



The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP)

Post Adoption Statement

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bournemouth Borough Council adopted The Bournemouth Local Plan: Town Centre Area Action Plan on 5th March 2013.
- 1.2 This statement has been prepared in accordance with paragraph (16) (3) and (4) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ('The SEA Regulations'). These regulations transpose into UK legislation European Directive 2001/42/EC ((the 'SEA Directive') which require a statement to be produced on adoption of a plan or programme, to detail:
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 through public consultation (on the SEA and SA process) have been taken into account;
 4. The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of 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.
- 1.3 This statement examines each of these points in turn.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Under section 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 local authorities must produce a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for any new or revised plan or programme. The overall purpose of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is to promote sustainable development through consideration of social, environmental and economic concerns in the preparation of plans or programmes and to evaluate reasonable alternative approaches, or options. SA is an iterative, ongoing process and was integral to the AAP's preparation.
- 2.2 The flowchart diagram overleaf illustrates the entire SA/SEA process, from the initial scoping stage (Stage A), through the stages of developing and refining options (Stage B), preparing the SA report (Stage C), consultation on the SA and plan (Stage D) and monitoring the plan's implementation (Stage E).



The full SA/SEA process

3.0 HOW ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS HAVE BEEN INTEGRATED INTO THE AAP

3.1 SA Scoping Report:

3.2 An appraisal framework, comprising the key environmental, social and economic issues arising in the borough, was prepared during the scoping stage of the SA, which began in 2007. This led to the Planning Authority developing, in consultation with statutory consultees and key stakeholders, a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (SA Scoping Report).

3.3 The SA Scoping Report sets out the framework of sustainability objectives (the SA Framework) and baseline indicators against which the AAP was tested at each stage in the plan's preparation. The SA Scoping Report also identified the main sustainability issues affecting the borough, set out baseline information/ statistics and identified higher-level plans and programmes which influenced production of the AAP. Policies were appraised against the sustainability objectives, the findings of which influenced policy formulation.

- 3.4 The initial draft SA Scoping Report was issued for consultation in June 2007 to the three statutory ‘consultation bodies’ referred to in the SA/SEA regulations: Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency. Copies of the report were also issued to the Dorset County SEA Group, neighbouring local authorities including Dorset County Council, the Regional Development Agency, Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole Economic Partnership, Bournemouth & Poole PCT, Dorset Wildlife Trust and the Bournemouth Local Strategic Partnership (Bournemouth 2026).
- 3.5 Following a later consultation period between 27 February 2009 and 6 April 2009, the Planning Authority received further representations on the SA Scoping Report. Although there were only three representations in total from this second consultation, all from the three statutory SA/SEA bodies, numerous points were raised. A revised SA Scoping Report was published in July 2009. The SA Framework in this version of the SA Scoping Report was used to assess the draft policies in the AAP.
- 3.6 **Sustainability Appraisal:**
- 3.7 SA reports which tested the AAP against the SA Framework were produced for each of the AAP’s main consultation stages - Issues and Options, Detailed Options, Preferred Options, and Pre-submission stage. The Pre-submission SA report also recorded the full SA/SEA process up to that stage, i.e. commencement of consultation on the soundness of the AAP. Following the Examination, Main Modifications to the AAP were reviewed to ascertain if they raised any issues for the SA and to identify whether they would result in any significant effects.
- 3.8 The outcome of the SA/SEA process at each stage influenced the revision of the options and/or draft policies for the subsequent stage (this is explained further in section 4). The SA reports were published and consulted upon alongside the AAP at each stage and the results of consultation were also fed into the process of AAP option/policy selection¹ and revision (see section 5).
- 3.9 **Habitat Regulations Assessment**
- 3.10 Articles 6(3) and (4) of Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (the “Habitats Directive”), transposed into UK law through Regulation 61(1) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (‘The Habitat Regulations’), impose a requirement on local planning authorities to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for spatial plans to determine whether the effects of those plans would be likely to have a significant adverse impact on the conservation objectives of a European-level protected site.
- 3.11 The HRA of the AAP was carried out in two main parts: screening and appropriate assessment. The first stage was a Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report designed to assess the potential impact of the AAP on European-level protected wildlife sites. This was prepared and published as part of the Detailed Options stage in March 2010. The second stage was production of an appropriate assessment, which was conducted at the Preferred Options stage (October 2010). A further screening and appropriate assessment was carried out at the Pre-submission consultation stage (August 2011). The assessment and production of the HRA reports were carried out by consultants and the reports were forwarded for consultation to Natural England as the statutory HRA consultation body.

