



## **Wyre Council**

**Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic  
Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

**Post-Adoption Statement**

**March 2019**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This post-adoption statement is the final output of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process. It describes the way in which Wyre Council (the 'council') has taken environmental and sustainability considerations and the views of consultees into account when preparing the Wyre Local Plan (the 'Local Plan').
- 1.2 This post-adoption statement satisfies the requirements for post adoption procedure and demonstrates compliances with the requirements of Regulation 16 (4) in the SEA regulations. This statement therefore sets out:
- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme (section 4 of this document);
  - How the environmental report has been taken into account (section 5);
  - How opinions expressed in response to the consultation on the SA Reports have been taken into account (section 6);
  - The reasons for choosing the plan or programme, as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with (section 7); and
  - The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme (section 8).

## 2. Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 2.1 The SA is a systematic process for assessing the social, economic and environmental impacts of a plan and aims to ensure that sustainable development is at the heart of the plan-making process.
- 2.2 It is a legal requirement that the Local Plan is subject to SA; this is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Guidance stipulates that the SA must comply with the requirements of the SEA Regulations, which transpose the SEA Directive into UK law.
- 2.3 SEA is a systematic process for evaluating the environmental consequences of plans and programmes to ensure that environmental issues are integrated and assessed at the earliest opportunity in the decision making process. Article 1 of the SEA Directive states that the aim is to: "...provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development".
- 2.4 It is possible to combine the processes of SEA and SA because they share a number of similarities. The National Planning Practice Guidance<sup>1</sup> recommends that the SA and SEA be conducted as a combined process (i.e. a process which assesses social,

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<sup>1</sup> National Planning Practice Guidance: Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal

economic and environmental effects) and this process and resulting reports have integrated these separate assessment, in accordance with the following requirements:

- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
- Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulation 2012;
- EU Directive 201/42/EC ('the SEA Directive');
- The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ('the SEA Regulations'); and
- Paragraph 165 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012<sup>2</sup>

2.5 For the purpose of this statement, the integrated appraisal approach will be hereafter referred to as the Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

### 3. Wyre Local Plan 2011 – 2031

3.1 The Wyre Local Plan sets out a long-term vision for the whole of the borough to 2031 and provides the statutory planning framework for the borough for non-minerals and waste matters. The Local Plan contains a vision, objectives and overall strategic framework to guide growth, detailed policies to manage development and land allocations for housing and employment developments, along with policies to protect and enhance areas.

3.2 The preparation of the Local Plan has taken place over three years and has been informed by numerous evidence based studies and technical assessments. A key aspect of this preparation has also included Wyre Borough Council's constructive cooperation with neighbouring authorities and other key organisations on cross boundary strategic matters, which has included meeting the councils Duty to Co-operate.

3.3 The Local Plan has been developed through an iterative process with comments made through consultation being taken into consideration at each stage of its preparation:

- Scoping – consultation<sup>3</sup> on the context, SA objectives and established baseline between June and July 2014;
- Plan Preparation – consultation on the Local Plan Issues and Options document was undertaken between 17 June and 7 August 2015; and

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<sup>2</sup> The Wyre Local Plan was submitted to the government for examination prior to the publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018 and 2019. It is the policies of the 2012 NPPF, including the test of soundness that continue to apply for the purposes of examining the Wyre Local Plan. Paragraph 32 of the NPPF 2019 continues to require the Local Plan preparation to be informed by a sustainability appraisal. The substance of NPPF 2019 in relation to the SA process is not material different.

<sup>3</sup> Consultation with the three statutory environmental consultation bodies: Environment Agency, English Heritage (now Historic England) and Natural England.

- Publication – consultation on the Publication draft Wyre Local Plan document was undertaken between 22 September and 3 November 2017.
- 3.4 The Local Plan (Publication draft Local Plan with minor modifications) was submitted to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination on 23 January 2018. Following the examination hearings which were held in May and June 2018, the Inspector recommended a number of Main Modifications i.e. changes to the Publication Draft Local Plan that he considers necessary to make it sound.
- 3.5 In light of the Main Modifications, a SA addendum that considered the Main Modifications was produced. The Council undertook consultation on the Main Modifications and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Addendum between 12 September and 24 October 2018.
- 3.6 Following consideration of the consultation comments, the Inspector issued his report dated 1 February 2019 that found the Local Plan to meet the necessary requirements and criteria for soundness in the NPPF. The Local Plan was then subsequently adopted by the council on 28 February 2019.

