

Eastleigh Borough

Local Plan Review

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Non-technical summary

December 2024



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future together



This is a non-technical summary of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. This supports the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review. It summarises the review of the key policies and baseline information to inform the sustainability appraisal, and sets out the sustainability appraisal assessment process.

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1. Sustainability Appraisal: overview

1.1 Eastleigh Borough Council has commenced work on the Local Plan Review. This will replace the adopted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2022) and help to shape future development across the Borough. It will form part of the Council’s development plan alongside the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan and any neighbourhood plans in the Borough which may be ‘made’ in future.

1.2 All local planning authorities are required to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for their Local Plans. The SA process incorporates the requirements of the SEA Regulations and fully considers the social, environmental and economic effects of emerging Local Plans. The preparation of the SA is an iterative process which means each of the relevant stages, including this Scoping Report, can be revisited. The SA is intended to assist in the formulation of a preferred spatial development scenario against a range of ‘reasonable alternatives’ - other possible choices. The SA identifies ways of mitigating and enhancing the social, environmental and economic effects that arise from proposed development.

1.3 Sustainability Appraisal has five stages:

A. Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope (‘Scoping Report’)

B. Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects

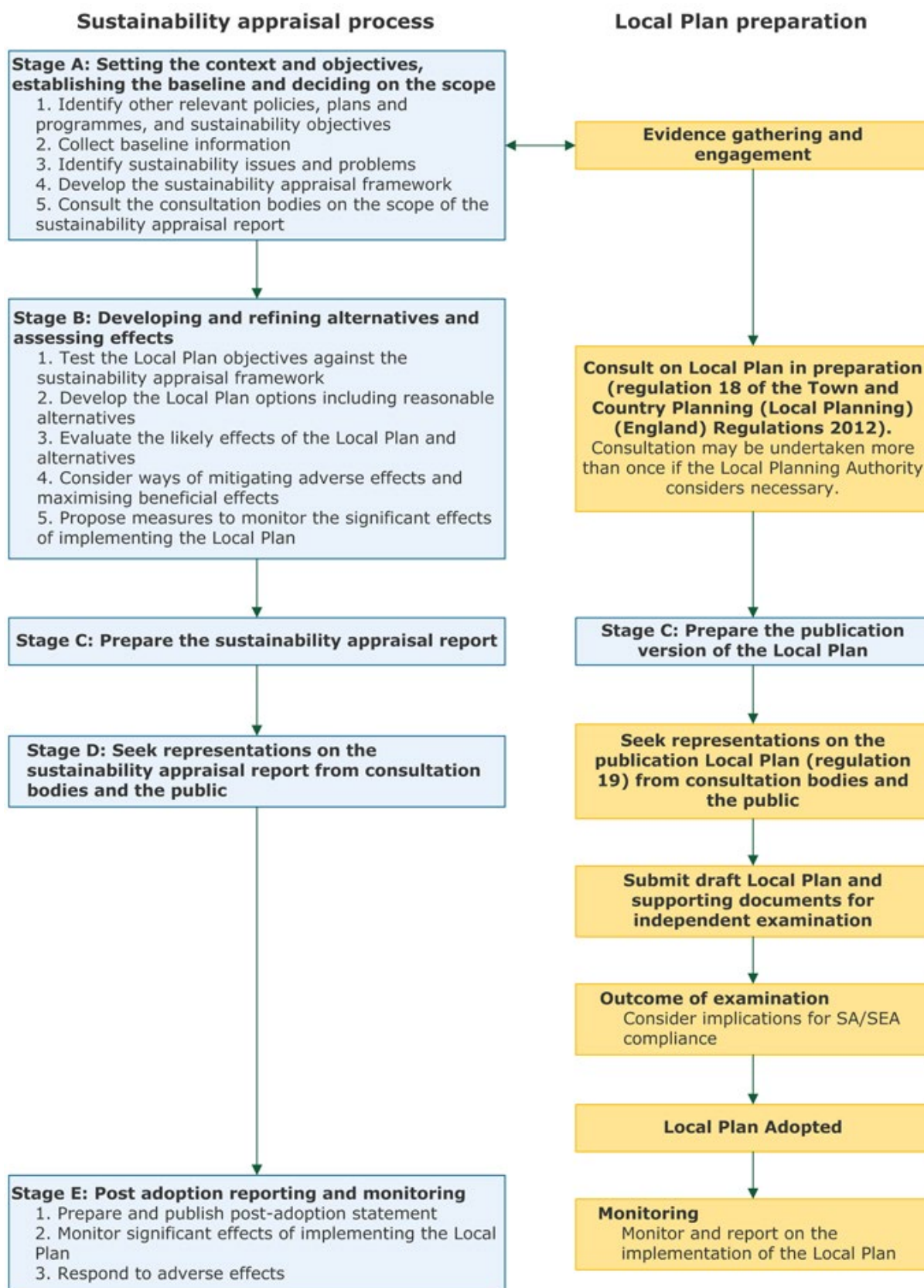
C. Sustainability Appraisal report preparation

