

Basildon Borough Council

Sustainability Appraisal
Reasonable Alternatives to
Basildon Town Centre
Regeneration Policy R2

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Regeneration Policy R2

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Introduction

1.1 Basildon Borough Council commissioned LUC in April 2013 to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Basildon Core Strategy and associated Development Planning Documents. In late 2014 the decision was made to consolidate all plan-making work into a single new Local Plan to manage growth and development up to 2034. The Draft Local Plan was published for consultation alongside an accompanying SA Report in January 2016, under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations (2012). Following the Regulation 18 consultation, further work was undertaken to prepare and appraise final options for inclusion in a Publication Local Plan. The Publication Local Plan was published for consultation alongside an accompanying SA Report in November 2018 under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations (2012).

1.2 During consultation on the Publication Local Plan, the Council received notification of several additional site options from site promoters, known as 'omission sites'. An SA Addendum was therefore produced in March 2019 that reported the significant effects of each omission site for comparison with the other site options appraised throughout the plan-making process, including the final site allocations. The Revised Publication Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on the 28th of March 2019 for Examination.

1.3 A second SA Addendum was produced in February 2020 to consider the implications of new air quality modelling on the effects of the Revised Publication Local Plan (March 2019). The SA Addendum also appraised the in-combination effects of the Revised Publication Local Plan with the Borough's preferred Air Quality Management Plan (a speed reduction scheme and non-charging Clean Air Zone) designed to mitigate modelled exceedances in NO₂.

1.4 This report represents the third SA Addendum to the Publication Local Plan SA Report (November 2018). It focusses on appraising new alternative housing growth figures for the Basildon Town Centre area, following the findings of new work undertaken in support of the Council's Basildon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy (September 2020). The Regeneration Strategy has not been adopted by Basildon Council as a planning document, rather, its purpose is to provide a strategic vision to those considering investing in the town centre. It clearly defines the Council's vision for future development and investment in Basildon Town Centre, by providing the robust evidence base, sound principles and strategic drivers on which to attract future regeneration.

Evidence Base Update

1.5 Since the reporting of the changes in the air quality baseline evidence and associated mitigation measures in the second SA Addendum (February 2020), the following new evidence documents have come to light and now form part of the Revised Publication Local Plan evidence.

Air Quality Review

1.6 An Air Quality Review undertaken by Basildon Borough Council in conjunction with Essex County Council and Ringway Jacobs was published in May 2020. The review models the likely changes in air quality as a result of the level of growth set out in the Revised Publication Local Plan (March 2019) and in light of the proposed mitigation measures set out in the Council's Air Quality Management Plan. The new analysis confirms that the scale of growth proposed in the Revised Publication Local Plan (March 2019) would not generate unacceptable exceedances in Nitrogen Oxide (NO₂) over the plan period.

Climate Change and Air Quality Topic Paper

1.7 The Climate Change and Air Quality Topic Paper (September 2020) sets out the changes in evidence and guidance since the submission of the Revised Publication Local Plan (March 2019). The Topic Paper suggests modifications should be made to the following Revised Publication Local Plan policies:

- Policy CC1: Responding to Climate Change to be modified to include specific mentions to the urban heat island effect and designing development with health and wellbeing, climate change and vulnerable people in mind.
- New Policy NE6 (1): Air Quality in addition to current Policy NE6: Pollution Control and Residential Amenity. The new policy would give greater consideration to the measures contained in the Air Quality Management Plan, including the potential inclusion of a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) and other areas, and seek net improvements in the overall air quality where possible.

Town Centre Topic Paper

1.8 The Council is also preparing a Basildon Town Centre Topic Paper which builds on the work undertaken as part of the Regeneration Strategy and explores the three growth options in more depth. The emerging Town Centre Topic Paper sets out changes in evidence and circumstances influencing the planning of land uses in Basildon Town Centre. In light of the new evidence and circumstances, the topic

paper suggests modifying the scale of housing growth planned in Revised Publication Local Plan Policy R2 from 'up to around 2,128 residential units' to 'a minimum of 4,200 residential units'.

1.9 This recommendation is also informed by the SA of the new reasonable alternative residential growth options set out below.