#### 4. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme?

- 4.1 This section explains how the environmental and sustainability considerations have been integrated into the Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal process.

##### Environmental and Sustainability Consideration in the Local Plan

- 4.2 The Local Plan is built upon the key principle of sustainable development and its three dimensions of social, economic and environmental, as set out in the NPPF 2012<sup>4</sup>:

**An economic role** - contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

**A social role** - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

**An environmental role** - contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use

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<sup>4</sup> See footnote 2 in relation to 2012 and 2019 NPPF position. The substance of the definition of economic, social and environmental set out in paragraph 7 of the NPPF 2012 is not materially different to that set out in paragraph 8 of the NPPF 2019.

natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

- 4.3 The three principles of sustainable development are interdependent and should be pursued in mutually supportive ways so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives. These principles of sustainable development have been integral to the key decisions made in the preparation of the Local Plan. This has been achieved through the preparation of a comprehensive and robust evidence base with supporting technical assessments. In relation to environmental considerations, this has included: Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Green Infrastructure Study, Ecological Appraisals and Highway Assessment. A Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)<sup>5</sup> has also been undertaken and integrated into the SA process. An ongoing process of engagement with statutory consultees, key stakeholders and the public on the emerging Local Plan, the evidence base and technical assessments (including the Sustainability Appraisal) has also been undertaken, which has including meeting the council's Duty to Co-operate requirement.

#### [Environmental and Sustainability Considerations in the Sustainability Appraisal](#)

- 4.4 The SA process considers the environmental and sustainability issues arising from the Local Plan. This is undertaken through an appraisal framework which underpins the assessment methodology and comprises a series of SA Objectives and guide questions (covering social, economic and environmental issues) that help to measure the performance of the various components of the Local Plan. The SA objectives and guide questions have been developed using the review of other relevant plans, programmes and environmental objectives, the baseline data, the key issues and opportunities, and the outcomes of consultation on the SA scope. The SA Objectives and guide questions are set out in table 3-4 in the SA Report 2017 and the assessment has measured the performance of the Local Plans:

- Strategic Objectives;
- Spatial development strategy;
- Site allocations; and
- Development Management Policies

- 4.5 As part of the appraisal process, the SA has recommended mitigation measures in order to mitigate potential adverse (negative) effects and to further increase any potential positive beneficial effects. The recommended mitigation measures have been considered, by the council in developing and refining the Local Plan and incorporated as appropriate into the Publication draft Wyre Local Plan. The assessment of site allocations and their reasonable alternatives were also important considerations in determining the council's final site allocations, which were

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<sup>5</sup> The process by which the effects of a plan or programme on European sites are assessed is known as 'Habitat Regulations Assessment'. Regulation 102 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) (the 'Habitat Regulations') requires that competent authorities assess the potential impacts of land use plans on the Natura 2000 network of European protected sites to determine whether there will be any 'likely significant effects' on any European site as a result of implementing the plan either alone or 'in combination' with other plans or projects; and if so, whether these effects will result in any adverse effects on that site's integrity with reference to the site's conservation objectives.

considered as part of the site selection process, as set out in the Site Allocation Background Paper. The SA Addendum, which considered the Main Modifications did not consider any further mitigation measures to be necessary.

## **5. How the environmental report has been taken into account?**

- 5.1 This section explains how the results of the SA Reports have been taken into account.
- 5.2 The Local Plan has been developed as an iterative process. The SA consultants undertaking the SA and preparing the SA reports have worked closely alongside the plan-making team to ensure the emerging findings and recommendations for the SA process were integrated into each stage of the Local Plan's development. An SA Report was issued at each preparation stage and these SA reports were available when that version of the Local Plan was issued for consultation, as set out in section 3 of this report.
- 5.3 The formal SA Report (Proposed draft) and the SA Addendum that considered the Main Modifications were considered by the Inspector during the Local Plan Examination.

