Rochford District Council Hockley Area Action Plan Adoption Statement

Rochford Council adopted the Hockley Area Action Plan (HAAP) on 25 February 2014.

As an integral part of the preparation of the HAAP Document, and in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Section 19 (5), the Plan has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The SA process assesses the likely significant economic, social and environmental effects of the Plan.

The SA of the Rochford District Core Strategy fully incorporates the requirements of the European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004), and has played an important role in the development of the HAAP Document.

In accordance with Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, this statement addresses each of the following issues in relation to the HAAP Document:

- How sustainability considerations have been integrated into the development plan document;
- How the options and consultation responses received on the HAAP Document and sustainability appraisal reports have been taken into account;
- the reasons for choosing the development plan document in the light of other reasonable alternatives; and
- monitoring measures.

Each of the above matters is considered in turn within this SA/SEA Statement.

How sustainability considerations have been integrated into the development plan document.

An overarching SA Scoping Report generic to all Rochford Development Plan Documents was produced as part of the preparation of the Rochford Core Strategy, and as such the overarching SA of the Council's planning policies is the Core Strategy SA Report. This was in accordance with government guidance which stated that the SA must be proportionate to the plan in question and it should not repeat the appraisal of higher level policy.

The Council's Core Strategy was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination (to be undertaken by the independent Inspector on behalf of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government) on 14 January 2010.

The final SA Report for the Core Strategy Submission Document with an integrated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was produced in 2009. However, following the Forest Heath case (Save Historic Newmarket v. Forest Heath District Council) in March 2011 which provided an additional interpretation on undertaking SEA, the Council requested that the Inspector delay the issuing of a decision on the soundness of the Core Strategy to enable a review of the Core Strategy Submission SA to be undertaken. The Inspector accepted this request, and an addendum to the submitted Core Strategy SA was produced, and consulted upon in June/July 2011.

The addendum appraised in further detail the preferred general locations for housing and employment development and the reasonable alternatives. The addendum should be read in conjunction with the Core Strategy Submission SA Report.

The Core Strategy was found sound, subject to changes and the Inspector's Report stated that the SA/SEA work undertaken, including the addendum, was adequate. The Core Strategy was adopted on 13 December 2011.

The SEA Baseline Information Profile for the District, which contains a wealth of environmental, economic and social information, and accompanied the SA Report for the Hockley Area Action Plan was used to inform the appraisal of Plan.

The stages in the SA process for the HAAP Document were as follows:

Stage	Task
Stage A	SA Scoping Process
Stage B	Developing and refining options and assessing effects.
Stage C	Preparing the SA Report.
Stage D	Consulting on the Plan and the SA Report.
Stage E	Monitoring and implementing the Plan.

Each stage of the HAAP Document has been the subject of an SA which has been prepared alongside the appropriate document. The milestones for the preparation of the HAAP are set out below:

Consultation Stage	Details
Initial public participation and consultation 2008	Placecheck event
	Online consultation
	School Workshop
Issues and Options 2009	Issues and Options Document published for
	consultation, 13 February 2009

	Representations invited 13 February 2009 – 30 April 2009. Consultation letters and emails sent.
	Public meetings (including Central Area Committee, 3 March 2009)
	Rochford District Matters article
	Press release
Options report 2010	Public drop-in session, 2 August 2010
	Public drop-in session, 27 August 2010
	Options Document published for consultation, 30 November 2010
	Representations invited 30 November 2010 – 4
	February 2011. Consultation letters and emails sent.
	Rochford District Matters article
	Drop-in session, 16 November 2010
	Public meeting, 7 December 2010
	Drop-in session, 10 January 2011
	SA of Options document / Scoping Report considering
	the sustainability effects of the Area Action Plan Options, published August 2012
Submission Document 2012- 2013	Exhibition, 14 August 2012 – 24 August 2012
	Submission Document published for pre-submission consultation, 29 November 2012
	Representations invited 29 November 2011-25 January 2013. Consultation letters and emails sent