Covid-19

1.10 The short-term implications of the current global pandemic are well known: intermittent social and economic 'lockdowns' and their social-economic implications, pressure on public services, including the NHS and online retails. However, the medium to long term implications through the rest of the Plan period are less certain. The Town Centre Topic Paper highlights some of the most relevant and likely implications, notably increased and lasting dependence on online retail and services and more home working, reducing the need for physical retail and office premises in the Borough. Although these implications are yet to be confirmed, they generally support the move towards increasing the number of residents in the town centre by generally improving sustainable and active accessibility.

Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

1.11 The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) is used by Basildon Borough Council to identify a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the plan period. The majority of sites in the HELAA were sourced from three 'Call for Sites' exercises which were conducted in 2007, 2008, and 2019.

1.12 The most recent call for sites exercise has focussed exclusively on Basildon Town Centre rather than the Borough as a whole for a number of reasons:

- Some Basildon Town Centre sites which were previously considered to be unavailable, have since been the subject of submitted planning applications or the Borough's pre-application process.
- Some Basildon Town Centre sites previously identified as unachievable due to viability issues have since been granted Housing Infrastructure Funding.
- Work on the Basildon Borough Regeneration Strategy (September 2020) revealed that Basildon Town Centre can support higher densities of residential development and attract higher sales prices and rental values, improving deliverability and viability in this particular location.

1.13 It should be noted however that landowners/promoters were permitted to submit any site in the Borough for consideration as part of the 2020 HELAA review up to 31/03/2020 and, therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the assessment of sites outside the town centre remains up to date.

1.14 Following the close of the town centre call for sites exercise in September 2019, the Borough's HELAA is being updated to determine which new site options are now suitable, available and achievable and what level of housing they could deliver.

New Town Centre Growth Options

1.15 The contents of the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy published in September 2020 have been used to review the contents of the Revised Publication Local Plan, specifically Policy R2: Basildon Town Centre Regeneration.

1.16 The current wording of Policy R2 provides for up to around 2,128 residential units. However, new evidence supporting the Borough's new Basildon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy (September 2020) identifies an additional housing capacity of 2,072 units over the level specified by the current Policy R2. This boosts the town centre capacity up to 4,200 residential units, although the Regeneration Strategy intends for some of the housing to be delivered after 2034 (i.e. following the end of the Revised Publication Local Plan period).

1.17 In addition, engagement with landowners has indicated ambitions to increase delivery rates in Basildon Town Centre to between 5,440 units and 7,233 units, offering the potential to significantly increase the town centre's contribution to meeting the Borough's objectively assessed housing need (OAN) calculated at between 19,440 and 19,720 homes over the Plan period. In light of this, the Council has identified three reasonable housing delivery options in Basildon Town Centre:

- **Option 1:** Up to around 2,128 residential units as identified in the existing Local Plan Policy R2
- **Option 2:** Up to 4,200 residential units as proposed in the Basildon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy 2020.
- **Option 3:** A range of 5,440-7,233 residential units as identified through engagement with landowners (i.e. capacity of all current town centre planning applications and pre-applications, as well as all other potential town centre sites).

1.18 Additional growth on non-Green Belt, town centre sites in Wickford has also been promoted. However, investigation

of these site options is still ongoing as part of the update to the HELAA. There is therefore currently insufficient information to make a robust judgement on whether the additional housing growth opportunities in Wickford could be delivered alongside the existing Revised Publication Local Plan allocations in the town. Therefore, it has been decided by the Council to rule out considering this option as a reasonable and realistic alternative to the Basildon Town Centre until more information becomes available. As such, this SA Addendum has not appraised additional growth at Wickford. If this option is found to be a reasonable alternative in the future it will need to be considered for allocation and appraised through the SA.

Sustainability Appraisal

1.19 Table 1.1 below presents the summary of SA scores for each of the three known reasonable growth options for Basildon Town Centre outlined above. The table is followed by justification for the effects identified for each option for each SA objective in the Basildon Local Plan SA Framework.

