



New Forest National Park Submission Draft Local Plan 2016 – 2036

Proposed additional site allocation – Ashurst Hospital

Sustainability Appraisal

January 2019

Sustainability Appraisal of the proposed site policy

1. The Authority completed a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) report for the Submission draft Local Plan 2016 - 2036 and this was published for consultation alongside the draft Local Plan in January 2018 (Core Document 10). This SA report incorporated the requirements for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC. The Authority also completed a Sustainability Appraisal of the proposed modifications to the Submission draft Local Plan and this was published as an Addendum to the Sustainability Appraisal Report in May 2018.
2. The overall purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal process is to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the preparation of a Local Plan. It involves testing the proposed policies against a set of sustainability objectives and criteria. The SA both informs the development of different policies and tests the sustainability of the final Local Plan policies.
3. This further Sustainability Appraisal has been prepared to assess the proposed additional housing site allocation policy for land at Ashurst Hospital (Annex 1). The SA assessment has adopted a consistent approach to that taken in the main Sustainability Appraisal Report (January 2018, CD10), and the Addendum to the Sustainability Appraisal Report (May 2018). For example, the ten sustainability objectives and criteria used in this SA report are consistent with those contained within CD10, which were produced in consultation with stakeholders and statutory consultees. Further details on the sustainability appraisal objectives and criteria can be found in CD10.
4. An appraisal of the draft Ashurst Hospital site allocation policy has been undertaken, using the matrix based on the SA objectives and criteria contained within CD10. The effects of the proposed Ashurst Hospital allocation policy have been predicted (i.e. what the effect will be on each SA objective), with 'scores' reflecting whether the impact of the policy is likely to be positive, negative, neutral or uncertain.

Sustainability Appraisal Conclusions

5. The SA assessment of the proposed Ashurst Hospital site allocation policy concludes that development could lead to possible conflicts with the protection of the landscape; nature conservation interests; and the built environment (SA Objectives 1, 2 and 3). These impacts are mitigated through the site-specific policy criteria proposed and other policies contained within the Submission draft Local Plan. The allocation would also have a positive impact on the delivery of housing to meet the needs of local communities within the National Park (SA Objective 7). The site has been identified for around 30 units and any on-site affordable housing provision would be directed to meet local needs.
6. In terms of the potential impacts on the *nationally protected landscape* of the New Forest National Park (SA Objective 1), the proposed site allocation policy restricts built development to the previously developed land at the north of the

site to ensure the existing green buffer remains to the surrounding open New Forest landscape (criterion a). Similarly, proposed criterion (h) requires the retention and strengthening of the existing vegetated southern boundary between the site and the adjacent Open Forest. In addition, the landscape setting of the Ashurst Hospital site has been protected through the confirmation of a Tree Preservation Order in December 2017 and this is reflected in criteria (d). On balance therefore, it is considered that a combination of the other policy requirements contained in the Submission draft Local Plan, allied to the site-specific policy criteria highlighted above, will ensure potential adverse impacts on the National Park's landscape will be mitigated.

7. The SA process also highlighted potential conflicts from the proposed allocation on the *conservation of local, national and international nature conservation sites* (SA Objective 2). The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Submission draft Local Plan concludes that impacts from new housing development could have likely significant in-combination adverse effects on designated nature conservation sites. As the SA process is informed by the HRA, this SA report concludes that the proposed Ashurst Hospital policy (Annex 1) could have a negative sustainability impact on the SA's nature conservation objectives.
8. This matter is assessed in more detail in the Habitats Regulation Assessment (LUC, January 2019) of the proposed site allocation policy. The draft policy includes a number of requirements to mitigate potential impacts, including restricting development to the previously developed land; restricting the form of residential use (in line with the recommendations of the HRA, January 2019); ensuring the green buffer to the south of the existing buildings is retained (criterion b); and a detailed criterion (h) aimed at avoiding urban edge impacts. The Submission draft Local Plan also includes a number of policies protecting designated nature conservation sites (e.g. draft policies SP5 (Nature Conservation Sites of International Importance) and SP6 (The Natural Environment)). These policies are supported by the measures included in the Authority's revised Habitat Mitigation Scheme and the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership's (SRMP) Mitigation Strategy. On this basis, it is considered that the potential adverse impacts from the proposed allocation on nature conservation interests will be mitigated.
9. The SA process has identified potential impacts from the proposed allocation on the conservation and enhancement of the *character of the built environment, local heritage and culture* (SA Objective 3). This relates to the existing buildings on the site that are considered to be non-designated heritage assets. This matter is addressed in criterion (c) of the proposed policy, which requires the retention of the Victorian Chapel; and the submission of a detailed heritage assessment and structural survey to justify the loss of the 19th Century former workhouse buildings.
10. In addition, the Submission draft Local Plan contains a number of policies – including draft policies SP1 (Sustainable development), SP16 (Historic and Built Environment), SP17 (Local Distinctiveness), DP18 (Design Principles) and DP2 (General Development Principles) – which positively take forward SA Objective

3. The Authority's Design Guide SPD and the adopted Ashurst & Colbury Village Design Statement will also help to ensure that new development at Ashurst Hospital is appropriately designed. On this basis, it is concluded that potential impacts on the character of the built environment are adequately addressed by the relevant criteria in the proposed site allocation policy and general policy protection in the Submission draft Local Plan.

11. Finally, the SA process identified uncertain impacts on the sustainable use of resources (SA Objective 4); and access to services (SA Objective). This is because the degree to which the existing buildings on the site can be retained and re-used – which would be a sustainable use of resources – can only be determined following more detailed surveys. Secondly, although the redevelopment of the site for predominantly residential use may result in a reduction in the healthcare provision, this is balanced by the fact that significant parts of the site are already vacant and the proposed policy (Annex 1) supports the retention (and potential extension) of healthcare provision in the western part of the site.

Proposed Ashurst Hospital site allocation policy - Sustainability Appraisal	
<i>Assessment: + Positive o Neutral ? Uncertain - Potential conflict</i>	
Sustainability Appraisal Objective / Criteria	Assessment
1. Conserve and enhance the landscape and seascape, and safeguard tranquillity	-?
2. Conserve and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	-
3. Conserve and enhance the character of the built environment, local heritage and culture	-?
4. Encourage sustainable use of resources, enhance air and water quality, help mitigate climate change	?
5. Deliver opportunities and education for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities	?
6. Improve the well-being of communities by providing a safe environment, access to services & opportunities for healthy living	?
7. Support the delivery of housing for local communities	+
8. Support the local transport infrastructure, including sustainable transport	?
9. Facilitate a sustainable economy that supports businesses & communities, while maintaining the quality of the environment	?
10. Ensure a thriving land-based economy	O