Examination in public	The Sustainability Appraisal of Submission Document was also consulted upon at this time. Examination of the HAAP Submission Document by the Government Planning Inspector took place on 18 April 2013
	Hearing sessions took place between 17 September and 18 September
Schedule of modifications	Following the hearing sessions of 17 and 18 September 2013 the Inspector requested thee Council provide a response to several additional matters that were raised at the hearings and provide a list of proposed modifications to the plan
	The Council produced a consolidated schedule of modifications to the Hockley Area Action plan
	A Sustainability Appraisal of the Hockley Area Action Plan Submission Document – Schedule of Modifications was completed in October 2013. This report formed an addendum to the Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
Inspectors Report	The Inspector published his final report on the HAAP on 14 February 2014
Adoption	The HAAP was adopted at full Council on 25 February 2014

The stages of the SA scoping process (Stage A) were as follows:

Task	Purpose
A1: Reviewing Relevant Policies, Plans and Programmes	To identify other relevant plans, policies, programmes and sustainability objectives, and assess the context provided by them, in particular relevant environmental, social and economic objectives and requirements.

Task		Purpose
A2:	Collecting baseline information	To provide the basis to predict and monitor effects and help to identify sustainability problems and alternative ways of dealing with them.
A3:	Identifying the sustainability issues and the appraisal objectives	To define key issues for the DPD and develop sustainability plan objectives and options to link to evidence by reference to baseline information.
A4:	Considering options and alternatives	To identify the effects of 'reasonable alternatives' as set out in the SEA Directive, as appropriate. However, there is no need to devise alternatives simply to comply with the Directive.
A5:	Developing the SA Framework	To identify SA Objectives, where possible to be expressed in the form of targets and sustainability indicators. The issues to be covered in the SA Framework and the level of detail should be such that they are relevant and proportionate to the plan.
A6:	Consultation on Scope of the SA	Statutory, specific and general stakeholders.

The key sustainability issues for the District are identified in the Core Strategy Submission SA Report. It was considered that this list is of relevance to the HAAP DPD. These issues were used in developing the objectives and policies of the document, as detailed below under Task A5. The key sustainability issues for the Hockley Area Action Plan are as follows:

Key sustainability Issues/ opportunities identified for the HAAP

The provision of quality and affordable housing to meet housing needs in Hockley.

Improving connectivity between the town center and train station.

Taking account of environmental and physical constraints when accommodating new development.

Opportunity to improve the public realm by providing a more defined center as well as through enhanced pedestrian crossing facilities and green landscaping.

The protection of Hockley's biodiversity (Hockley Woods SSSI & LNR), heritage, landscape and character.

High levels of car ownership and travelling to work using a private vehicle.

Key sustainability Issues/ opportunities identified for the HAAP

High levels of out-commuting and difficulties in competing with economies in surrounding areas.

Opportunities to improve retail and stimulate the local economy, whilst recognizing difficulties in competing with the retail pull of Southend, Basildon and Chelmsford.

Climate change is a significant issue facing all communities and the AAP will need to consider issues around energy efficiency, renewables and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

An SA Framework used to appraise the policies set out in the Hockley Area Action Plan was produced. The decision-aiding questions of the SA Framework were adapted from that of the Core Strategy Submission Document to reflect the differing perspectives and scales of the Development Plan Document, where appropriate. The SA Framework was developed having regard to consultation response, and the final SA Framework used was as follows:

	SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question
		Will it (the Policy)…?
	Balanced Communities	
1	To ensure the delivery of high quality sustainable communities where people want to live and work	 Will it ensure the phasing of infrastructure, including community facilities to meet ongoing and future needs? Will it ensure the regeneration and enhancement of existing rural and urban communities? Will it ensure equal opportunities and that all sections of the community are catered for? Will it meet the needs of an ageing population in Hockley? Will the policies and options proposed seek to enhance the qualifications and skills of the local community? Will income and quality-of-life disparities be reduced?
	Healthy & Safe Communities	
2	Create healthy and safe environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not	 Will it ensure the delivery of high quality, safe and inclusive design? Will it improve health and reduce