Table 1.1: Summary of SA Scores

SA objectives	Option 1 - Policy R2	Option 2 – Up to 4,200 homes	Option 3 – A range of 5,440 to 7,233 homes
1. Conserving and enhancing the diverse natural and urban landscape, countryside and green spaces of Basildon Borough.	++/-	++/-	++/-
2. Protecting and enhancing the cultural heritage and local distinctiveness of Basildon Borough.	+/-	+/-	+/-
3. Protect, conserve and enhance the Borough's biodiversity and the habitats which support it.	+	+	+
4. Achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth to stimulate economic regeneration.	++	++	++
5. Ensure the Borough's Town Centres are promoted as sustainable locations for living, retail, leisure and related commercial development.	++	++	++
6. Improve educational attainment and social inclusion, especially in the most deprived areas of the Borough.	++	++	++
7. Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home and increase affordable provision to help those in most need locally.	++	++	++
8. Improve the health and wellbeing of the Borough's residents and reduce inequalities in health related to development and the environment.	+	+	+
9. Create and sustain vibrant communities that are safe and feel safe to those who live in or visit them and where crime is reduced.	++	++	++
10. Regenerate and renew disadvantaged areas where people live or work in the Borough.	++	++	++
11. Improve accessibility to and enhance local services and facilities.	++	++	++
12. Improve efficiency of land use, through the re-use of previously developed land and existing buildings, including the re-use of materials from previous buildings.	++	++	++
13. Minimise the risk of flooding and the detriment to public health, domestic and commercial property and the natural environment flood events can bring.	0	0	0

SA objectives		Option 1 - Policy R2	Option 2 – Up to 4,200 homes	Option 3 – A range of 5,440 to 7,233 homes		
14.	Reduce the local contribution to climate change, by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, improving energy efficiency of buildings and increase the use of renewable energy sources for local energy needs to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels.	++	++	++		
15.	Reduce air, land and noise pollution and improve their respective quality through direct action or mitigation measures.	+/-	++/-	++/-		
16.	Improve water efficiency and achieve sustainable water resource management.	0	0	0		
17.	Adopt building and public realm designs which ensure the Borough is prepared for the effects of climate change.	+/-	+/-	+/-		
18.	Reduce waste generation and increase the amount of waste which is recycled or re-used.	0	0	0		
19.	Reduce traffic congestion and its related pollution levels by improving travel choice and channelling development to sustainable locations.	+/-	++/-	++/-		
Key		++ Significant positive effect likely	++/- Mixed significant positive and minor negative effects likely	+/- Mixed minor effects likely	+ Minor positive effect likely	0 Negligible effect likely

SA objective 1: Conserving and enhancing the diverse natural and urban landscape, countryside and green spaces of Basildon Borough

1.20 Revised Publication Local Plan Policy R2 (Option 1) seeks to regenerate Basildon Town Centre, helping to improve the urban landscape. Furthermore, it promotes an enhanced public realm with new public green spaces. This is likely to have a significant positive effect on this objective. However, the significant densification and urbanisation of the town centre also has the potential to affect the existing character and local distinctiveness of certain sensitive elements of the town centre. Acknowledging the policy’s focus on regeneration, this adverse effect is only recorded as minor, resulting in a mixed significant positive minor negative effect of Option 1 overall.

1.21 The same regeneration aspirations would be delivered through Options 2 and 3. Where they differ is on the scale (both extent and density) of homes being delivered in the town centre. The greater the number of homes, the greater the potential significant adverse effects on the special character of the town centre; however, there is already high density development in the town centre and there is no evidence to suggest that the largest scale of homes proposed under Option 3 would result in particularly significant adverse effects compared to the current baseline. It should also be noted that the greater the number of homes delivered on existing

brownfield land in the town centre the less need to consider the development of greenfield land elsewhere in the Borough to meet the Borough’s housing needs of the Plan period. Therefore, overall, both Options 2 and 3 are considered to have mixed significant positive and minor negative effects against this SA objective.

SA objective 2: Protecting and enhancing the cultural heritage and local distinctiveness of Basildon Borough

1.22 Revised Publication Local Plan Policy R2 (Option 1) seeks to regenerate Basildon Town Centre which should help to enhance the character of the town centre, including its features of historic and cultural significance, with at least minor positive effects on this SA objective. Although Policy R2 does not directly require the safeguarding of the setting and significance of the historic assets in the town centre, it does require that development be delivered as guided by the most up to date Town Centre Masterplan. Therefore, only the potential for minor adverse effects are recorded. Even though Options 2 and 3 would provide significantly more homes than Option 1, the same regeneration aspirations and safeguards set out in the future masterplan would apply. Therefore, the same mixed minor positive and minor negative effects are recorded for all three options against this SA objective.

