

Local Development Framework

Core Strategy

Options Consultation:

Sustainability Appraisal Report
Non Technical Summary

February 2009



INTRODUCTION

This report provides a non-technical summary of the Sustainability Appraisal Report for the Core Strategy Options Consultation. The Core Strategy forms a key part of the new plan for Kirklees, called the Local Development Framework (LDF). The full Sustainability Appraisal Report and Core Strategy Options consultation document are available on the Council website at www.kirklees.gov.uk/localdevelopment.

The role of a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is to assess how the key principles of sustainable development are being incorporated into the planning process. Broadly speaking these key principles can be broken down into three categories: Social, Environmental and Economic. Sustainable development should improve the quality of life for present and future generations whilst at the same time respecting the limits of the environment.

Sustainability Appraisal of the LDF is required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – an environmental ‘test’ - is required under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes 2004 Regulations. Government guidance suggests that SEA should be incorporated into the SA process which considers economic and social as well as environmental effects. In Kirklees, a single corporate framework has been agreed that combines SA and SEA into one overall appraisal method (referred to as “SA” for simplicity in the rest of this document).

SA involves;

1. Compiling information about the social, environmental and economic context in which the Core Strategy Options are being developed.
2. Assessing the Core Strategy Options at various stages of their development and suggesting possible ways of making them more sustainable.
3. Taking the appraisal reports into account in decision making and providing information on how this has been done; and
4. Monitoring the impacts of implementing the LDF.

WHAT IS THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) published by the government in May 2008 sets out a number of requirements about how much development there should be in Kirklees over the next 15 years or so, and very broadly where it should go. The Core Strategy is the spatial plan which aims to set out in more detail where this new development – housing, employment, shopping and other services – should go, what changes to transportation will be needed, and what the development will be like, for example, high or low density.

The key variables for the spatial strategy are:

- Where the new housing goes.
- Where the new employment land goes.
- How town centres and smaller centres change to ensure that the changing needs for shopping and services can be met, and the need for offices can be accommodated.
- How the transport system could change to ensure that people can get to work, shops, schools etc., and businesses can receive and despatch goods efficiently.

A brief written description of the four options is set out below.

The Core Strategy Options:

Option 1: Growth towns

This option broadly follows the government's guidelines in RSS. It concentrates new housing and employment in and around Huddersfield and also promotes development in Dewsbury.

Option 2: Making the most of our economic prospects

This option takes into account our desire to strengthen Kirklees' economy and makes more land available for businesses to locate, expand and compete. In turn this should provide Kirklees residents with more and better job opportunities and reduce the need for our residents to commute to other areas.

Option 3: Balancing development across the district

This option takes some of the development pressure off north Kirklees and north-east Huddersfield and promotes new homes and jobs in south Kirklees to meet the needs of existing and future residents.

Option 4: Reducing the impact of climate change

This option gives priority to minimising the impact of development on climate change by concentrating new housing around our main towns and by locating new jobs close to housing areas, so that people need to travel less and can use public transport more. This approach minimises development in areas at

risk of flood, but encourages the use of floodplains for sport and recreation, wildlife habitats and other environmental enhancements, including creating linked green spaces through urban areas.

The SA report tests each of these options and provides guidance on how sustainable each option is. It was preceded by testing at several stages of development of the Core Strategy to provide guidance on how well each option seemed likely to meet sustainability objectives. The tests were carried out by a core group of officers from a variety of Kirklees Council services.

THE SA PROCESS

1. SCOPING

The first part of the SA process was to collect information on Kirklees. This is called the scoping stage. This stage looked at over 80 other plans and programmes to see how they may influence the Core Strategy. This included looking at national and regional guidance and legislation upon a range of issues such as energy and housing, as well as looking at other strategies within Kirklees, such as the Community Strategy. In addition information was collected about Kirklees' environment, economy and social issues. The aim of the scoping stage was to identify key sustainability issues for the Core Strategy. The issues identified were;

- Social – social exclusion, lack of affordable housing, income levels, job creation, fear of crime;
- Transport – high proportion of people using their car to travel to work, limited public transport in rural areas;
- Climate Change – the need to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and adapt to the impacts of change;
- Biodiversity – the need to protect and enhance opportunities;
- Leisure and recreation – protect, enhance and develop new opportunities across the District to meet shortfalls;
- Heritage – the need to preserve and protect the existing character;
- Resource efficiency – reduce energy demand, improve energy efficiency and increase the use of low carbon and renewable energy sources