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	SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question
		Will it (the Policy)…?
	undermine the quality of life or community cohesion	 health inequalities in Hockley? Will it promote informal recreation and encourage healthy, active lifestyles? Will green infrastructure (non- vehicular infrastructure routes and links) and networks be promoted and/or enhanced? Will it minimise noise pollution? Will it minimise light pollution?
	Housing	
3	To provide everybody with the opportunity to live in a decent home	 Will it increase the range and affordability of housing for all social groups in Hockley? Will a mix of housing types and tenures be promoted? Will it reduce the number of unfit homes? Does it promote high quality design? Is there sustainable access to key services in Hockley? Does it meet the resident's needs in terms of sheltered and lifetime homes or those that can be easily adapted so?
	Economy & Employment	
4	To achieve sustainable levels of economic growth/prosperity and promote town centre vitality/viability	 Does it promote and enhance existing centres by focusing development in such centres? Will it improve business development in Hockley? Does it enhance consumer choice through the provision of a range of shopping, leisure, and local services to meet the needs of the entire community? Does it promote mixed use and high density development in urban centres? Does it promote a wide variety of jobs across all sectors? Does it secure more opportunities for residents to work in the District?

	SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question
		Will it (the Policy)…?
		 Will it aid the realisation of London Southend Airport's economic potential?
	Accessibility	
5	To promote more sustainable transport choices both for people and moving freight ensuring access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling	 Will it increase the availability of sustainable transport modes in Hockley? Will it seek to encourage people to use alternative modes of transportation other than the private car, including walking and cycling? Will it contribute positively to reducing social exclusion by ensuring access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services? Will it reduce the need to travel? Does it seek to encourage development where large volumes of people and/or transport movements are located in sustainable accessible locations? Does it enable access for all sections of the community, including the young, the socially deprived, those with disabilities and the elderly? Does it secure more opportunities for residents to work in the District, and for out-commuting to be reduced?

	SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question
		Will it (the Policy)…?
		 Does it enable access to green infrastructure and the wider natural environment to all sections of the community?
	Biodiversity	
6	To conserve and enhance the biological and geological diversity of the environment as an integral part of social, environmental and economic development	 Will it conserve and enhance natural/semi natural habitats, including the District's distinctive estuaries and salt marshes? Will it conserve and enhance species diversity, and in particular avoid harm to protected species and priority species? Will it maintain and enhance sites designated for their nature conservation interest? Will it conserve and enhance sites of geological significance? Does land use allocation reflect the scope of using brownfield land for significant wildlife interest where viable and realistic? Does new development integrate within it opportunities for new habitat creation, particularly where they could facilitate species movement and colonisation in relation to climate change pressures on biodiversity and its distribution?
	Cultural Heritage	
7	To maintain and enhance the cultural heritage and assets of the District	 Will it protect and enhance sites, features and areas of historical, archaeological and cultural value in both urban and rural areas? Will it support locally-based cultural resources and activities?

	Landscape & Townscape	
8	To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes	 Does it seek to enhance the range and quality of the public realm and open spaces?

	SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question
		Will it (the Policy)…?
		 Will it contribute to the delivery of the enhancement, effective management and appropriate use of land in the urban fringe? Will it reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land? Will it conserve (as preservation is neither realistic or desirable) the landscape character areas of the plan area? Will it preserve and/or enhance townscape character and value?
	Climate Change & Energy	
9	To reduce contributions to climate change	 Will it reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by reducing energy consumption? Will it lead to an increased proportion of energy needs being met from renewable sources in Hockley? Does it adapt to and provide for the consequences of climate change in a largely low-lying area?
	Water	
10	To improve water quality and reduce the risk of flooding	 Will it improve the quality of inland water? Will it improve the quality of coastal waters? Will it provide for an efficient water conservation and supply regime in Hockley? Will it provide for effective wastewater treatment? Will it require the provision of sustainable drainage systems in new development? Will it reduce the risk of flooding? Will it integrate sustainable flood management which works with natural processes, presents habitat enhancement opportunities and is landscape character sensitive?

	SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question
		Will it (the Policy)…?
	Land & Soil	
11	To maintain and improve the quality of the District's land and soil	 Does it ensure the re-use of previously-developed land and urban areas in preference to Greenfield sites, as far as is practicable given the characteristics of the District? Will higher-density development be promoted where appropriate? Will soil quality be preserved? Will it promote the remediation of contaminated land in Hockley? Will the best and most versatile agricultural land be protected?
	Air Quality	
12	To improve air quality	 Will air quality be improved through reduced emissions (eg. through reducing car travel)? Will it direct transport movements away from AQMAs and/or potentially significant junctions?
	Sustainable Design & Construction	
13	To promote sustainable design and construction	 Will it ensure the use of sustainable design principles, e.g. encouraging a mix of uses? Will climate proofing design measures be incorporated? Will the local character/vernacular be preserved and enhanced through development? Will it require the re-use and recycling of construction materials? Will it encourage locally-sourced materials? Will it require best-practice sustainable construction methods, for example in energy and water efficiency?

The second state in the preparation of the Sustainability Appraisal for the Hockley Area Action Plan (Stage B) encompassed the development and refinement of policies and assessment of effects. The six main tasks were as set out below.

Stage	Task
B1	Testing the DPD objectives against the SA framework
B2	Developing the DPD options
B3	Predicting the effects of the DPD
B4	Evaluating the effects of the DPD
B5	Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects
B6	Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the DPD

Appraisal of the AAP vision and polices

A SA scoping process was undertaken in July 2012 to ensure that the emerging SA covered the key sustainability issues that are relevant to the success of the SA and to Hockley. This included the development of an SA framework of objectives and an SA Scoping Report that summarised the findings of the scoping process. This was sent to statutory consultees for consultation in July 2012.

An SA Scoping Report was prepared to summarise the findings of the Scoping Process. This was sent to statutory consultees for consultation in July 2012.

The key sustainability Issues for the Hockley AAP are shown in the table below.

Key Sustainability Issues for Hockley AAP

The provision of quality and affordable housing to meet housing needs in Hockley.

Improving connectivity between the town centre and train station.

Taking account of environmental and physical constraints when accommodating the new development.

Opportunity to improve the public realm by providing ta more defined centre as well as through enhanced pedestrian crossing facilities and green landscaping.

The protection of Hockley's biodiversity (Hockley Woods SSSi & LNR), heritage, landscape

and character.

High levels of out-commuting and difficulties in competing with economies in surrounding areas.

Opportunity to improve retail and stimulate the local economy, whilst recognizing difficulties in competing with the retail pull of Southend, Basildon and Chelmsford.

Climate change is a significant issue facing all communities and the AAP will need to consider a issues around energy efficiency, renewables and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The recommendations identified throughout the SA process assisted in mitigating the potential impacts of the proposed policies and had a positive effect on the sustainability of the Plan, the SA report for the HAAP Submission Document found that overall there would be significant sustainability benefits in adopting the plan.

Following the examination hearing sessions, and the Inspector's interim report on the soundness of the HAA, a Schedule of Modifications was produced. These modifications were subject to sustainability appraisal, and an addendum to the SA Report was produced.

The SA Addendum concluded that the majority of the proposed modifications to the HAAP Submission Document have either a positive effect or no significant effect at all on the SA Objectives.

How the options and consultation responses received on the development plan document and sustainability appraisal reports have been taken into account

Several options for the development of Hockley were identified through an Issues and Options Document published for consultation in January 2009.

