

Three Rivers District Council

Three Rivers Site Allocations Document

Pre-Submission Preferred Options Additional Sites Sustainability Appraisal Note

July 2012

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1 Non-Technical Summary

1.1 Introduction

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires Sustainability Appraisals to be carried out for Local Planning Authority plans. In addition, the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) (hereafter referred to as The Regulations) require Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisals (SA) for a wide range of plans and programmes, including local plans.

SAs and SEAs aim to help make planning more sustainable and provide for a high level of protection of the environment. It is possible to satisfy the requirements of both pieces of legislation through a single appraisal process; an approach which is taken here. Three Rivers' emerging Site Allocations document, the adopted Core Strategy and other local plan documents will provide a long-term vision for development in Three Rivers and must be subject to both sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment.

The Council have already completed production of the Core Strategy, which was adopted in October 2011. Further documents such as the Site Allocations document identifies sites throughout the District for various land use purposes such as residential, schools, employment, retail, open spaces and for mixed use developments to enable delivery of the objectives for spatial development set out in the Core Strategy and the Community Strategy.

Many sites proposed for allocation were consulted on as part of the Core Strategy preparation process- the Core Strategy Further Preferred Options (2009) and later as a Site Allocations Issues and Options (2010). The Further Preferred Options contained many housing sites, and the Site Allocations Issues and Options listed sites for education, employment, retail and open spaces. Based on consultation responses and further available information, the Site Allocations Preferred Options (2012) identified preferred sites for:

- Residential
- Employment
- Education
- Retail
- Publicly Accessible Open Space
- South Oxhey and The Grove major development sites
- Green Belt revision and
- Major Developed Site (Maple Lodge Waste Water Treatment Works).

Following this consultation, there are a limited number of new sites that the Council considers there may be merit in allocating and these are included in the current Pre-Submission Preferred Options Additional Sites Consultation.

During 2006 a scoping process was carried out to help ensure that the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) covered the key sustainability Issues relevant to the Three Rivers Core Strategy. Relevant plans and programmes were reviewed to develop a wider understanding of the issues and priorities for Three Rivers, and information about the current and future social, environmental and economic characteristics of the District was compiled. A

Sustainability Appraisal Framework was drawn up, setting out Sustainability Objectives that aim to resolve the issues and problems identified. The information compiled during the scoping process – SA Scoping Report- was sent to statutory environment bodies and was also made available on the Three Rivers District Council website. For the Site Allocations document, in order to enable bespoke site analysis but to maintain continuity from the Core Strategy, the SA/SEA Framework of the Core Strategy SA Report has been adapted to suit site level analysis. The revised framework was circulated and views gathered from the four neighbouring Councils of Three Rivers District Council, St Albans City and District Council, Watford Borough Council and Dacorum Borough Council during December 2011.

All stages prior to this Site Allocations Pre-Submission Preferred Options Additional Sites Consultation have been subject to sustainability appraisal using the SA/SEA Framework and were consulted on with members of the public.

This current stage is subject to a sustainability appraisal as a Note to the Site Allocations Pre-Submission Sustainability Appraisal (January 2012) and should be read in conjunction with that report. This forms the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the Sustainability Appraisal Note and provides a summary in non-technical language of the principal findings of the assessment of the Pre-Submission Preferred Options Additional Sites Consultation. All Pre-Submission Preferred Options Additional Sites Consultation documents are now put forward for consultation with statutory consultees and members of the public to invite views and comments on the report.

1.2 Three Rivers Site Allocations Pre-Submission Preferred Options Additional Sites Version

The Site Allocations Pre-Submission Preferred Options Additional Sites identifies one new housing site, four new open spaces and one proposed change to the Green Belt to enable delivery of the objectives for spatial development set out in the Core Strategy and the Community Strategy.

The Site Allocations SA Report Note (main report of this Non-Technical Summary) discusses the results of the sustainability assessment of the proposed additional sites only. The report is a Note to the Site Allocations Pre-Submission Sustainability Appraisal (January 2012) and therefore should be read in conjunction with that report.

1.3 Site Allocations Pre-Submission Preferred Options Additional Sites Sustainability Appraisal

Each individual site in the Pre-Submission Preferred Options Additional Sites consultation has been evaluated against sustainability objectives for:

Severity – significant positive or negative, mild positive or negative, uncertain or neutral impact.

The geographical extent of the predicted effects are assumed to be typically local in nature, and are likely to be within the short and medium term (within the plan period of 2026).