## **6. How opinions expressed in response to the consultation on the SA Reports have been taken into account?**

- 6.1 This section explains how the opinions expressed in response to the consultation on the SA reports have been taken into account in developing the Local Plan.
- 6.2 The Local Plan has been developed following consideration of consultation comments received as part of formal statutory consultation on the Local Plan and SA Report, in accordance with the SEA Regulations. The following SA Reports were prepared and published for consultation at each of the key Local Plan development stages:
- Scoping Report (2014);
  - Interim SA Report (2015);
  - SA Report (2017) – Publication Draft; and
  - SA Addendum (2018) – Post Submission Main Modifications
- 6.3 It was the council's initial intention to prepare a two-part Local Plan, a part one Core Strategy and a part two Allocation Plan. The initial SA Scoping was produced in 2011 and an interim SA Report of the Core Strategy Preferred Options was produced in 2012. However, following the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework in March 2012, the National Planning Practice Guidance in March 2014 and the updating of key evidence base documents, the council decided to prepare a single Local Plan in April 2014. As part of this, a revised SA Scoping Report specific to the Local Plan was prepared in June 2014.

- 6.4 The SA Scoping Report 2014 set out the context, SA objectives and established the baseline data. A minimum five week consultation was undertaken with the three statutory environmental consultation bodies (Environment Agency, English Heritage (now Historic England) and Natural England) in June and July 2014. The consultation comments received were used to update the next iteration of the SA and fed into the Local Plan preparation and SA assessment framework.
- 6.5 An Interim SA report was produced in 2015 that assessed the Wyre Local Plan Issues and Options document, which consisted of three development strategy options. The interim SA report underwent a minimum six week consultation alongside the Local Plan Issues and Options document in June-August 2015. Responses received as part of the consultation have been considered as part of updating the SA and the Local Plan preparation.
- 6.6 The SA Report was produced in 2017 and assessed the Publication draft Wyre Local Plan, which consisted of the proposed site allocations and development management policies. The SA Report also assessed reasonable alternative options that were considered as part of the site selection process. The SA Report underwent a minimum six week consultation alongside the Publication draft Wyre Local Plan document in September – November 2017. Responses received as part of the consultation were considered by the Council, and where appropriate minor modifications to the Local Plan were proposed by the council and submitted with the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Examination in January 2018.
- 6.7 Following the Local Plan examination hearing sessions, the Inspector recommended a number of Main Modifications i.e. changes to the Publication Draft Local Plan that he considered to be necessary for soundness. To consider the Main Modifications, an addendum to the SA Report was produced. The SA Addendum also provided an assessment of the likely impacts of delivering the housing requirement in comparison to the lower and upper limits of the housing objectively assessed need range (457 and 479 dwellings per annum). The SA Addendum concluded that the Main Modifications do not result in any significant changes to the SA, or require any further mitigation measure or changes to the proposed monitoring framework set out in the SA Report (2017). The SA Addendum underwent a minimum six week consultation alongside the Local Plan Main Modifications in September – October 2018. Responses received as part of the consultation were considered by the Inspector in preparing his report.
- 6.8 The comments received throughout the consultations outlined above have informed the scope of the SA, helping to in turn shape the development of the Local Plan from inception to adoption.