SA objective 3: Protect, conserve and enhance the Borough's biodiversity and the habitats which support it

1.23 Revised Publication Local Plan Policy R2 (Option 1) primarily deals with the existing built-up area of Basildon, which is less valuable for biodiversity. However, the provision of new squares and green spaces is required as part of development, which has the potential to have a net positive effect on urban biodiversity. Furthermore, Policy R2 requires development be delivered as guided by the most up to date Town Centre Masterplan. Given the predominantly urban character of the area and the proposals the potential for positive effects against this SA objective are limited to minor positive effects.

1.24 Even though Options 2 and 3 would provide significantly more homes than Option 1, the same regeneration aspirations and safeguards would apply. It should also be noted that the greater the number of homes delivered on existing brownfield land in the town centre the less need to consider the development of greenfield land elsewhere in the Borough, which may have ecological value and/or sensitivities, to meet the Borough's housing needs of the Plan period. Therefore, the same minor positive effect is recorded for all three options against this SA objective.

SA objective 4: Achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth to stimulate economic regeneration

1.25 Revised Publication Local Plan Policy R2 (Option 1) seeks to regenerate the town centre of Basildon, including significantly increasing the provision of retail, leisure and entertainment uses and supporting the diversification of uses. Option 1 is therefore likely to have a significant positive effect on this objective.

1.26 Options 2 and 3 aim to deliver more homes than Option 1 through a combination of densification and the allocation of less space for retail, leisure and entertainment uses. However, this capacity for greater residential development has been partly driven by new evidence suggesting changes to the level of requirement for retail and other ancillary uses in Basildon town centre. Therefore, as long as Options 2 and 3 continue to meet the Borough's economic growth needs, albeit to a less significant degree than Option 1, significant positive effects are also recorded for Options 2 and 3. It should also be noted that the delivery of more homes in the town centre will increase footfall in the town centre for the businesses, services and facilities that remain and are provided in the regenerated town centre, helping to sustain them in the long term.

SA objective 5: Ensure the Borough's Town Centres are promoted as sustainable locations for living, retail, leisure and related commercial development

1.27 Revised Publication Local Plan Policy R2 (Option 1) seeks to reinforce Basildon's role and function as the highest-order centre in the Borough. Therefore, a significant positive effect is likely for this SA objective.

1.28 Options 2 and 3 aim to deliver more homes than Option 1 through a combination of densification and the allocation of less space for retail, leisure and entertainment uses. However, this capacity for greater residential development has been partly driven by new evidence suggested less need for such uses in Basildon town centre. Therefore, as long as Options 2 and 3 continue to meet the Borough's retail, leisure and related commercial needs, albeit to a less significant degree than Option 1, significant positive effects are also recorded for Options 2 and 3. It should also be noted that the delivery of more homes in the town centre will increase footfall in the town centre for the businesses, services and facilities that remain and are provided in the regenerated town centre, helping to sustain them in the long term. For example, this will support the new multi-screen cinema (opening in 2022), which is seeking to reverse the outward migration of such leisure facilities to the Festival of Leisure Park and promote the "new" town centre as a sustainable option for new and existing residents.

SA objective 6: Improve educational attainment and social inclusion, especially in the most deprived areas of the Borough

1.29 Revised Publication Local Plan Policy R2 (Option 1) supports the provision of a further education college in the town centre. The provision of this new facility is likely to have a significant positive effect on this objective.

1.30 Options 2 and 3 are also expected to have significant positive effects on this SA objective as they also aim to invest in the new further education college and digital hub on the town centre.

SA objective 7: Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home and increase affordable provision to help those in most need locally

1.31 Revised Publication Local Plan Policy R2 (Option 1) seeks to provide up to around 2,128 dwellings within the town centre. Options 2 and 3 aim to provide up to 4,200 and between 5,400 – 7,233 residential units, respectively. As such, each option is likely to make a significant contribution to the Borough's housing needs over the Plan period, with a significant positive effect on this objective. It should be noted that Options 2 and 3 have more significant positive effects as they would contribute to the delivery of more and greater

variety of homes, helping to address the Revised Publication Local Plan's shortfall in meeting the Borough's objectively assessed housing need. The greater the number and range of homes delivered, the greater the significance of the positive effect against this SA objective.