The Site Allocations Pre-Submission (Preferred Options) Additional Sites SA Note has identified positive, negative and uncertain effects for sites and made recommendations, wherever appropriate to strengthen policies to achieve sustainable development.

This document is now being put forward for consultation with statutory stakeholders and members of the public.

1.4 Site Allocations Pre-Submission Preferred Options Additional Sites Assessment Results

This section sets out the results of the sustainability appraisal of the Additional sites, and discusses the potential contribution of each to achieving sustainability objectives. It should be noted that the assessment is a desk top based exercise and informed by the findings of the recently adopted Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal, plans and policies review relevant to the study topics and through baseline information as discussed in the Site Allocations Pre-Submission Sustainability Appraisal (January 2012) report.

Based on the findings of the SA, most Site Allocations Additional sites are likely to have minor positive, and in some cases uncertain contribution to the progression of sustainable development in Three Rivers and to the achievement of Core Strategy objectives. Minor negative effects have been predicted under various SA objectives for site AH(1) dependent on the site condition and on the proposed use at each site. Reference must be made to the Assessment summary matrix to gather summary predicted effects for each site under each sustainability objective. Reference must be made to the Detailed Assessment Matrix for commentary on the prediction. Where it has not been possible to predict the effects (i.e. there is uncertainty) an explanation of how the uncertainty may be addressed is provided in the detailed assessment matrix.

Table 1: Site Allocations Additional Sites Sustainability Assessment Summary Matrix

SEA Objective (abridged)	SA1- Biodiversity	SA 2&3- Water	SA4- Soils	SA 5&6- Climate change	SA7- Air Quality	SA8&9- Resource efficiency	SA10- Cultural Heritage	SA11- Landscape & Townscape	SA12- Health	SA13- Sustainable locations	SA14,15&16- Good Quality Housing	SA17- Crime	SA18- Economic Growth	SA19- Fairer access to services	SA20- Revitalise Town centre
AH(1) Land Opposite Alpine Press, Kings Langley	?	0	-	0	0	?	0	-	0	0	+	0	-	0	0
AOS(a) South Way Playing Fields, Abbots Langley	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	0
AOS(b) The Green, Croxley Green	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	0
AOS(c) Harrocks Wood, Chandlers Cross	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	0
AOS(d) Hill Farm Avenue, Leavesden	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	0
AGB(1) Leavesden	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The assessment found that overall positive or neutral effects are observed across most SA objectives. There are uncertain effects for additional site AH(1): Land opposite Alpine Press, Kings Langley against biodiversity and resource efficiency as the site is part greenfield and part previously developed. Impacts will depend on the location of development within the site so cannot be predicted without further details. Negative impacts on soils objectives would be minimised by limiting development to the previously developed part of the site.

The open space allocations are all predicted to bring benefits to the health of the local population (by providing access to walking and cycling that will lead to a healthy lifestyle). The proposals are all supportive of the SA19 objective-fairer access to services.

As the site AGB(1): Leavesden is already developed so the designation alteration i.e. removal of Green Belt is unlikely to have any impact on sustainability objectives.

1.5 Cumulative, Synergistic and Secondary Impacts

Guidance on Sustainability Appraisal requires that in addition to predicting the positive, negative, neutral or uncertain effects against the SEA/SA objectives, any cumulative, synergistic and secondary effects these policies will have whilst interacting with each other, or with other LDF policies. These impacts are discussed in the Site Allocations Pre-Submission Sustainability Appraisal (January 2012) report.

1.6 Monitoring

The requirement in the SEA Regulations relating to monitoring focuses specifically on significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes, with a view to identify unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.

Once the plan is implemented, its effects on the environment are to be monitored to allow action to be taken to reduce and/or offset any significant effects on the environment.

Where possible, monitoring will make use of existing monitoring arrangements and link with similar monitoring regimes of Three Rivers District Council. The Site Allocations Pre-Submission Sustainability Appraisal (January 2012) report proposed a draft monitoring framework. The final monitoring framework will be developed based on specific effects identified at each of the sites included in the final submission document.

1.7 Next Steps

The Pre-Submission Preferred Options Additional Sites Sustainability Report accompanies the Site Allocations Pre-Submission Preferred Options Additional Sites Consultation. Both documents are put forward for consultation between 13 July and 24 August 2012.

Please return responses to:

Head of Development Plans
Three Rivers District Council
Northway
Rickmansworth
Hertfordshire
WD3 1RL

Email: TRLDF@threerivers.gov.uk