

Three Rivers District Council

Three Rivers Core Strategy Further Preferred
Options – Consultation version
Sustainability Report - Addendum
November

Halcrow Group Limited *in association with*
Centre for Sustainability at TRL Limited 2009

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Contents Amendment Record

This report has been issued and amended as follows:

Issue	Revision	Description	Date	Signed	Verified
01	00	Core Strategy Further Preferred Options SA Report Addendum	09 Nov 09	KD	RG (TRL)

1. Introduction

Halcrow in association with the Centre for Sustainability (C4S) and were commissioned by Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) to conduct a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Core Strategy Preferred Options DPD in February 2009. During February and March 2009 the Core Strategy and the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) were consulted upon with members of the public. The Core Strategy was amended in October 2009 to take into account the results from the public consultation. The amendments relate to Policy CP2 and adding or altering the capacity of strategic and non strategic housing sites (hereafter referred to as housing sites) located across the district.

Following this amendment, TRDC commissioned Halcrow and C4S to conduct an SA on the amended version of the Core Strategy (Core Strategy Further Preferred Options). As the majority of the policies in the Core Strategy remain the same, the additional SA has been restricted to details relating to the housing sites. The assessment is presented in this report which has been produced as an addendum to the existing SA Report that was published in February 2009.

2. Methodology

Whilst the principles of the SA Framework in the Core Strategy SA Report, February 2009 are retained, the SA for specific sites is tailored to take into consideration more site specific information in order to assess the impact of development on sustainability at a local level.

The SA Report produced in February 2009, assessed the sustainability of the proposed policies at a national, regional and local level as suggested in the DCLG SA Guidance. However, in order to understand the sustainability effects on those specific sites proposed for housing, a more detailed localised assessment is considered to be the most appropriate methodology.

Each housing site has been assessed for its suitability against a series of environmental, social, economic and land use criteria and constraints. The assessment detail is presented for each site in Appendix A.

The specific sites were also evaluated for their overall environmental, social and economic effects rather than the effect of development of each site against every SEA/SA objective. This appraisal was guided by the SEA/SA objectives from the SA Framework. These overall sustainability assessments are presented at the bottom of each of the site assessment tables in Appendix A.

3. Appraisal results

The scale of proposed development at each site and proximity to environmental features such as wildlife sites and community facilities (e.g. for education, retail and health) are key criteria considered in this assessment. The following considerations have been taken into account during the assessment.

3.1 *Environmental*

- The assessment considers that the effect of development on sites close to Local Nature Reserve or Wildlife Sites varies with the scale of the proposed development. Larger scale developments are likely to impose more negative effects and in small scale developments effects may be mild or none although this is dependant on the biodiversity and recreation value of the LNR,
- Large scale development proposals are likely to add greater pressures to water demand and resources. These are assessed as a negative factor in the absence of any proposed mitigation. The assessment takes into account the Core Strategy Policy of adopting the Code for Sustainable Homes (CfSH) for new developments. Efforts in addition to adopting CfSH are expected in this assessment.

- The results for developing previously developed land located on greenbelts are mixed, as this combination of features supports PPS3 and the SA soil objective, but may adversely affect biodiversity. Therefore the assessment takes a case-by-case approach as large scale developments are likely to have negative effect on biodiversity and landscape features, whereas the effects of small scale development depends on the presence of any species or habitat of value.
- The effect of large scale developments on general traffic and further on air quality and emissions are taken to be negative, the assessment assuming absence of mitigation measures.

3.2 Social

- The proximity to health, education, retail and community facilities within walking distance is considered positive. As good transport links may compensate for limited availability of one of these amenities, sites with access to public transport score positive and sites with difficult services accessibility are scored negative.
- The contribution to meeting district housing targets, particularly affordable housing is regarded a positive.
- The effect of neighbouring land uses on proposed housing developments with respect to opportunity for nuisance and crime is assessed. For example, introducing residential uses adjacent to industrial sites may lead to places of congregation after office hours leading to potential criminal activity, considered negative effect on crime SEA objective.

4. Summary results

This section discusses the overall findings of the non-strategic and strategic sites assessment. Specific site assessment results are presented in Appendix A.

Amendment to policy wording of policy CP2- Housing Supply does not alter the SA assessment contained in the SA Report, February 2009.

4.1 Environmental

The majority of sites scored 'mild positive' followed by 'mild negative' for some sites. Overall, 26 out of a total of 50 sites are likely to progress to a 'mild positive' impact. A total of 15 sites have 'mild negative' effect, however 8 sites will require further information (therefore uncertain) with one site with a significant negative effect.

The site at Bluebell Drive, Bedmond, is Greenfield in nature, is located within the greenbelt, has good landscape views and part of the site is a wildlife site. A development consisting of 25 dwelling units is likely to affect biodiversity, recreation use and the views across the site to the greenbelt. A combination of all these negative effects has resulted in significant negative effects being assigned to this site. However, development of the site may also contribute to remediation of a past tip site, contributing to SA soil objectives.

4.2 Social

A total of 22 sites scored 'mild positive' with 14 sites being likely to have mild negative effect. The effect of 9 sites is uncertain due to lack of information being available to inform the assessment. Two sites have been assessed as having a significant positive effect and one site is likely to have significant negative effect.

Developments at Little Furze, South Oxhey and Gade View Gardens, Abbots Langley are considered to have significant positive effects on social aspects due to their significant contribution to affordable housing and the provision of extra care housing.

The site at Leavesden Aerodrome is currently suffering from limited access to basic amenities and key services such as education and public transport. This limitation could

have significant negative effects on social objectives if a development of 400 dwelling units occurs at the site with no additional provision, however it is expected that development on the site of 400 dwellings would contribute to provision of basic amenities and key services such as education and public transport.

4.3 Economic

Assessing the impact or contribution of smaller sites to the district economy will require detailed information, and is often complicated. For this reason, the results from the majority of the sites are marked as 'not known'. However, large and medium scale residential developments, such as at Little Furze or Waterdell, Bricket Wood are likely to bring positive inward investment into the district. An exception to this is East Kings Langley where the economic contribution is likely to be mixed, as development on this site will result in loss of employment land (to mixed use development), but a likely increase in inward investment.

5. Mitigation

The mitigation recommendations contained in the main SA Report (February 2009) will apply to the issues identified for each site in Appendix A. Mitigation for specific site issues are discussed in the Appendix against the particular site.

6. Further Details

This draft Sustainability Report Addendum, output of the Core Strategy Further Preferred Options appraisal will accompany the Core Strategy Further Preferred Options DPD, November 2009. Both documents will undergo public consultation which will take place in November and December 2009.

Please return responses to:

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Response from this consultation will be considered while producing SA Reports in the remaining stages of this SA Process.