

**Horsham District Council & Crawley Borough Council
West of Bewbush Joint Area Action Plan**

**Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment
Adoption Statement**

Horsham District Council and Crawley Borough Council adopted the West of Bewbush Joint Area Action Plan on 31st July 2009. This document and its accompanying Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment report are available to view at the Horsham District and Crawley Borough Council offices or on the website at www.westofcrawley.gov.uk.

This statement has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (16) (3) and (4), which require a statement to be produced on adoption of a plan or programme, to detail;

1. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
2. How the Environmental Report has been taken into account;
3. How opinions expressed through public consultation have been taken into account;
4. The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with;
5. The measures that are taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

Planning Policy Statement 12 widens these considerations from environmental, to broader sustainability issues, and this statement therefore provides information on the wider sustainability appraisal process.

This statement examines each of these points in turn.

1. How environmental / sustainability considerations have been integrated into the plan

The process of Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment enabled a range of sustainability issues to be incorporated into the West of Bewbush Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP). This was achieved by examining the requirements of plans and policies influencing the document, which enabled the identification of a number of issues the JAAP would need to address. Baseline data was also collected for the plan area and its surroundings, which identified key facts about the West and North West of Crawley area and the environmental conditions on the proposed development site. The information collected also examined the implications for the future without the JAAP.

By examining the requirements of the plans and policies influencing and the baseline data, the following sustainability issues were identified.

- There is a high need for affordable housing in both Horsham District and Crawley Borough.
- Any development that takes place will need to ensure that community facilities and services are provided to meet the needs of the new neighbourhood.
- Car ownership and use is high, creating pressure on the road network. Development will need to help minimise the need to travel, particularly by car and encourage other forms of transport such as walking cycling and bus use.
- Development pressure has the potential to adversely affect the environment, including biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage. However there is also the opportunity for the development, if correctly designed, to enhance these features and improve links to the surrounding countryside.
- Development has the potential to increase the risk of flooding. Flood risk may also increase as a result of climate change.
- The existing environmental quality of the area will need to be either maintained or enhanced. Issues requiring consideration are the remediation of the landfill site, potential noise impacts from the A264, and maintaining water quality of the surrounding watercourse.
- Any development will use resources such as raw materials and energy during the construction and operational phases. Energy consumption will also have an impact on climate change through the burning of fossil fuels. Development should therefore take place to minimise the consumption of resources as far as possible.
- There is a need to maintain the economy of the area, and provide employment opportunities to meet the needs of the new residents. In addition, new retail facilities will be needed to meet the needs of new residents.

From the identification of these issues it was possible to develop the Vision, Principles and objectives of the West of Bewbush development to take the sustainability issues identified above into account. The principles address matters such as landscape, resource use, affordable housing and traffic generation. This clearly demonstrates that sustainability considerations have been incorporated into the West of Bewbush Joint Area Action Plan.

2. How the Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment has been taken into account

The findings of the SA/SEA process have been taken into account at all stages of the preparation of the West of Bewbush JAAP, and the final SA/SEA published alongside this document provides a formal statement and audit trail of the assessment.

The process began with preparation of the “Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the West and North West of Crawley Joint Area Action Plan – Scoping Report”, which was published in September 2006. This report provided a summary of the baseline data and plans and programmes influencing the JAAP, which was based on a review of information collected as part of the work on the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of Councils’ Core Strategies, and updated to incorporate more local level data for the land in the West and North West of Crawley area. The report also set out the sustainability issues for the proposed development area, based on the findings of the baseline data and plans and programmes. This led to the identification of sustainability objectives against which the sustainability of the JAAP could be tested. Finally, the document also identified preliminary options and approaches for the JAAP that would be tested as part of the sustainability appraisal process.

The findings from the next stage in the Sustainability Appraisal process were set out in the West and North West of Crawley Joint Area Action Plan Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment – Draft Final Report, published in October 2007. This report updated the baseline data and sustainability issues and objectives set out in the earlier Scoping Report. The document also set out the preliminary results of the assessment of the different options for the JAAP and assessed the cumulative and synergistic effects. It set out means by which potential sustainability or environmental problems identified could be mitigated.

