

**The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea  
Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal (SEA/SA)-  
Statement of Particulars under 2004 Regulations**

**1.0 The need for an SEA/SA Statement**

1.1 The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Council adopted its Core Strategy on 8 December 2010. The Core Strategy is the principal document in the Local Development Framework (LDF) and provides the vision, objectives and spatial policies to guide development in the Borough until 2028.

1.2 Once a plan or programme has been adopted, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive requires those responsible for preparing it – in this case the Council - to provide the public and the Consultation Bodies with information on how environmental considerations and consultation responses are reflected in the plan or programme and how its implementation will be monitored in the future. The Directive states that the:

“Plan or programme proponents should ensure that, when a plan or programme is adopted, the Environmental Consultation Bodies and the public are informed and the following items are made available to those so informed:

- (a) the plan or programme as adopted;
- (b) a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme...[including] the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with, and
- (c) the measures decided concerning monitoring [of the plan]”

1.3 In light of this requirement, the Council has prepared an SEA / Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Statement setting out the above information (reporting on how sustainability considerations including environmental considerations).

1.4 This statement has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The overall purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is to evaluate the likely implications for sustainable development of any of the policies contained within the Core Strategy. The policies or proposals and any reasonable alternatives are appraised to determine their potential to give rise to significant effects. The SEA/SA Report covers the appraisal the Core Strategy which was submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2010.

**2.0 Developing the Core Strategy’s SEA / SA**

2.1 The Council started the production of the SEA / SA for the Core Strategy in 2005. Following a five week period of public consultation, the Council produced, in 2005, a Scoping Report consisting of three volumes – the report itself and two technical appendices. The Scoping report set out what was considered to be the appropriate context for the appraisals that have been carried out; it established the Royal Borough’s environmental baseline; it listed the sustainability appraisal

objectives which were considered to be most appropriate for the Royal Borough, and it decided on the scope of the future appraisal.

- 2.2 The Council used the Scoping Report as the basis of carrying out the sustainability appraisal of the various options outlined within the 'Issues and Options' document. The Council worked with consultants to identify the economic, social and environmental implications of these options. An Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report documented the findings of this options appraisal. The Council took the findings of this independent appraisal into account when progressing the Core Strategy to the next stage of the process which was 'Preferred Options.'
- 2.3 In 2009, the Council produced a Sustainability Appraisal Update Report which was a non-statutory report and aimed to inform statutory consultees and stakeholders of the SA process that had occurred. This report also identified how the SA had influenced the preparation of the Plan, provided an update to the Scoping Report, (prepared in 2005), and reported any suggested changes to the SA framework for the appraisal of the Core Strategy.
- 2.4 The Council has produced several iterations of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy. The reason for these exercises was to take into account the findings of the Core Strategy consultations which took place in 2008 and 2009.
- 2.5 The hearing sessions for the Examination were held during July 2010 and the Inspector's Report was received in October 2010. The Core Strategy was found to be 'sound' subject to a number of recommended changes, most of which were recommended by the Council to the Inspector. The effect of these changes together with minor clarification updates of the text have had no significant effect on the conclusions of the SA and consequently the SA Report has not been amended.

### **3.0 How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme**

- 3.1 The final SA Report sets out the sustainability baseline and context and identifies the sustainability issues affecting the Borough and explains the development of the SA framework. It explains the different components of the Core Strategy including the strategic objectives and spatial strategy, the 'Places' and strategic sites and finally the development management policies. It includes thorough explanations of the appraisal methodology and appraisal findings and it gives conclusions and recommendations for monitoring. The appraisal process, together with consideration of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the results of public consultations helped identify a number of sustainability issues, which are:

#### **Environmental issues that have been examined:**

- Air quality – the whole Borough is a declared 'Air Quality Management Area' for both PM10 and NO<sub>2</sub>

- Open Space – there is a shortage of public open space in the Borough, and a shortage of areas in which to create additional open space.
- Noise and Vibration – complaints have been rising since 2004.
- Traffic – two thirds more parking permits have been issued than parking spaces.
- Waste – RBKC have not met their recycling targets.
- Sites of nature conservation importance: bird populations are in decline and there has been a loss of sites of nature conservation value.

**Social issues that have been examined:**

- Housing – the availability of low cost, affordable housing, the high price of housing in the Borough and the upward trend in the numbers of homeless persons.
- Health - Shortage of Doctors' Surgeries and GPs.
- Education – No. of pupils permanently excluded from primary schools – this increased by nearly 200% from 2001/2002 levels in 2003/2004.
- Need for a new secondary school in the SW of the Borough.
- Community Facilities – lack of elderly person homes (Care Homes)
- Crime - Total notifiable offences are declining; however, there have been increase in drug offences.

**Economic issues that have been examined:**

- Deprivation – some wards amongst the most economically deprived in the country, in particular, Golborne and Notting Barns.
- Shortage of small office units, <300m<sup>2</sup> and particularly <100m<sup>2</sup>.
- Average house prices are the highest in the UK creating a barrier to entry for low and medium level earners.

3.2 It is important to note that some of these issues have already been tackled such as the need for a secondary school in the SW of the Borough.

3.3 The 16 sustainability objectives were developed taking into account the above issues. The objectives of the Core Strategy were appraised against these sustainability objectives and subsequently the options were assessed. Baseline information provided a basis for taking an objective view on the likely impact of policies on each SA Objective. Since the baseline also provided comparative data for conditions in other areas and information about trends, a judgement could also be made concerning the significance of such an impact.

3.4 A total number of 145 evidence base documents were produced and made available to the public to inform the development of the Core Strategy. These documents cover a wide range of issues: environmental issues, built environment and conservation issues, social and economic issues. One of the reports was the 'Habitats Directive Screening Assessment' which concluded that the proposed Core Strategy policies were not likely to affect the sites in the Borough which have been identified for habitats assessment.