SA objective 8: Improve the health and wellbeing of the Borough's residents and reduce inequalities in health related to development and the environment

1.32 Each option will directly contribute to the regeneration of the town centre. Contributing to economic growth and the diversification of uses in the town centre, job creation and improving the quality of local resident's lives. Furthermore, the options would seek to enhance the town centre's public and green spaces. These contributions are likely to have minor positive effects on this objective for all options.

1.33 The greater the scale of development in the town centre the greater the potential for adverse effects on the amenity of existing residents, workers and visitors, particularly during the construction phase; however, all three options include a significant amount of development and safeguards will be put in place in accordance with future masterplan work, so no adverse effects are recorded against any of the options in this regard.

SA objective 9: Create and sustain vibrant communities that are safe and feel safe to those who live in or visit them and where crime is reduced

1.34 Each option supports the regeneration of the town centre, which will help to create and sustain its vibrancy. The greater the density of residential development, the greater the general level of footfall in the town centre, contributing to overall vibrancy and level of public surveillance. However, all three options include a significant amount of development. Therefore, a significant positive effect is recorded for all three options.

SA objective 10: Regenerate and renew disadvantaged areas where people live or work in the Borough

1.35 Each option aims to regenerate the town centre of Basildon. The greater the scale of investment, the greater the potential for positive effects against this SA objective, but all three options include plans for significant regeneration. Therefore, a significant positive effect is recorded for all three options.

SA objective 11: Improve accessibility to and enhance local services and facilities

1.36 Revised Publication Local Plan Policy R2 (Option 1) seeks to significantly improve the quality and increase the quantity of local services and facilities in Basildon's town

centre. Therefore, a significant positive effect is likely. For example, there are on-going discussions with partners (i.e. NHS) to deliver a phlebotomy service in the town centre from 2021.

1.37 Options 2 and 3 aim to deliver more homes than Option 1 through a combination of densification and the allocation of less space for retail, leisure and entertainment uses. However, this capacity for greater residential development has been partly driven by new evidence suggesting less need for such uses in Basildon town centre. Therefore, as long as Options 2 and 3 continue to meet the Borough's need for local services and facilities, albeit to a less significant degree than Option 1, significant positive effects are also recorded for Options 2 and 3. It should also be noted that the delivery of more homes in the town centre will generally improve the proportion of local residents in the Borough within walking distance of the town centre and all the services and facilities it provides. Furthermore, the town centres new residents will have access to some of the Borough's best sustainable transport routes to London and the wider area. Therefore, significant positive effects are also recorded for Options 2 and 3 against this SA objective.

SA objective 12: Improve efficiency of land use, through the re-use of previously developed land and existing buildings, including the re-use of materials from previous buildings

1.38 Revised Publication Local Plan Policy R2 (Option 1) is focused on the regeneration of Basildon Town Centre, which is an existing built-up area. The policy also specifically encourages the redevelopment and modernisation of existing premises. Increasing the density of development in this urban location before developing on greenfield land, re-using materials and previous buildings where possible is likely to have a significant positive effect on this objective.

1.39 Options 2 and 3 aim to deliver more homes in the same location. The greater the number of homes delivered in the Basildon Town Centre the fewer that will need to be delivered elsewhere and the less the likelihood for the need to lose further greenfield to development. Therefore, significant positive effects are also expected for options 2 and 3, with Option 3 likely to generate the most significant positive effects against this SA objective.

SA objective 13: Minimise the risk of flooding and the detriment to public health, domestic and commercial property and the natural environment flood events can bring

1.40 Although there is relatively limited flood risk in Basildon Town Centre, all three options would result in its densification potentially increasing the impermeable area and therefore

increasing the potential for surface water flooding. Although Revised Publication Local Plan Policy R2 (Option 1) makes no specific reference to the management of flood risk in the town centre, it does require that development be delivered as guided by the most up to date Town Centre Masterplan. Furthermore, Policy R2 requires the creation of new green spaces, which have the potential to facilitate effective drainage. Therefore, overall, in light of the requirements set out in the future masterplan, a negligible effect is recorded against this SA objective for Option 1.