The results of the consultation on this report led to the creation of an Options Report, produced in 2010. This built on the existing evidence base but essentially re-initiated the process from the beginning. The findings of this report (Hockley AAP Options Report November 2010) were assessed against a SA Framework of objectives, covering the short, medium and long term effects of the options on SA objectives.

The findings of the Options Report 2010 informed the development of the Pre-Submission AAP. The method for this SA is comprised of three elements:

- 1. Identifying relevant baseline information and other plans or programmes that influence the AAP polices.
- 2. Using the SA Framework with professional expertise and drawing upon selected information in the Review of Plans and Programmes, and the Baseline Information.

 Commenting on the areas where each element or policy of the AAP has specific potential impacts- highlighting where possible, positive/ negative effects, short/ long term effects, indirect/ direct effects, cumulative effects, and the reversibility, scale and likelihood of effects with recommendations for proposed mitigation or enhancement where identified.

Uncertainties and potential data gaps were incorporated into the SA matrices where applicable.

Where negative effects, including environmental effects, were predicted, the SA sought where possible to identify means of offsetting these effects. Where it was considered that there were opportunities to enhance the sustainability of the proposals, appropriate recommendations were made.

A compatibility analysis of the Pre-Submission AAP Vision and Objectives was carried out using the SA framework in October 2012. Overall the vision and objectives were found to be compatible with the majority of SA objectives.

The recommendations identified throughout the SA process suggest that the AAP policies will make significant contributions to the progression of SA Objectives.

The SA Report for the HAAP Submission Document found that the adoption of the plan as proposed would have significant beneficial sustainability benefits.

The HAAP Submission Document and its accompanying SA were consulted on between 29 November 2012 and 25 January 2013.

Following the consultation period the HAAP Submission Document and accompanying SA were submitted to the Government for independent examination on 18 April 2013. Hearing sessions took place between 17 September and 18 September 2013.

The Inspector issued a report following the Examination, detailing his interim views on the soundness of the plan, including suggestions of modifications to make the plan sound.

The Council considered these suggested modifications and produced a list of modifications to the HAAP. These modifications were consulted on between 26 November 2013 and 17 January 2014.

A Sustainability Appraisal Addendum, assessing the impact of the modifications was published in October 2013. This report sought to undertake an SA of the Council's HAAP Schedule of Modifications. It differs from the pervious SAs in so much as it assesses the modifications made to the policies themselves.

The findings of the SA Addendum were that the Inspectors suggested modifications were consistent with the SA Framework objectives developed for the Hockley Area Action Plan. Several of the proposed changes were predicted to have no significant impact on the sustainability objectives.

A detailed breakdown of the SA Addendum can be found in appendix II.

The Inspectors final report was published on 14 February 2014.

The reasons for choosing the development plan document in light of other reasonable alternatives

A number of options for future change in Hockley were initially identified through an Issues and Options Document published for consultation in Jan 2009. As a result of responses to the consultation an additional Options Report was produced for Hockley AAP in 2010, which built on the existing evidence base but essentially started the development of AAP Options from the beginning. The options identified in this Report (Hockley AAP Options Report Nov 2010) were assessed against the full SA Framework of objectives with regard to the short, medium and long term effects of the options on the SA objectives.

The findings of the HAAP 2010 Options Document helped to inform the development of the Pre-Submission AAP. The detailed assessment of proposed policies can be found in Appendix I.

Appendix III shows the evaluation and decision making process that was used to assess the various options and policies relating to the HAAP.

Monitoring measures

The SA process identified suitable indicators to monitor the Sa Framework objectives. These are as follows.

Potential Indicators

1. Balanced Communities

To ensure the delivery of high quality sustainable communities where people want to live and work

- Changing educational attainment at GCSE Level
- Proportion of persons in the local population with a degree level qualification.
- Parishes with a GP, post office, play area, pub, village hall
- Percentage of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centre
- Mix of housing tenure within settlements
- Provision of new community facilities secured through new developments, including a break-down by settlement

2. Healthy & Safe Communities

Create healthy and safe environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion

- Monitor the number of domestic burglaries, violent offences, vehicle crimes, vandalism and all crime per 1,000 population.
- Percentage of residents surveyed who feel 'fairly safe' or 'very safe' during the day whilst outside in their Local Authority, including in key settlements
- Indexes of Multiple Deprivation throughout the District.

