



# **Sustainability Appraisal of the Harborough District Local Development Framework**

**Harborough Core Strategy**

**November 2011  
Sustainability Adoption Statement**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Harborough District Council resolved to adopt the Harborough Core Strategy Development Plan Document at its Full Council meeting on the 14 November 2011.
- 1.2 The Core Strategy will form part of the Harborough Local Development Framework (LDF) and replaces relevant parts of the Harborough District Local Plan (2001). The Core Strategy is the first and key document within the LDF setting the vision, spatial strategy and core policies for the development of the district to 2028.
- 1.3 In accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004 (16) (3) & (4) the Council has prepared this Sustainability Adoption Statement, as part of the procedures of Adoption, to explain:
  - how environmental considerations have been integrated into the document
  - how the environmental report has been taken into account,
  - how opinions expressed through public consultation have been taken into account
  - the reasons for choosing the Adopted Strategy in the light of reasonable alternatives considered
  - how the significant environmental effects of implementing the strategy will be monitored.

## **2. What is the Sustainability Appraisal?**

- 2.1 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a means of assessing and ensuring that plans and programmes which relate to land-use, including the constituent parts of the LDF, are compatible with the aims of sustainable development as set out in government guidance<sup>1</sup>. SA is a statutory process incorporating the requirements of the EU SEA Directive<sup>2</sup>, which acts to ensure that all plans / policies with land use implications take into consideration environmental issues and impact. The UK's SA process has widened this scope to also include the consideration of economic and social issues. The process of SA helps Local Planning Authorities to identify the relative environmental, social and economic performance of possible strategic, policy and site options and to evaluate which of these may be more sustainable.
- 2.2 By carrying out an SA of the Core Strategy Harborough District Council has followed guidance in PPS12 and is meeting the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 SI No. 2204, the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 SI No. 1633 and the EU SEA Directive 2004/42/EC.

## **3.0 How was the Core Strategy Appraised?**

- 3.1 The SA of the Core Strategy has been an iterative process, undertaken by UE Associates on behalf of HDC, and has formed an integral part of the

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<sup>1</sup> Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning (June 2008) and A Practical Guide to Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (Sept 2005)

<sup>2</sup> Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001/42/EU

documents preparation. The SA started in 2007 during the pre-production and evidence gathering stage and has involved assessment carried out at each key stage in its evolution resulting in:

- *Sustainability Appraisal & SEA of the LDF Scoping Report (Nov 2008)* which set out the scope of the SA, undertook a review of Policies, Plans & Programmes & Baseline data, identified the key sustainability issues for the district, developed objectives and a Sustainability Appraisal Framework,
- *SA & SEA Of the Harborough Core Strategy - Options SA Report (March 2009, revised Sept 2009)* which accompanied the Core Spatial Strategy Alternative Options document (June 2009) and assessed the 89 alternative options set out.
- *SA Appraisal of the Harborough Core Strategy – Assessment of the potential strategies presented in the Towards a Final Draft (Oct 2009)* which accompanied the Towards a Final Draft document that set out the emerging preferred options, and
- *Sustainability Appraisal Report (Oct 2010)* which accompanied the Submission Core Strategy document and appraised the document in full including significant changes to policy since the Towards a Final Draft document.

3.2 The Scoping Report sets out the 12 SA Objectives (Appendix 1) against which the sustainability effects of the Core Strategy its; vision, objectives and policies were tested. It was published in November 2008 allowing the 3 statutory 'Consultation Authorities' – Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency to respond.

3.3 In accordance with the Statement of Consultation (adopted 2006) various consultation methods were used during the production of the Core Strategy. In addition to consulting statutory consultees the SA reports at the options and submission stages were also subject to public consultation, alongside the relevant Core Strategy document, which allowed consultees to comment on the range of options put forward. Comments from all three environmental bodies, other organisations and individual members of the public at each stage were fed into the development of subsequent iterations of the Core Strategy through to the Adopted Core Strategy.

3.4 At each of the Alternative Options, Towards a Final Draft and the Submission stages all strategies and policies within the Core Strategy were subjected to a high level assessment to enable their effects (whether positive, negative or uncertain) to be described, analysed and compared. Where uncertain or negative sustainability effects were identified further detailed assessment was undertaken. Recommendations from the SA assessments at each stage were passed to Policy Team / Policy Officers to consider and incorporate into subsequent iterations of the Core Strategy document. The SA work, together with consultations, informed the plan making process enabling the strategy, options and policies to be retained, discounted or amended to secure greater sustainability benefits.