D. Seek representations on SA Report from consultation bodies (see Table 1), the public and other key stakeholders

E. Post-plan adoption reporting and monitoring

1.4 The figure overleaf captures how sustainability appraisal and the Local Plan interrelate during the plan-making process:

Figure 1: Relationship between Sustainability Appraisal and Local Plan preparation



Source: A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (ODPM, 2005)

2. Introduction to the Scoping Report

2.1 The Scoping Report constitutes ‘Stage A’ of the SA process. The Scoping Report is itself, subdivided into five sections, each informing the last, as shown in Table 1 below. This ‘scoping’ process identifies the key environmental, social and economic issues which help construct the framework against which development proposals in the Local Plan area assessed. Scoping also assists with identifying objectives for the Local Plan itself to address, especially where these are linked to development and its effects.

Table 1: Scoping Report at-a-glance

| Scoping: stages | Purpose of overall report and stages | Where covered |
|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Overall aim | To set out the context, objectives and approach of the SA To identify relevant environmental, economic and social issues and objectives | Scoping Report |
| ‘A1’: Identifying other relevant plans, programmes, environmental protection and sustainability objectives | To establish how the plan or programme is affected by outside factors, to suggest ideas for how any constraints can be addressed and to help identify the objectives for SA | Scoping Report (Appendix 1) |
| ‘A2’: Collecting baseline information | To provide an evidence base for environmental problems, prediction of effects, and monitoring To help in the development of Sustainability Appraisal objectives | Scoping Report (Appendix 2) |
| ‘A3’: Identifying sustainability issues and problems | To help focus the SA and streamline the subsequent problems, prediction of effects, and monitoring To help in the development of Sustainability Appraisal objectives. | Scoping Report (Appendix 3) |
| ‘A4’: Develop the sustainability appraisal framework and SA objectives | To provide a means by which the environmental performance of the Local Plan ‘reasonable alternative’ scenarios can be assessed | Scoping Report (Appendix 4) |
| ‘A5’: Consult the consultation bodies ¹ on the Scoping Report | To ensure that the SA covers the likely significant environmental effects of the Local Plan | Scoping Report and appendices |

Source: *A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive* (ODPM, 2005)

¹ Natural England, Environment Agency, Historic England, National Highways

2.2 Regulations state that SA must, critically, assess effects on the environmental topic areas that are captured below in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Environmental topic areas

- Biodiversity
- Population
- Human Health
- Flora
- Fauna
- Soil
- Water
- Air
- Climatic Factors
- Material Assets
- Cultural Heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage)
- Landscape

3. Eastleigh Borough in context

3.1 Eastleigh Borough adjoins the eastern and northern boundaries of the city of Southampton; Test Valley borders to the north-west, Winchester district and the South Downs National Park to the north and north-east, Fareham borough to the east, and New Forest district to the south-west, across Southampton Water. Figures 3 and 4, below, shows the Borough in context and key transportation networks.

