

# Core Strategy: submission version

## Sustainability Appraisal Report Non-technical summary



March 2009

# 1 Summary and Outcomes

## Non-technical summary

### What is Sustainability Appraisal?

**1.1** Government legislation requires the Council to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of all the documents which together make up the Local Development Framework (LDF). The main role of the SA is to ensure that the planning policies being developed by the Council, in this case the Core Strategy, achieve the optimal balance of positive social, environmental and economic outcomes for Wandsworth.

**1.2** Sustainability Appraisal is not a precise science. It involves a balance of value judgements about how the environment we live in should look and function. While some people may place a high value on the quality of the natural environment, others may strive for a healthy economy or a strong sense of community. It is the Council's task to find a balance between these sometimes conflicting goals.

**1.3** In addition to the Government's requirement for Sustainability Appraisal, the Council is required under European Directive to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of new plans. Government guidance considers it appropriate to combine both assessments through a single approach. The Council's report therefore integrates both SA and SEA and is referred to by the single term 'Sustainability Appraisal'.

### Policy Amendments and New Policies

**1.4** The Sustainability Appraisal is an ongoing process required at various stages in the development of the Core Strategy. A full Sustainability Appraisal of various policy options was conducted in order to arrive at the 'Preferred Options'. The Preferred Options Sustainability Assessment was published in September 2007 and a period of public consultation followed. A revised version of the Sustainability Appraisal was published in July 2008 to accompany the Proposed Submission Version of the Core Strategy, taking account of changes to the Core Strategy arising in response to the consultation and to any other matters, including updates to the evidence base. Following publication of the Core Strategy in September - October 2008, the Council has considered the representations received and has made a number of changes in its Submission Version. This report is required to document and evaluate any proposed changes to the Core Strategy arising from consultation or any other matters.

**1.5** The majority of changes that have been made to the Core Strategy since the publication of the 'Proposed Submission Version' are minor and this appraisal has disclosed that their overall effect is to improve the sustainability of the policies involved, a full sustainability appraisal was therefore not required. The most significant change to the policies, compared to the Proposed Submission Version is the inclusion of a policy

on Gypsy and Traveller sites. A full sustainability appraisal of these policies has therefore been included in this report, together with the appraisal made of the significant changes made at the Proposed Submission stage.

### **Overall Outcomes of the Sustainability Appraisal**

**1.6** The appraisal has found that the policies proposed in the Submission Version of the Core Strategy document are sustainable. Positive impacts of each policy outweigh the negative impacts when considered against the range of indicators.

### **The Next Steps**

**1.7** The Council intends to submit the plan to the Secretary of State in March 2009, which will be accompanied by this version of the Sustainability Appraisal. An examination in public is then due to be held in June 2009 by an independent Planning Inspector. The Inspector's report, anticipated to be received in September 2009, will be binding on the Council. The Core Strategy is then scheduled for adoption in December 2009.

### **A statement of the likely significant effects of the plan**

**1.8** As the policy options were developed at each stage of the process, they were appraised against the sustainability objectives. The results of the assessment broadly show that the policies are the most sustainable: i.e. achieve balanced growth and regeneration, enable housing targets to be met sustainably and reducing the need to travel whilst protecting the natural and built environment. The evaluation has identified significant beneficial effects of the chosen policies.

**1.9** The SA process requires boroughs to maximize the positive effects whilst minimising negative effects through identification of mitigation measures and this is described in the main report. Finally, the SA report proposes how Core Strategy policies will be implemented, and how the effects of the policies on the environment will be measured.

### **Statement on the difference the process has made**

**1.10** The Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy has helped inform the development of the strategic policies. By developing and consulting on both the Core Strategy options and the Sustainability Appraisal together, environmental, social, and economic considerations have been integrated throughout the process. Given this, the Sustainability Appraisal has generally confirmed that thinking on sustainability issues is well embedded in development of the Core Strategy.

**1.11** More generally, the SA process has produced substantial benefits in the plan-making process through the further development and assessment of the baseline, identification of indicators and targets and identification of significant benefits. The preparation of the SA report has resulted in a thorough analysis of the state of

Wandsworth as well as identification of trends covering environmental, social and economic issues. It has provided a robust evidence base for both the Core Strategy and forthcoming DPDs such as the Site Specific Allocation Document (SSAD) and Development Management Policies DPDs. Identification of indicators from the analysis of Preferred Options resulted in a robust set of indicators which have been included in the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and provide a strong base for monitoring policies. Fifty key "headline" indicators, which will be used as part of the AMR monitoring process, have been identified in an Appendix to the Core Strategy.

**1.12** The need to monitor policies, set targets and identify indicators is an important part of the the SA process. This will show whether the wider environment of Wandsworth is improving or worsening, and thus enable amendments to be made to Core Strategy policies. One of the overall benefits of integrating the indicators identified through the SA process with Core Strategy formulation and monitoring through the AMR, will be the potential to identify and respond to changes in the wider environment more quickly.

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