Potential Indicators

- Monitor the type and number of applications permitted in the greenbelt.
- Life expectancy
- Hectares of new greenspace created, including location of greenspace
- Percentage of eligible open spaces managed to green flag award standard
- Death rates from circulatory disease, cancer, accidents and suicide
- Residents description of Health
- Obesity levels

3. Housing

- To provide everybody with the opportunity to live in a decent home
- Number of unfit homes per 1,000 dwellings.
- Indices of Multiple Deprivation Housing and Services Domain
- Percentage of households rented from the Council or in Housing Association/Registered Social Landlords properties
- Percentage of new housing which is affordable, including in key settlements
- Average house price compared with average earnings
- Number of housing Completions

4. Economy & Employment

To achieve sustainable levels of economic growth/prosperity and promote town centre vitality/viability

- The changing diversity of main town centre uses (by number, type and amount of floorspace), including a breakdown for the 3 town centres.
- The changing density of development
- Percentage change in the total number of VAT registered businesses in the area
- Percentage of employees commuting out of the District to work
- Amount of land developed for employment (by type)
- Retail health checks/economic prosperity of smaller towns and villages and key settlements

5. Accessibility

To promote more sustainable transport choices both for people and moving freight ensuring access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling

- Changes in the travel to work mode of transport
- Indices of Multiple Deprivation most notably the Housing and Services Domain
- Car ownership
- Percentage of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of a GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a major health centre
- Kilometres of cycle routes and facilities for cyclists
- Kilometres of new walking routes provided
- Number of houses within a specified radius of services/facilities

Pedestrian and cycle counts in the 3 town centres of Hockley, Rochford and Rayleigh

6. Biodiversity

To conserve and enhance the biological and geological diversity of the environment as an integral part of social, environmental and economic development

Net change in natural/ semi natural habitats

Potential Indicators Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance Condition of designated sites Change in area of woodland Proportion of new developments delivering habitat creation or restoration 7. Cultural Heritage To maintain and enhance the cultural heritage and assets of the District Buildings of Grade I and II at risk of decay Condition of Conservation Areas Number of historic parks and gardens 8. Landscape & Townscape To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes To monitor the number of parks awarded Green Flag Status To monitor the number of landscape or built environment designations Hectares of new development outside settlement boundaries Hedgerow and/or veteran tree loss Area of /change in landscape designations % of development on previously developed land 9. Climate Change & Energy To reduce contributions to climate change Changes in the travel to work mode of transport Greenhouse gas emissions Renewable energy capacity installed by type Percentage of new development including renewable energy generation Energy consumption 10. Water To improve water quality and reduce the risk of flooding Changing water quality Groundwater levels Percentage of new development incorporating water efficiency measures Water consumption per household Number of homes built against Environment Agency advice on flooding 11. Land & Soil To maintain and improve the quality of the District's land and soil Use of previously developed land Density of new residential development Number of sites/hectares decontaminated as a result of new development 12. Air Quality To improve air quality AQMA designations or threshold designations Growth in cars per household Growth in car trip generation Type of travel mode to work

% change I n public transport patronage

Potential Indicators

- Number of days in the year when air quality is recorded as moderate or high for NO2, SO2, PM10, CO and Ozone on average per site.
- Monitoring of air quality in Hockley Town Centre, particularly at the SPA Road miniroundabout.

13. Sustainable Design & Construction

To promote sustainable design and construction

- Percentage of new development incorporating energy and water efficiency measures, and sustainable drainage systems
- Percentage of new development meeting BREEAM very good/excellent standards
- Percentage use of aggregates from secondary and recycled sources