- 3.5 The final strategy and policies within the Adopted Core Strategy were appraised in full in the Sustainability Appraisal Report. In accordance with Regulation 36<sup>3</sup>, a copy of the SA Report is available to view alongside the Core Strategy on the Council's website <http://www.harborough.gov.uk/corestrategy>, at HDC Offices and at libraries throughout the district. No potential significant impacts of the hearing changes consultation were identified through the SA Addendum produced.
- 3.6 In broad terms the Core Strategy policies perform adequately against the SA objectives and a range of mostly positive effects are identified. Occasional negative effects also feature and are the subject of recommendations, which can be appropriately addressed through consideration of suitable mitigation during the Core Strategies implementation. A summary of the potential sustainability effects of the Core Strategy is given in Appendix 2<sup>4</sup> to this statement.

#### **4.0 Reasons for choosing the Adopted Strategy**

- 4.1 The range of options that have been considered through sustainability appraisal process were derived from early Issues & Options work, stakeholder & public consultation and by district council officer & members. The strategy, options and policies have been selected and refined throughout the various stages of the preparation of the Core Strategy. Options that were considered reasonable, realistic and relevant have been assessed and the results of these are presented in the series of SA reports. The options that are selected as the Councils preferred set of options were generally representative of those with the most positive and least negative effects.
- 4.2 The Inspector in his report on the Independent Examination into the Core Strategy concluded that "the Harborough Core Strategy Development Plan Document provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the District. The Council has sufficient evidence to support the strategy and can show that it has a reasonable chance of being delivered." "SA has been carried out and is adequate".

#### **5.0 Monitoring the Environmental Effects of the Core Strategy**

- 5.1 Monitoring is an essential element of plan making and implementation and plays an important role in assessing the actual sustainability effects of the Core Strategy. Monitoring proposals for measuring the Core Strategy's implementation in relation to the SA Objectives are set out in Chapter 9 of the SA Report (Oct 2010). As recommended SA monitoring and reporting activities will be integrated into the regular planning cycle as part of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

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<sup>3</sup> Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2004

<sup>4</sup> Sustainability Appraisal Report (Oct 2010) – UE Associates. Non Technical Summary Page III-V.

## Appendix 1

	<b>SA Objective</b>	<b>Sustainability theme</b>
1	Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity.	Biodiversity and geodiversity.
2	Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening distinctiveness and its special qualities.	Historic environment and landscape.
3	Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance.	Historic environment and landscape.
4	Safeguard and improve community health, safety and well being.	Health, population and quality of life.
5	Improve accessibility in the district, including from rural areas.	Accessibility and transportation, population and quality of life.
6	Reduce waste and maximise opportunities for innovative environmental technologies in waste management.	Material assets.
7	Plan for the anticipated levels of climate change.	Climate change.
8	Minimise Harborough's contribution to climate change.	Climate change.
9	Provide affordable, environmentally sound and good quality housing for all.	Housing.
10	Encourage investment in order to grow the local economy.	Economic factors.
11	Use and manage land, energy, soil, mineral and water resources prudently and efficiently, and increase energy generated from renewables.	Material assets, water and soil.
12	Maintain and where necessary, improve environmental quality with regard to water, air, soil and pollution.	Air quality, water and soil.

