

BTP7



Local Development Framework

Central Lancashire Core Strategy

# Sustainability Appraisal Summary of Recommendations

Background Topic Paper

December 2010

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**The purpose of this Sustainability Appraisal Summary of Recommendations Background Topic Paper is to draw attention to the key recommendations from the Sustainability Appraisal Report and how these have been taken forward and incorporated into the preparation of the Core Strategy.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Sustainability Appraisal is an iterative process and has closely informed the choice of policies for the Central Lancashire Core Strategy by taking account of their social, environmental and economic effects.

## **ISSUES AND OPTIONS**

- 1 The first stage of consultation on the Core Strategy was marked by the Issues and Options Paper published in November 2006. Responses to this identified that more work needed to be done on a single but important aspect - to develop possible spatial options for the location of new development and other forms of investment in the plan area. These were presented in November 2007 when a second document - Issues and Options Paper 2 - was consulted on. This second paper set out three possible spatial options for Central Lancashire and it was only in this respect that it superseded or added to the first Issues and Options Paper.
- 2 At the outset of the preparatory work the issues and options presented for engagement in November 2006 were tested against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework and recommendations were made to take forward into the preferred options. For the full analysis and breakdown of recommendations see Appendix 1 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report.
- 3 A key recommendation regarding locating new development was to have an appropriate level of growth in service centres rather than rely on one particular area and to reduce the need to travel to these locations. This recommendation was subsequently used to inform the Preferred Options Policy PCS1 by concentrating new development in the urban areas and key service centres and to a lesser extent in rural service centres. This recommendation has been carried through to the Publication Core Strategy and informed Policy 1.
- 4 On the option of using greenfield sites, it was noted that the loss of such land to development would, inevitably, have a negative environmental effect. However it was recognised that developing on greenfield land on the edge of existing urban settlements, rather than releasing Green Belt land or greenfield sites in rural areas, would have a lesser negative environmental effect. Further recommendations supported the continued use of brownfield land as a priority, which has been taken forward into Publication Policy 4.
- 5 Key recommendations for housing broached the issue of meeting the least negative social, environmental and economic effects with the need to be flexible and deliverable as a policy. The sustainability appraisal highlighted the most sustainable options, yet also offered recommendations in terms of feasibility and flexibility that could be taken forward.
- 6 In terms of housing provision and its' relationship to meeting economic growth, the recommended most sustainable approach was to release land for housing linked to employment land take-up rates. However this was not considered

practical at the time. This view was reinforced by the need to conform to the Regional Spatial Strategy's housing requirement figures, albeit the scale of these were linked to future economic growth assumptions as were the employment land requirements. This was however a matter the Publication Core Strategy was able to re-visit.

- 7 At times the sustainability appraisal work has recommended that a variety of options have the same sustainability issues and therefore either option can be taken forward. For example, ensuring that jobs are created in areas of the greatest need could be taken forward in a number of ways.
- 8 Recommendations regarding economic development looked at issues such as the distribution of new economic development and the most appropriate locations. The key recommendation suggested prioritising economic development within the main urban areas and on previously developed (brownfield land), which informed Preferred Options Policy PCS11 and its successor Publication Policy 9 by focussing new economic growth on regionally significant sites, the urban centres and those sites in central and accessible locations.
- 9 Reducing the need to travel is a key Government commitment and an important element of the Core Strategy. The sustainability appraisal highlighted that all options had some significant benefits except on greenfield development and specifically nature conservation sites. The need to protect nature conservation sites has been taken forward in Preferred Option Policies PCS21 to PCS26 and Publication Policies 18 to 22.
- 10 Protecting the environment is an important issue for environmental, economic and social sustainability. Preferred Options Policy PCS 21 and Publication Policy 22 take forward the recommendation to protect geological and biodiversity sites by trying to protect, conserve and enhance their appearance and function.
- 11 Providing renewable energy and the most sustainable options were discussed at the issues and options stage. A mixture of promoting large scale and micro scale renewable energy generation was supported through the sustainability appraisal and taken forward in the Preferred Options PCS2 and PCS3 and Publication Policies 27 and 28.
- 12 Other recommendations included developing the rural economy by combining the proposed options - encouraging rural diversification, rural leisure and tourism and encouraging small scale employment opportunities (Preferred Options Policy PCS 13 and Publication Policy 13). The recommended options for providing rural affordable housing were by reserving sites in rural settlements specifically for such development (rural exception sites in Publication Policy 7) and pursuing small scale housing in rural settlements provided a large proportion is affordable (an affordable housing target of up to 35% in rural areas has been taken forward in Publication Policy 7). Also of the options proposed for a hierarchy of retail centres, the sustainability appraisal recommendation was to identify centres at the city, town, district and local levels (Preferred Option Policy PCS14 took this recommendation forward and Publication Policy 11 identified a final hierarchy excluding local centres (latter to be picked in the Site Allocations work) – based on the completion of specific research.
- 13 Further, the spatial options proposed in Issues and Options Paper 2 were fully appraised. For the full list of recommendations see Appendix 2 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report. In brief, Spatial Option 3 was the recommended

option of spreading growth between the main urban areas and some growth of local service centres. This recommendation was taken forward into Preferred Options Policy PCS1 and Publication Policy 1.

