



Crawley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy - Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) Adoption Statement

Crawley Borough Council adopted its Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy (DPD) on 28 November 2007.

This statement has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (16) (3) and (4), which require that a statement be produced on adoption of a plan or programme. The statement must show;

1. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
2. How the environmental report has been taken into account;
3. How opinions expressed and results of public consultation have been taken into account;
4. The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with;
5. The measures that are taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

This statement will examine these points in turn.

1. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme

The final SA/SEA of the Core Strategy sets out baseline information for the Borough, and identifies the main environmental and sustainability issues affecting the Borough. It includes key facts and statistics, and identifies the issues the Borough will face in the future.

In addition to the baseline information, the final SA/SEA identifies the key higher-level plans and programmes which influenced the Core Strategy. This enabled the sustainability issues affecting the Borough to be identified, and in turn the sustainability objectives against which the Core Strategy options were assessed.

The main sustainability issues facing Crawley at present are;

- deprivation in some parts of the Borough,
- increasing demands on healthcare,
- low skill levels and average wages,
- likely decline of town centre without significant growth;
- pressure for brownfield land development,
- increasing waste, energy consumption, and emissions.

The Community Strategy for Crawley sets out a vision for the town. In order to achieve this vision, and as a result of public consultation a number of priorities are identified in the Core Strategy. These priorities are:

- Affordable Housing

The Core Strategy addresses this priority through policy H5 (Affordable Housing), which sets out that 40% of dwellings on schemes of 15 dwellings or more, 0.5 ha or more will be affordable homes.

- Community Safety

Core Strategy policies CS1 (Safety through Design and Operation) and CS2 (Improvements to the Local Environment) aim to address crime through design and environmental improvement projects.

- Local Economy

Core Strategy policies E1 (Employment Floorspace Provision), E2 (Location of new employment development opportunities), E3 (Protection and management of employment floorspace), and E4 (small employment sites/provision) outline a strategy for meeting employment growth demands, whilst maintain the existing economic buoyancy of the town.

- Health and social care

Core Strategy policies ICS6 (Providing for Primary Healthcare Needs) and ICS7 (Providing for Secondary/Higher Order Healthcare Needs) aim to provide health and social care facilities within the Borough.

- Education and life long learning

Core Strategy policies ICS3 (Providing for Educational Needs), ICS4 (Providing for a new University Campus) to ICS5 (Educational Land which becomes surplus) aim to provide educational facilities for the Borough.

- Local Environment

Core Strategy policies EN1 (Nature Conservation), EN2 (Green Spaces and Corridors), EN3 (Green Spaces and Corridors), EN4 (Greening New Development) to EN5 (Protecting and Enhancing the Built Environment) aim to protect the natural and built environment of the Borough.

In addition to the above, other policies in the Core Strategy also have implications for meeting these priorities and objectives, for example, H1 (Housing Provision) also supports the economy by facilitating housing delivery.

These Core Strategy policies, and their relevant indicators set out in the Final SA/SEA Report will be monitored, along with other policies, once a year as part of the Annual Monitoring Report.

2. How the Environmental Report has been taken into account;

The SA/SEA has contributed to the development of the Core Strategy by providing an independent assessment of the sustainability of the Council's proposed options and policies through the Core Strategy production process. The SA/SEA 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.

The SA/SEA was prepared alongside, and in support of the Core Strategy and is a key output of the policy development process. Indeed, it reflected and supported the draft Core Strategies, which were subject to public consultation.

The SA/SEA process began with the production of the SA/SEA Scoping Report. This involved identifying the sustainability issues and objectives for the Core Strategy, as well as identifying relevant baseline information and indicators. At this stage, the options which could be taken forward into the Preferred Options document were set out, and the document was then sent out to stakeholders for comment. Altogether, this formed a useful stage to the plan preparation process and a good evidence base.

The comments received on the SA/SEA Scoping Report helped to create a final set of sustainability objectives, which were then used to test the options and policies identified at the Preferred Options stage. The sustainability objectives were then assessed against the policies of the Core Strategy to determine the effects of the policy.

The effects of the options were analysed as part of the SA/SEA process, against the objectives, to provide information on the impacts in the short, medium and long term. The assessment matrices are in Appendix 3 of the final SA/SEA, and a summary of the significant effects can be found in chapter 6.

Following the assessment of the effects of the policies, measures to limit and mitigate against environmental, social and economic impacts of the Core Strategy were identified. These measures are set out in chapter 6 and the assessment tables in Appendix 3 of the Final SA/SEA Report.

As a result of the SA/SEA analysis, policies have been modified at various stages in their development. For example, EN4 was modified at submission stage to specify that the edges of strategic developments should be defined by substantial green landscape areas and CS5 was also modified at submission stage following observations in the SA/SEA that suggested that the previous version of the policy could lead to the loss of playing fields.

3. How opinions expressed and results of public consultation have been taken into account;

Statutory Consultees

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 these include the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England.

Consultation under Regulation 25

Statutory Consultees

In November 2004 the statutory consultees were consulted on the SA/SEA Scoping Report. They were invited to comment on the appropriateness of the objectives and indicators, as well as any other comments they considered were relevant. Following the comments received from 10 respondents at consultation, it was considered that all relevant aspects and issues identified were covered in the Scoping Report.

Consultation under Regulation 26

The Preferred Options Core Strategy together with the draft SA/SEA report were published for public consultation in October 2005 for 6 weeks. The draft SA/SEA report highlighted the reasons for the selection of the preferred options, and the SA/SEA report assessed the options against the sustainability objectives, the cumulative and synergistic effects of the options, as well as identifying possible mitigation measures.

As a result of consultation, policies in the Core Strategy were modified. An example of this being, policy EN1 which was modified between the preferred options and submission (other examples can be seen in Appendix 6 of the Final SA/SEA Report, which shows the development of policies over time).

The Council received 1,312 representations to the Preferred Options Core Strategy and 61 representations were made on the draft SA/SEA report.

Submission

The Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State on 26th May 2006. On submission, the Council received 300 representations.

4. The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with;

The Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004 (12) (2) 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 are limited by higher-level guidance such as the West Sussex Structure Plan, for example, the location of a new neighbourhood West and North West of Crawley was determined in the Structure Plan and therefore was taken forward onto the Core Strategy.

This statement therefore sets out the reasons for selecting the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives.

Within the SA/SEA assessment, the alternative options for the Core Strategy were tested against the sustainability objectives. The results showed in the short, medium and long term the effects of the approach, this helped inform the decision as to which alternatives should be taken forward as policies in the Submission Core Strategy. Appendix 7 of the Final SA/SEA Report shows these effects in full.

5. The measures that are taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

Following the publication of the Inspector's Report, the SA/SEA is now published alongside the Core Strategy. However, the effects of the Core Strategy will be monitored annually by monitoring the changes in the baseline data and indicators identified in the SA/SEA. The results of this monitoring will be published annually in the Annual Monitoring Report. The results of this monitoring will be taken forward into subsequent reviews of the Core Strategy.