Figure 3: Location of Eastleigh Borough in Hampshire



Figure 4: Eastleigh Borough and main transport networks



3.2 The main town in the Borough is Eastleigh. The Borough includes two other large urban areas – Chandler’s Ford and Hedge End – and some sizeable settlements at Bishopstoke, Fair Oak, Horton Heath, West End, Bursledon, Botley, Hamble and Netley. The Borough covers an area of 79.8 sq. km. It is predominantly suburban in character, reflecting many of the pressures that might be expected in a location bordering a major city, but it retains some areas of countryside that are locally significant, because of the separation they provide between settlements, their biodiversity and/or landscape characteristics.

3.3 Features of the Borough include renowned sailing venues on the River Hamble; an international cricketing venue at the Utilita Bowl; Southampton Airport, and an important rail, aviation and maritime heritage.

4. Eastleigh Borough: Key sustainability issues

4.1 The summary below captures some of the key sustainability issues captured by the scoping exercise. For a fuller description please refer to the main Scoping Report and its appendices, particularly Appendix 3, which captures the range.

Housing

In common with many parts of England, affordability - house prices relative to income - is poor and has become steadily worse. There is a need to find sustainable and accessible locations for new housing in the Borough. Affordability of housing is a major issue in the Borough, resulting in significant demand for Affordable Housing. There is a need for a greater variety of housing to be delivered in the Borough for all groups and communities.

Business and economy

Economic indicators in the Borough are mixed. There is a need to ensure the competitiveness of the local economy, including provision of sufficient premises, improving skills levels, ensuring that people are able to access employment opportunities and employment rates are increased in areas of higher deprivation.

Climate change

In the Borough, continued development will generate more domestic energy consumption and more trips, which could generate more emissions. It is vital that the Borough continues to reduce carbon emissions. Trips need to be managed to support sustainable / lower carbon forms of transport.

Water resource & quality

With further development in and around the Borough it is important to plan to maintain water supply and waste-water treatment in-order to meet the needs of a growing population and protect the environment. Numerous watercourses flow through the Borough and, in accordance with the Water Framework Directive, it is important that water quality is maintained or improved as required. Without mitigation, nutrient discharges from new development, in combination with other sources, would have an adverse effect on major environmental designations in The Solent and River Itchen. Suitable mitigation from development is to ensure that it achieves 'nutrient neutrality'. As regards such processing facilities in the Borough a target date of 1 April 2030 has been placed upon Chickenhall Eastleigh wastewater treatment station, to reach required standards of, respectively, 0.25 mg/l (phosphorus) and 10mg/l (nitrogen).

Flood risk

Specific areas of the Borough, associated with the rivers Itchen, Hamble, Monks Brook and their tributaries, are at risk of flooding. Climate change is likely to generate more flooding, hotter weather and droughts.

Transport & connectivity

Levels of car ownership in the Borough are relatively high. The Borough benefits from a comprehensive network of motorways, A roads and other roads. However, a range of locations experience traffic congestion at peak times. Across the Borough, and particularly to serve key destinations, there is a need to improve rail and bus services and infrastructure - including access to and interchange facilities with these services.

Air quality

There are four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in the Borough, covering central Eastleigh, the M3, Hamble Lane and Botley High Street. The air quality monitoring point in Southampton Road (central Eastleigh) shows nitrogen dioxide and particulate (PM2.5 and 10) levels exceed targets. The points at Steele Close, Chandlers Ford and the Point, central Eastleigh show that nitrogen dioxide levels exceed targets. The high levels of reliance on travel by unsustainable vehicular modes leading to road traffic congestion, is having an adverse effect on air quality.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity in the Borough is under pressure from both existing and future potential development, and from climate change. Impacts on biodiversity arise from:

- Recreational pressures on designations along the Solent coast and in the New Forest;
- Pressures on water resources including abstraction from the River Itchen, and disposal of waste-water, both of which can contribute to diminishing water quality, including with regard to nutrients;
- Other forms of pollution including poor air quality, contaminated land, and surface water run-off from urban areas and from intensively farmed land;
- Direct loss and/or fragmentation of habitats, arising from development and related infrastructure, but also from sea level rise, which contributes to erosion and coastal squeeze;
- Increases in noise and light pollution.

Historic environment

There are a range of heritage assets in the Borough, including 8 conservation areas, 176 listed buildings, locally listed buildings, 8 scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, a historic wreck, and archaeological assets. Elements of this Borough's historic environment, including archaeological remains and historic landscapes, may be at risk from neglect, and from development pressures.

