

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 15 SEPTEMBER 2016

REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (SA) OF THE EAST HERTS DISTRICT
PLAN – PRE-SUBMISSION VERSION 2016

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

The purpose of this report is:

- To present to Members the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the East Herts District Plan Pre-Submission Version 2016 and to seek agreement to publish the SA for consultation under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE
PANEL: That Council, via the Executive, be advised that:**

(A)	the Sustainability Appraisal of the East Herts District Plan Pre-Submission Version 2016, as detailed at Essential Reference 'B' to this report, be agreed and published for consultation for a period of six-weeks in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended.
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1.0 Background

1.1 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of a draft plan and any alternatives, in terms of sustainability issues, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and maximising positives. In simple terms, the process of SA is one of assessing and recording how possible implications of development have been considered through the plan-making process.

1.2 The process of SA is legally required and should be undertaken

in line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which were prepared in order to transpose into UK national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive, 2001.

- 1.3 The Council has commissioned Aecom consultants to undertake a final Sustainability Appraisal to support the District Plan. This final SA expands and updates on previous SA work presented alongside the Issues and Options Consultation Document, 2010 and the Preferred Options Consultation Document, 2014 (see Background Papers). The SA encompasses the requirements of the Equality Impact Assessment, Health Impact Assessment and Rural Proofing.
- 1.4 This report presents the final Sustainability Appraisal of the Pre-Submission District Plan in **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**. The SA complements Habitats Regulations process, which is presented in Agenda Item 13.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 The Sustainability Appraisal has informed the preparation of the emerging District Plan. Reasonable alternatives to the policies and sites have been assessed at various stages in the preparation of the District Plan and this has informed the development of the spatial strategy and the selection of sites. As well as an appraisal of each policy and site, the SA includes an assessment of the cumulative effects of the Plan against sustainability objectives.
- 2.2 The SA Report consists of four parts which includes an introduction plus seven appendices. The introduction explains the background to the report, an overview of the regulatory requirements, an outline of the District Plan and the scope of the SA.
- 2.3 Part 1 of the Report sets out what has happened in SA and Plan-making terms up to this point. It sets out how the Council has considered reasonable alternatives, including the previous work between 2008 and 2014 to inform the Preferred Options Plan as well as more recent work to inform the Pre-Submission District Plan. Part 1 also appraises the reasonable alternatives and sets out the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in the light of alternatives.

2.4 Part 2 appraises the proposed Pre-Submission District Plan development strategy. It sets out the appraisal narrative of the proposed policies and site allocations and the Plan as a whole against the SA Framework which comprises the following issues:

- Biodiversity
- Community and Wellbeing
- Economy and Employment
- Historic Environment
- Housing
- Land
- Landscape
- Low Carbon Development
- Transport
- Water

2.5 Part 3 sets out what the next steps of the Plan-making and SA process include.

2.6 The SA also includes seven appendices:

- Appendix I: Regulatory Requirements
- Appendix II: Updated Baseline and Policy Context
- Appendix III: Development Options Appraisal
- Appendix IV: SA of Spatial Strategy Alternatives in 2014
- Appendix V: Site Options Appraisal in 2016
- Appendix VI: SA of Settlements
- Appendix VII: SA of Spatial Strategy Alternatives 2016

2.7 Subject to agreement it is proposed that consultation on the Pre-Submission District Plan will commence on the 3rd November 2016 for a six-week period closing on the 15th December 2016. The SA forms part of the Consultation Documents as required by Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended. As stated in the District Plan Report at Agenda Item 15, one of the key legal tests is whether an adequate Sustainability Appraisal has been carried out. This SA report therefore fulfils this test.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

Previous versions of the SA are available on the Council's website:
<http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/sa>

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