- 14 As summarised, the results of the issues and options analysis were used to inform the preferred options choices and latterly the Publication Core Strategy Policies.

## PREFERRED OPTIONS

- 15 The selection of preferred options was heavily informed by the sustainability appraisal and the recommendations of the most sustainable option(s) or the least negative effects. The Preferred Core Strategy was published in September 2008. For a full sustainability account see Appendix 3 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report which details why options were chosen and others rejected.

- 16 For the Preferred Options policies a series of mitigation measures were identified, where it was deemed possible to improve or strengthen the preferred policies, although no significant adverse effects were identified.

- 17 See table below recording the proposed mitigation measures:

Preferred Policy	Mitigation Measures
<b>PCS1: Locating Growth and Investment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure management of the effect of development on biological and geological assets.</li> <li>▪ Work with organisations such as CABI to ensure benefits from investment in the built environment and from concentrating development in locations that protect landscape character are achieved.</li> <li>▪ Positive effects on climate change could be strengthened by linking to the development pattern with high quality design.</li> <li>▪ Issues around air quality management and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be addressed.</li> <li>▪ Monitor compliance with PPS7.</li> </ul>
<b>PCS7: Existing Housing Stock</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Social issues should be addressed as part of a strategic housing renewal focus.</li> </ul>
<b>PCS8: New Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Positive effects on climate change could be strengthened by linking to the development pattern with high quality design.</li> <li>▪ Issues around air quality management and SuDS should be addressed.</li> <li>▪ Monitor compliance with PPS7.</li> </ul>
<b>PCS9: Affordable Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Links to design standards are key to achieving positive effects on townscape.</li> <li>▪ Requires positive introduction of SuDS into affordable housing schemes.</li> </ul>
<b>PCS11: Economic Growth and Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure management of the effect of development on biological and geological assets.</li> <li>▪ Work with organisations such as CABI to ensure benefits from investment in the built environment and from concentrating development in locations that protect landscape character are achieved.</li> <li>▪ Positive effects on climate change could be strengthened by linking to the development pattern with high quality design.</li> <li>▪ Issues around air quality management and SuDS should be addressed.</li> <li>▪ Monitor compliance with PPS7.</li> </ul>
<b>PCS21-27: Biodiversity and the</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Guidance on appropriate design needs to be in place.</li> </ul>

<b>Natural and Built Environment</b>	
<b>PCS28: Travel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that improvements to the road network only take place once improvements to public transport, cycling and walking facilities have been implemented.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that improvements to the road network are designed so they have minimal impact on the surrounding area and any damage is repaired or replaced.</li> </ul>

**Source: Sustainability Appraisal Report, 2010 Table 6.3 Proposed Mitigation Measures**

- 18 The following paragraphs assess how the proposed mitigation measures have been carried forward and informed the selection of final preferred options policies and publication policies.
- 19 Preferred Options Policy PCS21 considered the importance of the management of biological and geological assets; this is carried forward into Publication Policy 22. The design of new developments and protecting landscape character is an important sustainability appraisal recommendation that has been incorporated into Publication Policy 17.
- 20 Tackling climate change is emphasised as a cross cutting theme within the Publication Core Strategy to take account of the importance of climate change and how it links with the other chapters and policies, such as high quality design.
- 21 Publication Policy 30 deals with air quality management issues and Publication Policy 17 promotes the adoption of SuDS in new developments taking into account the proposed mitigation measures relating to Preferred Options Policy PCS1, now Publication Policy 1.
- 22 It was recommended that Preferred Options Policy PCS7 could have been strengthened by incorporating a strategic housing renewal focus. The authorities subsequently completed a Strategic Housing Market area Assessment (SHMA) to take account of the social housing needs in the plan area, which has informed the preparation of Publication Policies 6 and 7.
- 23 Achieving good quality design is seen as mitigation for new development, by encouraging long lasting structures, taking consideration of the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM standards, renewable energy generation, designing out crime, use of sustainable resources etc. Achieving good quality design has become a cross cutting theme for the Publication Core Strategy to highlight the importance of this theme and Publication Policies 17, 26, 27 and 28 have incorporated the suggested mitigation measures to strengthen the overall sustainability of the plan. Further, there will be a Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the three authorities to use which will take account of the importance of this topic.
- 24 Walking and cycling are important elements of Publication Policy 3, which details a series of travel options from greater use of walking, cycling and public transport and less reliance on the car.
- 25 Where possible, all the mitigation measures identified as a response to the preferred options sustainability appraisal have been taken forward and

incorporated into the Publication Core Strategy to create the least negative social, environmental and economic effects.