Deprivation

Whilst no wards in the Borough fall within the 10% of most deprived wards nationally, there are some pockets of relatively higher deprivation in communities such as Eastleigh South, Eastleigh Central, Bursledon and Old Netley, Netley Abbey and Bishopstoke West. The south of the Borough is not as well-served with arts and cultural facilities as the remainder.

Health

Health inequalities exist between the most and least deprived communities in the Borough. There is a need to ensure that provision of high-quality, accessible open space is maintained and incorporated within planned development. There are significant opportunities for improvements to green infrastructure networks in the Borough and there is considerable scope for an improvement in the Borough’s cycling networks, and an enhancement of the connectivity of walking routes.

5. Sustainability Objectives for Eastleigh Borough

- 5.1 Having identified the key sustainability issues above – more extensively reported in Appendix 3 of the SA Scoping Report – a set of sustainability objectives can be designed. These SA objectives are summarised in Table 2 below. It is against these that development proposals in the Local Plan will be appraised.

Table 2: Sustainability Appraisal Framework - Eastleigh Borough

| Sustainability Theme | SA Objective |
|---|---|
| 1. Housing | “Provide sufficient quantity and mix of housing to meet identified needs, including affordable and specialist needs” |
| 2. Health and Well-Being | “Safeguard and improve community health, safety and wellbeing” |
| 3. Economy | “Develop a dynamic and diverse economy” |
| 4. Transport Accessibility / Connectivity | “Reduce road traffic and congestion through reducing car dependency and providing a range of high-quality sustainable travel choices” |
| 5. Natural Resources | “Protect and conserve natural resources” |
| 6. Pollution | “Reduce air, soil, water, light and noise pollution” |
| 7. Climate Change Adaptation | “Plan for anticipated levels of climate change including flood risk and coastal change” |
| 8. Climate Change Mitigation | “Minimise Eastleigh Borough’s contribution to climate change by reducing its carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions” |

| Sustainability Theme | SA Objective |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 9. Waste Management | “Manage waste in the following order: prevent, re-use, recycle, other recovery, (disposal)” |
| 10. Biodiversity and Geodiversity | “Protect, restore and enhance biodiversity, mitigating adverse effects, adapt to climate change and protect geodiversity” |
| 11. GI, Open Space and Leisure | “Protect and enhance the Borough’s multifunctional green and blue infrastructure networks” |
| 12. Landscape and Townscape | “Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening distinctiveness and its special qualities” |
| 13. Heritage and Culture | “Conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets, protect the historic environment and support its effective management” |
| 14. Delivery | “Delivery of strategic proposals” |

5.2 The SA Framework in the table above is the basic one that is used to assess non-geographic i.e. thematic elements in the Local Plan. Proposals that will be visible on the ground are appraised using a more comprehensive Framework that may be found in the main Scoping Report.

6. Consultation and stakeholder involvement

6.1 Regulations require consultation with relevant government agencies bodies; these have already been consulted on the Scoping Report, and have assisted in making it – especially the SA Framework – more robust²:

- Historic England
- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- National Highways

6.2 This SA Scoping Report is available for public consultation alongside the Issues and Options Local Plan. Comments from any organisation or individual are welcome and will be considered alongside those of the statutory bodies.

6.3 Public and stakeholder input plays a crucial role in shaping sustainability appraisal (SA) processes. Involvement is important:

- It ensures the process is transparent, fostering trust in the decision-making process

² Please see Appendix 5 for further detail of this

- Stakeholders and the public often provide valuable local knowledge and context-specific insights that can improve the relevance and accuracy of SA
- Engaging with the public and stakeholders early in the SA process helps identify potential issues, conflicts, and areas of concern before they become significant problems
- Early input allows for the development of proactive solutions and mitigation strategies, which can save time and resources in the long run
- Stakeholders and the public can offer innovative ideas and alternative approaches that might not hitherto have been considered
- Engaging with communities empowers them by giving them a stake in the decision-making process that affects their environment and quality of life.



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