

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF THE WEST OF HORSHAM DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND CHARACTER AREAS SPD

Introduction

As part of the Horsham District Core Strategy, adopted in February 2007, Policy CP7 made provision for a development of up to 2000 homes in the West of Horsham area.

To provide further detail on the nature of any development that takes place to the West of Horsham, this Council prepared the Land West of Horsham Masterplan, which was adopted in October 2008. In addition, the Council has prepared a further Supplementary Planning Document – the Design Principles and Character Areas SPD, which sets out an additional level of detail concerning the design and appearance of the development.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

In accordance with planning legislation, it is necessary to ensure that the documents that the Council produces contribute to the principles of sustainable development as far as is practicable. In order to ensure that this is the case documents are subject to a process known as sustainability appraisal (SA), which incorporates the requirements of the European Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) directive.

Both the Horsham District Core Strategy, and the Land West of Horsham Masterplan SPD have been subject to an SA/SEA examining the effects of the policies or development locations on sustainable development. The results of this process show that the development is likely to have the following effects:

Positive Impacts

- There will be positive impacts on the provision of affordable housing and the provision of other services and facilities. This will help to meet the needs of the new residents and to some extent existing communities, thus helping with their integration
- The local and sub-regional economy is likely to benefit from an increased number of residents in the area.
- The provision of services and facilities at a local scale will mean that they are accessible by means other than the car. This will help to reduce vehicle journeys and is also likely to help minimise any adverse impacts on local air quality.

Negative Impacts

- The development could have an adverse impact on biodiversity, the landscape and the historic /cultural environment.
- There is some potential for the new development to place pressure on existing services and facilities.
- Construction and operational stages of the development will require raw materials and energy. This is likely to result in increased emissions of carbon dioxide and have a negative impact on climate change.
- Construction and operation of the new development is likely to increase the number of vehicle journeys. This has the potential to cause congestion and also adversely impact the air quality of the area.
- Increased hardstanding associated with the new development could increase the risk of flooding.

The SA/SEA process found that the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents will help to minimise many of the adverse impacts of the development that were identified for example by ensuring that the development is sensitively designed so as to protect and enhance the landscape, and ensuring that the development is designed to design out the potential for crime, and minimises its impact on the environment and climate change as far as possible.

Need for Further Sustainability Appraisal of the West of Horsham Design Principles and Character Areas SPD

It is considered that under the terms of the SEA regulations the West of Horsham Design Principles and Character Areas SPD is a minor modification of an existing plan or policy (i.e. the 'parent' documents of the Core Strategy and West of Horsham Masterplan SPD) The content of the SPD amounts to an amplification of the existing Core Strategy (in particular, CP7), and the Land West of Horsham Masterplan SPD. It is therefore considered that this document will not have any additional significant effects on the environment or sustainable development, and that as a consequence there is no need to carry out any further sustainability work other than that which is outlined in the paragraphs above.

A draft version of this statement was sent to Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage, seeking their views on the need for a further SA/SEA of the Design Principles SPD. Only Natural England responded, but they agreed that it would not be necessary to undertake any further SA/SEA work on this document.