2. ASSESSMENT

A key aspect of SA is the formulation of a set of sustainability objectives against which a plans performance can be measured. These objectives have been prepared in response to national, regional and local sustainability issues. The Core Strategy Options have been assessed using the objectives in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Kirklees Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

1. Ensure location and type of employment opportunities increases availability of jobs for local people
2. An economy better capable of growth through increasing investment, innovation and entrepreneurship
3. Ensure education facilities are available to all
4. People can access the health and social care they need at a time and place which is appropriate and convenient
5. Retain and enhance access to local services
6. Make our communities safer by reducing crime, anti-social behaviour, the fear of crime
7. Protect and enhance existing and support new Culture, Leisure & Recreation facilities and encourage their usage
8. All people are able to live in a decent home which meets their needs
9. Secure an effective and safe transport network which maximises access to key services, employment opportunities and amenities
10. Secure the efficient and prudent use of land
11. Protect and enhance the character of Kirklees
12. Preserve and enhance the historic environment
13. Maximise opportunities to protect and enhance bio-diversity
14. Reduce air, water, land, noise and light pollution
15. Prevent inappropriate new development in high flood risk areas and ensure development does not contribute to increased flood for existing property and people
16. Increase prevention, re-use, recovery and recycling of waste close to source
17. Increase efficiency in water, energy and raw material use
<u>Cross Cutting Objectives</u>
i Social inclusion and equity across all sectors:
ii A partnership and participative approach
iii Geographic adaptation to the needs of rural and urban communities
iv Creativity, innovation and the appropriate use of technology

Table 2 indicates the results of the sustainability appraisal of the four spatial options. The assessment of the options was done by comparing them against the seventeen SA objectives, set out in Table 1.

Table 2 Summary of the appraisal of the core strategy options 1-4

SA Objectives	Option 1			Option 2			Option 3			Option 4		
	ST	MT	LT	ST	MT	LT	ST	MT	LT	ST	MT	LT
1. Ensure location and type of employment opportunities increases availability of jobs for local people	+	+	++	+	+	++	+	-/+	-/+	+	-/+	-/+
2. An economy better capable of growth through increasing investment, innovation and entrepreneurship	+	+	++	+	+	++	+	-/+	-/+	+	-/+	-/+
3. Ensure education facilities are available to all	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-	-	-/+	-/+	-/+
4. People can access the health and social care they need at a time and place which is appropriate and convenient	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?/+	?	?	?
5. Retain and enhance access to local services	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+
6. Make our communities safer by reducing crime, anti-social behaviour, the fear of crime	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
7. Protect and enhance existing and support new Culture, Leisure & Recreation facilities and encourage their usage	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+
8. All people are able to live in a decent home which meets their needs	++	++	+	++	++	+	++	++	+	++	++	+
9. Secure an effective and safe transport network which maximises access to key services, employment opportunities and amenities	-/+	-	--	-/+	--	--	-/+	-	-	-/+	-	-
10. Secure the efficient and prudent use of land	+	-/+	-	+	-/+	-	+	-/+	-	+	-/+	-
11. Protect and enhance the character of Kirklees	-/+	-/+	-	-/+	-/+	-	-/+	-/+	-	-/+	-/+	-

	Option 1			Option 2			Option 3			Option 4		
	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+
12. Preserve and enhance the historic environment	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+
13. Maximise opportunities to protect and enhance bio-diversity	-/+	-/+	-	-/+	-	-/+	-	-/+	-	-	-/+	-/+
14. Reduce air, water, land, noise and light pollution	-/?	-	--	-/?	-	--	-/?	-	--	-/?	-	--
15. Prevent inappropriate new development in high flood risk areas and ensure development does not contribute to increased flood for existing property and people	-/+	-	-	-/+	-	-	-/+	-	-	-	-/+	+
16. Increase prevention, re-use, recovery and recycling of waste close to source	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
17. Increase efficiency in water, energy and raw material use	+	+	++	+	+	++	+	+	++	+	+	++

Key:

Magnitude of effect	Timescale		
	ST	Medium Term	Long Term
++ Very positive		Short Term <5 Years	
+ Positive		5-10 Years	
0 Neutral		10+ Years	
- Negative			
-- Very negative			
-/+ Positive or negative dependant upon implementation			
? Uncertain			

The Core Strategy will include policies to deliver the chosen option. The policies that have been proposed in the consultation document are grouped under the Strategic Objectives set for the Core Strategy. Table 3 provides a summary of how the Core Policies perform against the seventeen SA objectives. A full list of Core Policies can be found within the Core Strategy Options Consultation document available on the Council website at www.kirklees.gov.uk/localdevelopment.