- 26 The sustainability appraisal at the preferred options stage highlighted that the chosen set of preferred approaches had a positive social, economic and environmental effect and that the overall cumulative effect of the policies was also positive (See Appendix 6 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report).

## **PUBLICATION**

- 27 The Publication version of the Core Strategy was issued and placed on deposit in December 2010. This version has incorporated a significant number of the key recommendations that were identified at the two issues and options stages and the preferred options stage, by the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 28 There were some significant alterations from the preferred options to the publication stage that required a further sustainability appraisal. Namely, Policy 1 Spatial Strategy – Managing and Locating Growth, Policy 4 Housing Delivery and Policy 5 Housing Density.
- 29 Policy 1 has undergone a full appraisal of all the potential strategic sites and locations (see Appendix 7 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report, as well as the Strategic Sites and Locations, see Background Topic Paper (BTP1) for further information and analysis on this matter.
- 30 Of the three finalised Strategic Sites Buckshaw Village was deemed to be sustainable, Cuerden (Lancashire Central) was considered to be potentially sustainable with mitigation measures and BAE Systems unsustainable due to its location.
- 31 The Cuerden Strategic Site could be sustainable if transport links on site were improved to allow greater access for public transport – this is now an integral part of the detailed planning for this site. BAE Systems Samlesbury was deemed unsustainable due to its location, as access via public transport is poor (but may be improved). However due to the nature of the site as an internationally important location for aircraft manufacturing and the benefits of fostering the clustering of related industries here the economic benefits of pursuing this already well established site represent an overriding benefit.
- 32 The Strategic Locations of Cottam and Central Preston were both deemed sustainable and furthermore the sustainability appraisal of all possible such sites and locations has enabled the most sustainable ones to be revealed and carried forward, where possible. No proposed mitigation measures were recommended for the Strategic Locations.
- 33 External events have transpired to allow the Core Strategy's preparation to revisit the land requirements for housing and employment provision and the relationship between the two. First of all the Regional Planning Body recalculated the employment land requirements and put forward options for their dis-aggregation; in doing so some account was taken of the economic recession (see Background Topic Paper 2). Then with the election of the Coalition Government came major public sector expenditure cuts and altered funding regimes as well as changed planning policies including the intention to revoke Regional Strategies and introduce a new 'localism' agenda.

- 34 This has allowed the content of the Publication Core Strategy to put forward reduced housing provision requirement figures that are intended to be more aligned with the changed economic circumstances and offers the prospect of relating housing delivery with economic development performance – the option considered previously impractical at the first issues and options stage. Background Topic Paper 6 explains the rationale for the reduced housing requirement figures.
- 35 The relevant housing policy in the Publication Core Strategy - Policy 4, was altered from the Preferred Options Policy PCS8 to refer to lower housing requirement figures. The sustainability appraisal identified positive effects for this revised policy and as such no recommendations or proposed mitigation measures were proposed.
- 36 Publication Policy 5 on Housing Density (also influenced by changes to national planning policy) is a new addition to the Core Strategy and has been added to ensure that housing land is used efficiently and that new developments adhere to good design principles so that a high quality environment is encouraged. The sustainability appraisal identified no negative effects, however it proposed a number of mitigation measures including ensuring good quality design in practice, no development on biological or geological assets and avoiding development in high flood risk areas. These mitigation measures have been taken forward in Publication Policies 17, 22 and 29 and will be worked up in the proposed Design SPD.
- 37 Additionally, cross cutting theme text boxes have been included within the Publication Core Strategy to highlight the spatial elements of the document – these are achieving good quality design, promoting health and wellbeing and tackling climate change which have a positive impact for social, environmental and economic sustainability and highlight the importance of these strategic themes.
- 38 Further, chapter by chapter sustainability appraisal text boxes have been incorporated into the publication version of the Core Strategy to highlight the importance of the sustainability appraisal. These identify some of the key issues and options and explain how some of the recommendations have been incorporated iteratively throughout the process of preparing the Core Strategy.

## **CONCLUSION**

- 39 In conclusion, the sustainability appraisal has fully informed the preparation of the Core Strategy, influenced the choice of options, evidenced the rejection of inappropriate policies and alternatives and suggested a series of proposed mitigation measures and recommendations. As a result the final Sustainability Appraisal Report deemed there were no significant adverse effects caused by the Publication Core Strategy.