

HARROGATE DISTRICT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

CORE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

**THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF PLANS AND
PROGRAMMES REGULATIONS 2004**

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL STATEMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Harrogate Borough Council adopted the Core Strategy Development Plan Document on 11 February 2009. In accordance with Regulation 16 (3) and (4) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 the Council has produced this statement that sets out:

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Core Strategy
- How the environmental report has been taken into account
- How consultation responses have been taken into account
- Reasons for choosing the Core Strategy as adopted in light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with
- Measures that are to be taken to monitor significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Core Strategy.

2.0 HOW ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS HAVE BEEN INTEGRATED INTO THE CORE STRATEGY

2.1 An integral part of the process of preparing the Harrogate Core Strategy DPD has been to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal to ensure the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the development of the Core Strategy objectives and strategic policies. In undertaking the Sustainability Appraisal the requirements of EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment and The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 have been incorporated in to the Sustainability Appraisal.

2.2 The Sustainability Appraisal commenced during the pre-production and evidence gathering stage with the publication of a Scoping Report. The options were appraised against the Sustainability Appraisal to assess their performance in sustainability terms with reference to social, environmental and economic factors. The Preferred Options were also appraised. Additional appraisal work was undertaken where changes were made to the preferred options in the submission Core Strategy. A Sustainability Appraisal Report was prepared which documents the process and is a key output. This was submitted alongside the Core Strategy.

- 2.3 Before the start of the Examination into the Core Strategy, the Inspector requested that the Council undertake additional work in respect of proposed Urban Extensions. As part of this, further Sustainability Appraisal work was undertaken. This specifically provided an evaluation of the options for Urban Extensions that addresses sustainability in its wider sense, including environmental, social, and economic objectives as well as the likely implications for accessibility, the need for travel/modal shift. This ensured that the SA of the Urban Extensions integrated with the overall Core Strategy in terms of appraisal of objectives and assessment methodology

3.0 HOW THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT HAS BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

Issues and Options

- 3.1 Options were developed to address the key planning issues facing the District up to 2021. These options were tested, in broad terms, against the sustainability appraisal framework. This process aided the development and refinement of the options. The appraisal generally found that the range of options put forward were appropriate alternatives for addressing the issues facing Harrogate District.

Preferred Options

- 3.2 The significant effects of the options were appraised against the sustainability objectives, which provided information on their economic, social and environmental impacts. The appraisal included the scale and nature of the impact, cumulative, secondary and synergistic impacts. Where an impact was identified measures were identified to provide for mitigation, thereby increasing the sustainability of the Core Strategy. A summary of the impacts, together with mitigation measures, is provided in Chapter 7 of the SA Report and detailed appraisal matrices are set out at appendix 7. Where changes were made prior to the submission of the Core Strategy, these were also appraised in a similar way.

Harrogate & Knaresborough Urban Extensions (Additional Work)

- 3.3 The Urban Extension Options identified in the Harrogate & Knaresborough Urban Extensions Study (Vol. 2) were assessed against the sustainability appraisal framework. This broad assessment provides information to allow a comparison of each urban extension option to be made. A commentary is then provided on the main significant effects identified. The SA has highlighted which urban extension options are likely to perform better against the SA Framework. This, together with other material considerations, has formed the basis for determining which areas should be taken forward as Areas of Search for Growth.

4.0 HOW CONSULTATION RESPONSES HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

Scoping Report

- 4.1 Article 5.4 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive requires consultation with authorities with environmental responsibilities when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report. The designated bodies are Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England (formerly Countryside Agency and English Nature). In addition a range of other bodies were consulted. Full details of those consulted together with their comments and the Council's responses are set out in Appendix 1 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

- 4.2 The consultation resulted in a number of changes, including new indicators being incorporated, new plans being reviewed, changes to Core Strategy Objectives and new sustainability issues identified.

Issues and Options Consultation

- 4.3 Sustainability Appraisal information was published on the Council's website to accompany the Issue and Options consultation between 16 September and 11 November 2005 (extended to 16 December 2005). Consultation responses were received from four organisations and these are set out at Appendix 1 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report together with a commentary on the way in which these responses have influenced the appraisal process and selection of Preferred Options. As a result of the consultation, amendments were made to the appraisal of some of the options and to the presentation of the results to help clarity.

Preferred Options Consultation

- 4.4 The Sustainability Appraisal Report was published alongside the Preferred Options for consultation between 9 June and 21 July 2006. Consultation responses were received from four organisations and again these have been set out at Appendix 1 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report together with a commentary on the way in which these responses have influenced the appraisal process. As a result of the consultation further refinements were made to the appraisal and new plans or programmes reviewed.

Submission Consultation

- 4.5 The Core Strategy, accompanied by the Sustainability Appraisal Report was submitted on 7 September 2007. The additional Sustainability Appraisal Report was published alongside the Harrogate & Knaresborough Urban Extensions Study (Vol. 2) for consultation between 11 July and 22 August 2008. Representations received were considered by an independent Inspector at the Examination.

5.0 REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE CORE STRATEGY AS ADOPTED IN LIGHT OF OTHER REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES DEALT WITH

- 5.1 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (12) (2) requires environmental reports to examine reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme. This statement is required to set out the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with.
- 5.2 In preparing the Core Strategy a range of options were developed which form different ways of addressing key planning issues facing the District. These options were appraised against the SA Framework to test their sustainability. This is documented in Chapter 6 of the SA Report. In some instances there were no significant differences identified. Where differences in performance were noted these have been taken into account as far as possible in developing the Preferred Approach. The economic, social and environmental effects of the Preferred options was appraised and generally the options performed well. Mitigation measures were also identified.

5.3 The Core Strategy, as adopted, represents an appropriate response to the key planning issues identified for the District. It has also been confirmed that it is in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy.

6.0 MEASURES THAT ARE TO BE TAKEN TO MONITOR THE SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF IMPLEMENTING THE CORE STRATEGY

6.1 A single monitoring framework is being developed to encompass the various documents that will be prepared as part of the Harrogate District LDF. This will ensure that significant sustainability effects of implementing the plan are monitored to identify any unforeseen sustainability effects and enable remedial action to be taken. Proposals for monitoring key effects are set out at Chapter 9 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report. Monitoring information in connection with the Sustainability Appraisal will be set out in the Annual Monitoring Report and will be available to view on the Council's website.