Table 3: How well the Core Policies perform.

Policy Area	Performance
<i>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</i>	The policies perform in a very positive manner. They aim to focus development around the most sustainable settlements and improve the core transport network throughout Kirklees. Their negative effects mainly relate to the impact that concentrating development within settlements may have on their character.
<i>HOUSING SUITED TO NEEDS</i>	The positive impacts focus on the provision of housing to meet people's needs and the locational criteria for identifying land for them. The negative impacts focus on the consequence for the environment of providing new homes at such a scale.
<i>A STRONG ECONOMY</i>	The positive impacts focus on the safeguarding of existing, and provision of new opportunities to meet need for employment over the plan period. The negative impacts centre on the consequences for both the built and natural environment arising from the scale of development proposed.
<i>SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL</i>	The positive impacts centre on the creation of a safe and efficient transport network and the potential to reduce associated pollution.
<i>SERVICES PROVIDED WHERE PEOPLE WANT THEM</i>	Positive impacts focus on the retention and provision of services in existing centres but there could be adverse consequences for the historic environment.
<i>BETTER OPEN SPACES</i>	The positives centre on the support for new facilities, and the protection of open spaces, which would also benefit the natural landscape and habitats.
<i>WELL DESIGNED BUILDINGS AND SPACES</i>	The policy has been assessed as having a very positive impact because it promotes many aspects of sustainable design.
<i>LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS</i>	No policies are proposed under this objective. National and regional policies and policies under other objectives are considered to be sufficient to deliver this objective.
<i>BETTER NATURE CONSERVATION</i>	The positives centre on the protection and enhancement of important biodiversity sites and the associated wider benefits to the natural environment.
<i>BETTER WATER MANAGEMENT</i>	This has a very positive impact because it seeks to steer development away from areas of flood risk.

Policy Area	Performance
<i>PRUDENT USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES</i>	The positive impacts focus on the environmental and social benefits associated with renewable energy and limiting negative impact on air quality. While there are economic benefits from securing continuity of mineral extraction there are concerns about the potential impact on the character of areas subject to mineral extraction.

Significant effects and Mitigation

Table 2 indicates significant negative impacts for the four options, broadly as follows whilst not consistent across all options the main impacts are:

- The proposed level of growth over the plan period could increase congestion on the existing highway network at key locations throughout Kirklees.
- The proposed level of growth will require the release of greenfield and green belt land over the plan period.
- The development of greenfield, brownfield and green belt land may reduce opportunities for biodiversity close to and within urban areas.
- Increased development in and around urban areas may adversely affect the local character.
- Concentration of development within and close to urban areas would potentially increase air pollution where it is already a problem such as along the A62 corridor and in and around the main town centres.
- In three of the proposed options significant areas of regeneration are on land subject to flood risk.

Set against these negative impacts it is important to note all of the options will have significant positive impacts, particularly ensuring that the location and type of employment increases availability of jobs for local people and people are able to live in a decent home which meets their needs.

In response to the above negative effects mitigation measures have been identified as follows:

- Transport investment corridors have been identified with the aim of reducing congestion and improving public transport provision.
- Core policies are put forward that seek to ensure the sequential release of land using brownfield land in preference to greenfield to maximise the reuse of previously developed land.
- Core policies are put forward that seek to ensure the protection, provision and enhancement of open spaces within the urban area.
- Core policies are put forward that seek to protect and enhance biodiversity by identifying areas of habitat protection and establishing measures that developers can take to make provision for wildlife.
- Protection is afforded to the historic environment to ensure developments do not adversely impact upon listed buildings and, conservation areas, which help to give Kirklees its distinct character.

- Core policies are put forward that seek to minimise detriment to air quality by the careful design of developments and the management of vehicular movements.
- Core policies are put forward to ensure that new developments are sufficiently well designed to minimise pollution, be more energy efficient and use renewable or low carbon sources of energy.
- Development will be directed away from areas of flood risk.

Consultation Arrangement

This summary and the full sustainability appraisal report have been published to help the Core Strategy Options Consultation which starts on the 23rd February 2009 and finishes 3rd April 2009.

The Core Strategy options document and the full Sustainability Appraisal Report can be viewed online at www.kirklees.gov.uk/localdevelopment. Paper copies are available free of charge from the address below or from Town Halls and Library & Information Centres across Kirklees.

If you would like to formally comment on the Core Strategy Options consultation document you can:

- Register on our on-line consultation system at www.kirklees.gov.uk/localdevelopment and submit your comments
- Send your written comments by email to local.development@kirklees.gov.uk
- Send your written comments to
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