¹ It is important to note that the SEA Directive requires the assessment of ‘reasonable alternatives’. For the purposes of this SA Post-adoption Statement, ‘options’ and ‘alternatives’ have the same meaning.

4.0 HOW THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT HAS BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

4.1 The stages of production on the SA, for which consultation on both the AAP and SA documents took place simultaneously, were as follows:

• SA of Issues & Options	April 20th to June 8th 2009
• SA of Detailed Options	25th January to 8th March 2010
• SA of Preferred Options	November 8th 2010 to January 7th 2011
• SA of Pre-submission CS	31 st August to 14th October 2011
• SA and Habitats Regulations Assessment: Supplementary Statements on Proposed Main Modifications	June and September 2012

4.2 The outcome of the SA process (including the SA itself and the consultation responses on the SA) has influenced each successive stage of SA as well as the content of the AAP itself.

4.3 To accord with Regulation 30(1)(d) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008², the Council drafted a Consultation Statement. This document, published in August 2011, provides full details of all the consultation exercises undertaken as part of preparing the AAP and SA and states which persons and organisations were invited to make representations on these documents and how the representations were taken into account.

4.4 The Consultation Statement taken together with the different stages of Appraisals effectively fulfils the requirement under paragraph 16(4)(c) of the SEA Regulations, for the local planning authority to indicate how the environmental report (the SA and the SA Scoping Report) and representations on the AAP and 'relevant documents' were taken into account. Further detail of how the environmental report was taken into account in relation to updating the SA Framework can also be found in the SA Scoping Report.

4.5 SA of Issues & Options

4.6 Under the objectives and indicators in the revised SA Scoping Report, a SA was produced to document the appraisal of the policy options included in the Issues and Options Report.

4.7 SA of Detailed Options

4.8 A SA was produced to document the appraisal of the policy options included in the Detailed Options consultation document. This SA was published for consultation in January 2010 alongside the consultation document.

4.9 The influence of the Detailed Options SA has been documented in a separately published document i.e included in the Preferred Options SA published in November 2010.

4.10 SA of Preferred Options

4.11 This stage of the SA involved predicting the existence, and extent, of environmental, social and economic effects that were likely to arise from the implementation of the

² The requirement in this regulation was later replaced by paragraph 22(1)(c) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, which supersedes the 2008 Regulations.

preferred policy options together and of 'reasonable alternatives', as required by the SEA Directive. Where it was possible to identify possible mitigation measures for an impact, these were also noted in the SA report for this stage.

4.12 In order to comply with the SEA Directive, the assessment at the Issues and Options. Detailed Options and Preferred Options stages took account of:

- The likely significance and timeframe of any impacts
- Cumulative effects such as encouraging development near to transport links, improving public transport and encouraging walking and cycling, all of which should help to reduce car usage and related problems of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Mitigation measures required to overcome or minimise adverse impacts.

4.13 The Pre-Submission SA explains the results of consultation at the SA Preferred Options stage and how these were taken into account in drafting final policies for Pre-Submission.

4.14 SA of Pre-Submission stage

4.15 The Pre-Submission SA report documents the entire SA/SEA process up to commencement of consultation on the Pre-Submission AAP. The report also indicates how the SA outcome has been taken into account in amending the draft options and policies at each stage prior to this.

4.16 The Pre-Submission SA sets out in table format the likely impacts for each of the Pre-Submission policies together with recommended mitigation measures to address any adverse impacts that could potentially arise from introduction of the relevant policies.