## Appendix 2

<b>Potential positive sustainability effects of the Core Strategy</b>
<b>Accessibility and Transportation</b>
<p>Promotion of improvements to public transport and cycling/walking networks in the district.</p> <p>Extension and enhancement of the district's green infrastructure networks.</p> <p>Development hierarchy for the district which promotes accessibility to services, amenities and facilities.</p> <p>Improved service provision in areas which currently experience a shortfall in such provision (such as Broughton Astley and the Rural Centres).</p>
<b>Air Quality</b>
<p>Reduction of emissions of key pollutants from the encouragement of modal shift from the car and a development hierarchy which reduces the need to travel.</p> <p>Reduction of the effects of HGV traffic on air quality issues in Lutterworth.</p> <p>Localised air quality improvements from the provision of new open space and enhancements to green infrastructure.</p>
<b>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</b>
<p>Identification and protection of key biodiversity assets in the district.</p> <p>Recognition of the need to improve the biodiversity value of the district.</p> <p>Increase in the area designated for nature conservation.</p> <p>Promotion of district and sub-regional biodiversity networks through an enhancement of green infrastructure.</p> <p>Enhancement of the district's geodiversity assets for amenity use and education.</p>
<b>Climate Change</b>
<p>Limitation of greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging of modal shift.</p> <p>Promotion of new renewable energy provision in the district.</p> <p>Utilisation of Code for Sustainable Homes and other standards for new housing and employment.</p> <p>Support for climate change adaptation through enhancements to green infrastructure networks.</p> <p>Consideration of flood risk areas through the utilisation of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the use of the Sequential and Exception Tests.</p> <p>Promotion of the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.</p> <p>Encouragement of climate change adaptation in the design of development.</p>
<b>Economic Factors</b>
<p>Promotion of business start ups and entrepreneurship through appropriate accommodation and employment provision.</p> <p>Development hierarchy which supports the vitality of both the main and secondary settlements in the district.</p> <p>Improved accessibility to key employment locations.</p> <p>Measures to support the rural economy of Harborough.</p> <p>Support for the visitor economy.</p>
<b>Health</b>
<p>Promotion of healthier modes of travel.</p> <p>Improved accessibility to health services and leisure and recreational facilities.</p> <p>Promotion of physical activity and recreational opportunities through improved open space provision and green infrastructure networks.</p>

<b>Potential positive sustainability effects of the Core Strategy</b>
<b>Historic Environment and Landscape</b>
<p>Protection and enhancement of key historic environment features and areas.</p> <p>Expansion of the number of features and areas protected under national and local historic environment designations.</p> <p>Encouragement of the use of historic environment assets as key educational and recreational resources.</p> <p>Improvements to the setting of cultural heritage features from enhancements to the townscape, built environment and landscape.</p> <p>Protection of local distinctiveness and a sense of place.</p> <p>Recognition of the need for new development to reflect the key characteristics of the district's five landscape areas.</p>
<b>Housing</b>
<p>Focus on the provision of affordable housing provision, especially in the areas of the district where need is greatest.</p> <p>Encouragement of high quality design and layout of housing.</p> <p>Promotion of high sustainability standards for new housing.</p> <p>Location of new housing in areas with good accessibility to existing services and facilities.</p>
<b>Material assets</b>
<p>Provision of new and improved waste management facilities.</p> <p>Encouragement of new renewable energy provision in the district.</p>
<b>Population and quality of life</b>
<p>Development hierarchy for the district which promotes accessibility to services, amenities and facilities.</p> <p>Improved service provision in areas which currently experience a shortfall in such provision.</p> <p>Promotion of enhancements to public transport and cycling/walking networks.</p> <p>Improved affordable housing provision, enhanced housing quality and promotion of high quality residential environments.</p> <p>Expansion and enhancement of the district's green infrastructure networks.</p>
<b>Water and soil</b>
<p>Improvement in drainage and sewerage provision to meet future development pressures.</p>

<b>Potential adverse sustainability effects of the Core Strategy and areas for improvement</b>
<b>Accessibility and Transportation</b>
<p>Potential for improved provision of parking and loading facilities in Market Harborough town centre to undermine the use of public transport and walking and cycling routes in the town.</p> <p>Potential promotion of car use through improvements to the capacity and operation of Market Harborough's bypass.</p>
<b>Air Quality</b>
<p>Potential effects on air quality from traffic growth stimulated by new housing and employment provision.</p>
<b>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</b>
<p>Pressures on brownfield and greenfield biodiversity from new development.</p>



<b>Potential adverse sustainability effects of the Core Strategy and areas for improvement</b>	
<b>Climate Change</b>	Potential increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the district's built footprint and traffic growth.
<b>Economic Factors</b>	None highlighted by SA process.
<b>Health</b>	None highlighted by SA process.
<b>Historic Environment and Landscape</b>	Further potential for the place-specific policy for Lutterworth to recognise the town's rich historic environment resource.
<b>Housing</b>	None highlighted by SA process.
<b>Material Assets</b>	Loss of greenfield land from new areas of development. Further potential for the Core Strategy to ensure a continued supply of local building materials in the district.
<b>Quality of life</b>	None highlighted by SA process.
<b>Water and soil</b>	Further potential for an encouragement of water conservation measures in the district to reflect future constraints in water supply.