#### **4.0 How the Environmental Report has been taken into account**

- 4.1 The SA Report has contributed to the development of the Core Strategy by providing an independent assessment of the sustainability of the proposed options throughout their development. The SA Report demonstrates how the sustainability objectives have been taken into account and integrated into the development of the Core Strategy. This provides an audit trail and formal statement on the assessment of options, alongside the main document at each stage of the process.
- 4.2 The SA was prepared alongside and in support of the Core Strategy and is a key output of the plan making process which began with the production of the SA Scoping Report. This involved identifying the sustainability issues and objectives for the Core Strategy, as well as identifying relevant baseline information and indicators. The SA Scoping Report was publicly consulted upon and comments received helped to create a final set of sustainability objectives, which were then used to test the options of the Core Strategy at the 'Preferred Options' stage. All the following iterations of the Core Strategy consulted upon were accompanied and informed by a SA report.

#### **5.0 How opinions expressed and results of public consultation have been taken into account**

- 5.1 The SA/SEA regulations require that the authorities referred to in Article 6 (3) shall be consulted when deciding upon the scope and level of detail of information that is to be included in the final environmental report. These authorities are referred to as the statutory consultees and include the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England.
- 5.2 Formal consultation has been undertaken with the environmental consultation bodies, community groups and social and economic bodies for the following documents:
- Addendum Scoping Report (2005)
  - Scoping Report (2005)
  - Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report (2005)
  - Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea with a focus on North Kensington (July and October 2009).
- 5.3 Following consultation (which included a workshop) the SA Framework was revised. Due to the lapse of time between the production of the Scoping Report and the SA report, a non-statutory report was produced, the Sustainability Appraisal Update Report (July 2009). This provides a summary of all the stages of the SA process, including information on how the Interim SA Reports influenced the Core Strategy; an update review of other policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives; the evidence base; new key sustainability issues and changes proposed to the original SA framework.

5.4 For the development of the Core Strategy six separate public consultations took place, which were:

- Issues and Options Consultation (March 2005)
- Interim Issues and Options Core Strategy and North Kensington Area Action Plan (NKAAP) (February-April 2008)
- Towards Preferred Options Core Strategy and North Kensington Plan (July-October 2008)
- Places and Strategic Sites Consultation (May- June 2009)
- The Draft Core Strategy with a particular focus on North Kensington (July-September 2009)
- The Proposed Submission Core Strategy with a particular focus on North Kensington (October-December 2009).

5.5 Several reports were produced by the Council to explain how the consultation on the Core Strategy and the SA took place, who was consulted, the consultation methods, the representations made and main issues raised, how those representations were taken into account and changes recommended and how the Council complied with statutory requirements. They also explained how the policy evolved throughout the development process of the Core Strategy. The relevant documents are listed below:

- A statement setting out all those bodies and persons the local authority invited to make representations on the evolving Core Strategy.
- Consultation Statement on public participation (Regulation 25)
- Consultation Statement on Proposed Submission representations (Regulation 28)
- Schedule of Representations made to the Proposed Submission Core Strategy and Officers' Response
- Schedule of recommended changes to the Submission Core Strategy
- Statement on Regulation 30 giving details of where the Core Strategy and supporting documents can be inspected and the times when they can be inspected
- Policy Formulation Report
- Policy Matrix Report
- PAS Soundness Self-Assessment
- PAS Soundness Legal Compliance.

## **6.0 The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with**

6.1 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 requires SA/SEAs to consider any reasonable alternatives to the plan or programme, taking into account the objectives and scope of the document. Some options for delivery were not assessed within the SA/SEA process as they were not in conformity with higher level guidance and were therefore not pursued.

6.2 Appraisal has involved a several stage process where the findings of the sustainability appraisal reports have been taken into account by the Policy team when they have been making decisions on which options to take forward.

6.3 Within the SA/SEA process, the 52 issues covered were split broadly into 10 topic areas:

- Conservation and development
- Housing
- Offices and Industry
- Transportation
- Shopping and town centres
- Social and community uses
- Hotels
- Leisure and recreation
- Renewable energy and sustainable design
- Waste

6.4 The Options generated by the Council that covered these areas were subject to option assessment to determine their sustainability. The development of the evidence base during the production of the Core Strategy, taken together with the responses from the consultations and the recommendations of the SA process informed the options taken forward.

## **7.0 The measures that are taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme**

7.1 A Monitoring Framework is set out in Section 2D, Chapter 38 of the Core Strategy. The monitoring framework includes a list of performance indicators listed under each of the 'Strategic Themes'. The monitoring information is collected as part of the preparation of the Annual Monitoring Report and will also supply information into annual monitoring systems set up by the GLA, TfL and the LDA.

7.2 Where it would appear through monitoring that targets are not being met it may be necessary to review the policies within the Core Strategy to establish whether they need to be amended in order to secure delivery of the spatial vision. The need to review policies will be identified in the Annual Monitoring Report.

7.3 In addition to the issues identified in the Core Strategy the SA Report recommends that the following issues are monitored:

- Biodiversity
- Crime

- Housing
- Prioritising development on previously developed land
- Parks and open spaces
- Flood risk
- Further stimulation on socio-economic regeneration in North Kensington
- New and revised transport infrastructure and streetscaping
- Air Quality
- Healthcare

7.4 All of these issues are included in the monitoring framework.

**Further Information**

A full copy of the Sustainability Report of the Core Strategy and related documents can be downloaded from our website at the following address:

<http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/planningandconservation/planningpolicy/corestrategy.aspx>