negative effects on environmental factors were likely without a plan and that positive effects for socio-economic factors were less likely to be implemented.
- 15 Overall, the reasons for choosing the LPS as adopted include delivering the Vision, Objectives and Strategy for high quality development planning in the Cheshire East Borough area that delivers the most benefits and the least negative effects for sustainable development.

Measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant sustainability & environmental effects of the implementation of the LPS

- 16 The SEA Regulations require that the significant environmental effects of implementing the plan should be monitored with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action. Local Planning Authorities are required to produce Authority Monitoring Reports⁵ on the progress of Local Plans. Government Guidance on SA/SEA advises a pragmatic approach with shared monitoring for the SA/SEA and the Plan. The LPS Monitoring Framework includes a wide range of indicators that also relate to the SA Framework. It is considered that these indicators will be sufficient to identify any unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage, and provide information on the predicted effects from the SA. Monitoring of the LPS will be incorporated into the Council's Authority Monitoring Report, available to view on the Council's website.

For further information, please refer to the Council's website:

http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/

⁵ http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/authority-monitoring-report/authority-monitoring-report.aspx