The findings of the final stage of the assessment of the West of Bewbush Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Final Report were published in May 2008 alongside the submitted Joint Area Action Plan. The report updated the information set out in the draft Final Report, taking into account responses from the Preferred Options consultation. It also set out the mitigation measures proposed and incorporated into the submission JAAP. The SA/SEA formed part of the evidence base that accompanied the main West of Bewbush JAAP.

3. How consultations entered into have been taken into account

Key Environmental Bodies

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive requires that authorities referred to in Article 6(3) shall be consulted when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the Environmental Report. In England the key bodies are the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England.

Consultation with these key bodies was first carried out in September 2006 on the Scoping Report that was published alongside the Issues and Options consultation. The consultation enabled these bodies to comment on the appropriateness of the objectives, indicators, baseline information, issues/problems and plans and policies influencing the SPD. Comments that were received from the Statutory Consultees mainly related to the Issues and Options paper, but where appropriate changes and updates to the baseline data were made as result of comments made at this stage.

The key environmental bodies were also given the opportunity to comment on the draft final SA/SEA which was published alongside the draft Supplementary Planning Document published in October 2007. Again very few direct comments were made on the SA/SEA itself, but where appropriate the document was amended in the light of comments made on the Preferred Options document itself.

It was also possible to comment on the Final SA/SEA as part of the Examination process, for example in response to questions raised on the SA/SEA documentation raised by the inspector. No comments were raised in relation to this document by the statutory consultees as part of this process.

Public Participation

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive requires early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames for members of the public to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying Environmental Report before the adoption of the plan or programme or its submission to the legislative procedure. The Councils therefore undertook a programme of public participation on the plan and its SA/SEA prior to its adoption.

Comments were invited from members of the public as part of the Issues and Options and Preferred Options consultations, and the accompanying SA/SEA documentation. At the Issues and Options stage, some comments were made directly relating to the Scoping Report. This included comments from organisations including West Sussex County Council, Crest Nicholson, Mole Valley District Council, the Highways Agency, Ruspur Parish Council and Thames Water. Comments made on the document were taken into account during the preparation of the draft Final SA/SEA that was published for consultation at the Preferred Options stage. Few

4. Reasons for choosing the document as adopted in light of other reasonable alternatives

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (12) (2) requires environmental reports to examine reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme.

It is requirement that this statement sets out the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with.

Options considered for inclusion in the West of Bewbush JAAP were limited as a result of higher level plans and programmes. For example the area of land in which development could take place had been narrowed down to an area of study, identified in both the Horsham and Crawley Core Strategies. More detail on the scoping and selection of options is set out in Chapter seven of the Final Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted West of Bewbush Joint Area Action Plan.

The options considered for inclusion in the JAAP generally examined locational options, examining the most sustainable location for the development to take place. Other options considered included the road access arrangements, and the nature and type of services and facilities that should be provided as part of the development.

In most instances the option assessed as being the most sustainable was selected for inclusion in the JAAP. There were, however, a few instances where this was not the case, as other planning considerations were taken into account when selecting the option for inclusion in the JAAP. In all instances where it was necessary to bring forward an option not assessed as the most sustainable, mitigation measures were suggested and incorporated into the JAAP.

5. Monitoring

The Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the West of Bewbush JAAP has been published alongside the adopted Joint Area Action Plan. The SA/SEA process does not, however, finish with the publication of this document; and the effect of the West of Bewbush JAAP on the Sustainability Objectives will be monitored on an annual basis. The results of this monitoring will be included in the Councils' Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Reports. The results will help ensure that any unforeseen effects can be acted upon quickly.

The Horsham District Annual Monitoring Report is available to view on the Council's website www.horsham.gov.uk/strategic_planning. Crawley Borough Councils Annual Monitoring Report can be viewed on the planning and development pages of the Crawley Borough Council's website: www.crawley.gov.uk