

Waltham Forest Local Development Framework



Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Post Adoption Statement

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1 Introduction

1.1 Waltham Forest Council adopted its Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy document on 1 March 2012. The Core Strategy sets out the strategic planning framework for managing growth and change in Waltham Forest over the next 15 years.

1.2 This statement has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (16) (3) and (4). These regulations transpose into UK legislation European Directive 2001/42/EC (the 'SEA Directive') which require a statement to be produced on adoption of a plan or programme, to detail:

- how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
- how the environmental report has been taken into account;
- how opinions expressed through public consultation (on the SEA and SA process) have been taken into account;
- the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- the measures that are taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

1.3 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, all development plan documents (DPDs) prepared by local planning authorities must undergo Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The Core Strategy is one of the development plan documents under the Waltham Forest Local Development Framework. The purpose of the SA process is to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of a plan to help ensure that decisions are made that contribute to achieving sustainable development.

1.4 Government guidance clarifies that a single SA can also incorporate the requirements for a Strategic Environmental Assessment required by European Directive 2001/42/EC (the 'SEA Directive').⁽¹⁾

2 How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme

2.1 Environmental considerations have been built into the Core Strategy. Through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process every policy has been tested for its environmental integrity. Sustainability appraisal has performed a key role in providing a sound evidence base for the plan and has informed the evolution of the plan. 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 into the Sustainability Appraisal exercise undertaken.

¹ This Guidance has now been replaced by the Plan Making Manual (PMM), which was published by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) in 2009.

2.2 Sustainability Appraisal commenced during the pre-production and evidence gathering stage, initially using the Scoping Report produced in July 2006. This was subject to consultation with the statutory consultees. In light of the time lapse between the production of the Scoping Report and the development of the Core Strategy Issues and Options document, and the potential for a change in the baseline situation in the Borough, a revised and updated Scoping Report was produced in October 2008.

2.3 At each stage in the preparation of the Core Strategy, policies have been tested against the Sustainability Appraisal framework to predict and evaluate the effects of the Core Strategy. As the Core Strategy evolved, policies have been refined and ways of mitigating adverse effects, maximising beneficial effects and measures to improve the sustainability outcomes have been considered. A Sustainability Appraisal Report was published at each stage of the plan making process culminating in the Final Sustainability Appraisal document which was submitted for examination alongside the Core Strategy.

3 How the environmental report has been taken into account

Issues and Options

3.1 The Issues and Options document presented a number of policy options. Thematic options related to subject matters on physical, social and economic development and environmental protection from which the strategy for the future development of the Borough evolved - how Waltham Forest grows and how such growth should be distributed geographically. The Issues and Options document identified the key spatial issues, the options for addressing these and their sustainability implications. The document also highlighted the sustainability implications likely to be associated with the options considered which informed the preparation of the Preferred Options document.

Preferred Options

3.2 A sustainability appraisal report was published alongside the Preferred Options document in December 2009. Each preferred option was assessed in terms of the overall balance of impacts on an agreed set of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) objectives outlined in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. The appraisal considered whether the impact would be expected to be positive, negative, neutral or uncertain. The SA found that for the most part, the emerging policies were likely to progress the SA Objectives, but that in a limited amount of cases some policies could be strengthened to have more beneficial sustainability effects. Where a potentially negative impact was identified mitigation measures were proposed, including recommendations on how policies could be amended or refined to become more sustainable. These recommendations were taken forward into the Proposed Submission Document.

Proposed Submission

3.3 There were a considerable number of amendments following the publication of the Preferred Options document for consultation. The majority of policies were restructured/ordered and their content revised. The reasons for revisions to policies

arising from consultation responses are documented in the Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation Report. Policies were also revised following consultation on the Proposed Submission Core Strategy in January 2011. Table 3.4 of the Core Strategy SA Report (February 2012) shows the evolution of policies since the Preferred Options. Some policies were reworded between the Preferred Options and Proposed Submission stages to reflect the recommendations of the SA Report.

3.4 A Final SA report was submitted alongside the Core Strategy in May 2011 with each policy being assessed against the 23 Sustainability Appraisal objectives. The final set of amendments to policies was undertaken following receipt of the Inspector's binding report. Detailed information setting out how SA recommendations have been incorporated into the Core Strategy can be found in the Core Strategy SA Report (February 2012).

4 How opinions expressed through consultation have been taken into account

4.1 The SEA Directive requires responses to consultation to be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption or submission to a legislative procedure. As required by the SEA regulations, the Council undertook consultation on the scope of the sustainability appraisal with the statutory bodies. Comments received have helped to improve the SA Framework.

4.2 Core Strategy consultation documents at the key stages have been accompanied by both SA and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) reports (full and non-technical reports). Hard copies have been made available at the Council's offices and libraries together with electronic versions being made available on the Council's website. Throughout the SA process there have been opportunities for public and stakeholder consultation and comment. Consultation reports on the Core Strategy have been published at the key stages. These reports set out how comments made have been considered and have identified (where necessary) the changes to be made. All comments have been considered in detail and used to inform the Core Strategy's policies and proposals. Consultation responses to the Proposed Submission SA Report is included in Table 3.5 of the Final SA Report (February 2012).

5 The reasons for choosing the plan as adopted

5.1 The Core Strategy has been tested through public consultation and the SA process and represents an appropriate response to the key planning issues identified in the borough. The document is in general conformity with the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (the London Plan). The starting point for the Core Strategy has been the Waltham Forest Sustainable Community Strategy. This set out the guiding principles and key priorities to be implemented through the Core Strategy.

5.2 In developing the Core Strategy, three spatial options for managing growth and change considered varied from what may be considered 'business as usual' (reflecting existing policy and practice) through to 'moderate' change and 'significant' or 'extreme' change. Section 3.3 of the SA Report (February 2012) describes these options in greater detail. The plan has been informed by a careful assessment of the

effects of the spatial options considered. In evaluating and selecting the preferred spatial option, the Council considered the social, environmental and economic implications of the pursuing the alternative options. The reasons for choosing the plan is based on the most appropriate alternative. Through the SA process, the economic, social and environmental effects of the plan have been tested and found to perform well generally.

6 Measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant effects of the plan

6.1 Having predicted and evaluated all the significant effects arising from the Core Strategy, the outline monitoring requirements are provided in Table 19.2 of the SA Report (February 2012). This identifies the key areas where the plan is expected to have significant sustainability effects and provides details of how such effects will be monitored.

6.2 Appendix 3 of the Core Strategy generally sets out the monitoring framework for policies in the Core Strategy document. The monitoring framework includes many of the indicators and targets identified by the SA report. The Waltham Forest Annual Monitoring Report will be the main mechanism for assessing the performance and effect of policies contained in the Core Strategy.

7 Conclusion

7.1 The Sustainability Appraisal process undertaken has helped to ensure that the Waltham Forest LDF Core Strategy contributes to the delivery of sustainable development. The Core Strategy as adopted is the most appropriate strategy, given the reasonable alternatives considered.

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