## 7. The reasons for choosing the plan or programme, as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with?

- 7.1 This section explains the reasons for choosing the Local Plan, as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives considered.
- 7.2 The SEA Regulation 12 (2) require the assessment of the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the Local Plan and the 'reasonable alternatives' taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the Local Plan.
- 7.3 Government guidance advises that in considering 'reasonable alternatives', only realistic and relevant alternatives should be considered and they should be sufficiently distinct to enable a meaningful comparison of their different environmental effects. As any alternatives for the Local Plan need to be 'reasonable', alternatives that were not 'reasonable' were not considered through the SA appraisal. For example, in relation to housing allocations, reasonable alternative options were based on sites that were considered suitable and available in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and accord with the residential development principals. For employment allocations, reasonable alternative options were based on sites recommended for employment in the Employment Land Study<sup>6</sup> that accord with the employment development principles.
- 7.4 During the preparation of the Local Plan, the development strategy options, the policy and site allocation proposals and reasonable alternatives were considered and assessed through the SA. The SA process has therefore considered:
- Three alternative development strategy options, plus the final strategy option:
    - Fylde Coast peninsula main urban area focus;
    - A6 Corridor focus;
    - Dispersal;
    - 'Managed Dispersal'
  - The housing Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) range for Wyre Borough:
    - Proposed approach: 9,280 dwellings at 464 dwellings per annum (dpa);
    - Reasonable alternative: 9,140 dwellings at 457dpa;
    - Reasonable alternative: 9,580 at 479dpa
  - Site allocations, including consideration of 37 rejected alternative sites.
  - Assessment of eight Strategic Policies; six Core Development Management Policies; 10 Housing Policies; 15 Economy Policies and seven Site Allocation Policies;
- 7.5 The Local Plan and SA process has been developed through an iterative process, with the council evaluating and integrating the findings of the Interim SA, internal drafts of the SA and SA Report into policy development and site selection process. Comments made through the consultation have also been taken into consideration at each stage of its preparation.

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<sup>6</sup>Wyre Employment Land and Commercial Leisure Study 2012 and Wyre Employment Land Study Update 2015.

7.6 The SA findings were not the only factor taken into account when determining the content of the Local Plan and a key consideration in developing the Local Plan was achieving a balance between the aims of meeting housing needs and facilitating economic growth against the need to protect and enhance Wyre's natural and built environment. Because of this, the SA framework will indeed identify both potential positive and negative effects for the various proposals and their reasonable alternatives, such that it is not possible to rank the options solely on their score alone in order to select the final option and a balance has to be sought. The SA has also recommended mitigation measures to overcome negative effects and measures to enhance positive effects. The council has considered the recommended mitigation measures in developing the Local Plan. The Local Plan also includes a range of Development Management policies that aim to protect and promote sustainable development (social, economic and environmental) in the borough and contribute towards mitigating potential negative effects.

## **8. The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme?**

8.1 This section explains the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental and sustainability effects of the implementation of the Local Plan.

8.2 The SEA Regulations require the council to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Local Plan with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage to allow appropriate remedial action to be undertaken.

8.3 The monitoring framework has been developed to measure the performance of the Local Plan against changes in defined indicators that are linked to its implementation. These indicators have been developed based on the following:

- The objectives, targets and indicators that were developed for the SA Framework;
- Features of the baseline that will indicate the effects of the plan;
- The likely significant effects that were identified during the assessment; and
- The mitigation measures that were proposed to offset or reduce significant adverse effects.

8.4 The monitoring framework has been designed to focus mainly on significant sustainability effects including those:

- That indicate a likely breach of international, national or local legislation, recognised guidelines or standard;
- That may give rise to irreversible damage, with a view to identifying trends before such damage is caused;
- Where there was uncertainty in the SA, and where monitoring would enable preventative or mitigation measures to be taken.

- 8.5 As well as measuring specific indicators linked to the implementation of the Local Plan, contextual monitoring of social, environmental and economic change has been included i.e. a regular review of baseline conditions in the borough. This enables the measurement of the overall effects of the plan.
- 8.6 There are numerous SA indicators available and it is not always possible to identify how a specific plan has impacted a receptor, for example housing provision is likely to be influenced by a number of actions and different plans. A thorough analysis of the data collated and the emerging trends will, therefore be important.
- 8.7 A fundamental aspect of developing the SA monitoring strategy is to link with existing monitoring programmes and to prevent duplication of other monitoring work that is already being undertaken. Consideration has, therefore been given to the Performance Monitoring Framework that will be used to monitor delivery of the plan policies.
- 8.8 Recommendations for monitoring the social, environmental and economic effects of implementing the Local Plan are presented in full the SA Report (August 2017) – chapter 6. The impacts predicted in the SA will not be realised until development occurs. The monitoring framework presented in the full SA Report can then be updated to include targets as and when they are developed.
- 8.9 Local Planning Authorities are also required to produce an annual Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) which is the main mechanism for assessing the performance and the effects of the Local Plan.
- 8.10 The recommended SA monitoring framework will be incorporated into and monitored alongside the Local Plan monitoring framework and reported in the annual AMR. The AMR will be available to view on the councils website.