4.17 SA and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA): Supplementary Statements on Proposed Main Modifications

4.18 These statements (published in June and September 2012) were produced following an assessment of the likely sustainability impact of the Main Modifications proposed following the Examination, which was held in May 2012.

4.19 As part of the consultation on the proposed Main Modifications published in June 2012 both the implications for the SA and HRA were considered. The conclusion was that the changes did not result in any significant effects on either that required further appraisal.

4.20 As part of the consultation on the proposed Main Modifications published in September 2012, it was concluded that there would not be any significant effects on the HRA that would require further appraisal, but that some amendments to the SA would be needed. These were published at the same time as the September Main Modifications and included as an appendix.

5.0 HOW OPINIONS EXPRESSED THROUGH PUBLIC CONSULTATION (ON THE SEA AND SA PROCESS) HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

5.1 As indicated in paragraph 4.3, the representations on the AAP and SA and how these were taken into account are summarised in the Consultation Statement (published in August 2011), which provides full details of all the consultation exercises undertaken as part of preparing the AAP. Many representations whilst not specifically referring to the SA document that had been published, did however, comment on sustainability issues and these were included as part of SA process. In addition, at each stage of the SA production, the comments received from previous consultation stages were included to indicate how these influenced the next stage.

5.2 The most responses to the AAP consultation were at Preferred Options stage (269 responses), mainly reflecting a higher degree of public interest in more detailed

proposals. Most comments on the SA were at the Detailed Options stage (5 specific responses), i.e earlier in the process where the alternatives were under consideration.

- 5.3 Representations on the Pre-submission AAP were received from 19 organisations and individuals during the soundness consultation held between 31 August 2011 and 14 October 2011. The representations were sent to the Planning Inspector for his consideration. Two of these comments related to the SA including one that was in support. The representations are summarised in the Regulation 30(1)(e) Statement, published in November 2011, which is available on the Council's website. This Statement does not however indicate how these comments were taken into account as it was the purpose of the Inspector's final report on the AAP to indicate where he felt any modifications were necessary in order to make the plan sound.

6.0 THE REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE PLAN OR PROGRAMME AS ADOPTED, IN THE LIGHT OF OTHER REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES DEALT WITH

- 6.1 The preferred and alternative options were tested via a SA matrix scoring system commonly used in carrying out sustainability appraisal that tested the degree of positive or negative impact on the SA objectives within the framework.
- 6.2 The SA commented on how sustainable each of these initial options would be along with any considerations that would need to be taken into account when implementing them. This information assisted the Council in selecting preferred options.
- 6.3 The Main Modifications put forward following the Examination required insertion of a new policy to reflect the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', enshrined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), as well as changes to the wording of some existing policies. As mentioned above these proposed modifications were carefully considered and a further update of the SA was carried out. However, this did not result in such significant adverse implications as to require further revision to the AAP.

7.0 THE MEASURES THAT ARE TAKEN TO MONITOR THE SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OR PROGRAMME

- 7.1 The documents making up the Local Plan for Bournemouth, including the AAP, are to be kept under continuous review by means of an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR makes provision for monitoring the sustainability of all local planning documents as they are adopted and implemented. The Council intends to produce the AMR annually.

8.0 FURTHER INFORMATION

- 8.1 Relevant documents are available to download as follows:

- AAP and related supporting documents:
www.bournemouth.gov.uk/towncentreaap
- Pre-submission Sustainability Appraisal:
<http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/PlanningBuildings/Planning/Policy/Local-Plan/TCAAP/TCAAPSoundness.aspx>
- Regulation 30(1)(d) Consultation Statement and Regulation 30(1)(e) Pre-Submission Consultation Results Statement:
<http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/PlanningBuildings/Planning/Policy/Local-Plan/TCAAP/TCAAP-Examination.aspx>
- Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment: Supplementary Statements:
<http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/PlanningBuildings/Planning/Policy/Local-Plan/TCAAP/TCAAP-Examination.aspx>