1.41 Options 2 and 3 increase the density of development in the town centre. However, these greater densities will be accommodated through higher building heights rather than the development of a wider area, meaning that the loss of more permeable surfaces in the centre is not considered to be notably more than Option 1. Therefore negligible effects are also recorded for Options 2 and 3 against this SA objective.

SA objective 14: Reduce the local contribution to climate change, by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, improving energy efficiency of buildings and increase the use of renewable energy sources for local energy needs to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels

1.42 Revised Publication Local Plan Policy R2 (Option 1) requires the provision of a number of key services including employment, open space and education facilities. Having an improved range of services and facilities in the centre of the town will enable existing and new residents to access facilities on foot or by public transport, reducing the reliance on the car and thus reducing car-based greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, the delivery of a significant number of homes and other land uses in the Borough offers the potential to access economies of scale and diverse heat and electricity demand to invest in more energy efficiency and low carbon and/or renewable schemes, offering greater potential to reduce the carbon footprint of new residents and workers in the town centre. The greater the scale of development in the town centre the greater the ability to access these economies of scale and technology efficiencies.

1.43 Although more people and growth will increase the daily volume of greenhouse gas emissions in the town centre, heating more homes and increase the number of vehicles on roads, given the town centre is aiming only to meet the District's growth needs, the concentration of this growth in the town centre will only serve to minimise greenhouse gas emissions elsewhere in the Borough, and the relatively sustainable location of the centre means that growth in this location compared to others is likely to help minimise the need to travel by private car. Therefore, overall, all three options offer the potential for significant positive effects against this SA objective.

SA objective 15: Reduce air, land and noise pollution and improve their respective quality through direct action or mitigation measures

1.44 Revised Publication Local Plan Policy R2 (Option 1) proposes a significant amount of new development within the centre of Basildon in close proximity to known areas of poor air quality, for example along the A127 especially around the Noak Bridge Junction as it leads into the town centre. The construction of this new development is likely to result in an increase in noise and air pollution for a temporary period. However, this development will be required to implement noise and air quality management strategies during construction (including noise and dust management plans). Therefore these adverse effects are only recorded as minor.

1.45 Given the town centre is aiming only to meet the District's growth needs, the concentration of this growth in the town centre will only serve to avoid road-based travel elsewhere in the Borough. The relatively sustainable location of the centre ensures that the allocation of more homes and improving the range of services and facilities in the centre of the town has greater potential to reduce the need for local residents to travel by private car when compared to more remote locations where access to many of the services and facilities in the town centre are more limited. The positive effects associated with locating more growth in such a central and sustainably accessible location offers greater scope for significant positive effects against this SA objective for Options 2 and 3. Therefore, Option 1 is judged to offer the potential for mixed minor positive and minor negative effects against this SA objective, and Options 2 and 3 have the potential to generate mixed significant positive and minor negative effects against this SA objective.

SA objective 16: Improve water efficiency and achieve sustainable water resource management

1.46 The significant increase in the scale of development proposed in Basildon Town Centre under all three options will significantly increase the amount of water consumption. The greater the scale of development the greater the need for water in the town centre. However, given the town centre is aiming only to meet the District's housing needs, the concentration of growth in the town centre will only serve to minimise water needs elsewhere in the Borough. Therefore, overall, all three options are likely to have a negligible effect on this SA objective.

SA objective 17: Adopt building and public realm designs which ensure the Borough is prepared for the effects of climate change

1.47 Revised Publication Local Plan Policy R2 (Option 1) seeks to provide new and improved public realm and green

spaces. This will help to alleviate the impacts of climate change, principally minimising surface water flood risks and the urban heat island effect. These same ambitions would be realised through options 1 and 3. Therefore, a minor positive effect is recorded for all three options against this SA objective. However, all three options result in the development of buildings of a significantly greater mass, increasing the potential for exacerbating the urban heat island effect in the town centre. Generally, these greater densities will be accommodated through higher building heights rather than the development of a wider area, meaning that the loss of more permeable surfaces in the centre is less significant. Therefore, overall, a minor negative effect is recorded for all three options, resulting in minor mixed positive and negative effects for these options. It should however be noted that options 2 and 3 double and potentially triple the number of homes being delivered in the town centre, respectively. Therefore, the potential for these options to generate adverse effects against this SA objective are relatively greater.

SA objective 18: Reduce waste generation and increase the amount of waste which is recycled or re-used

1.48 The significant increase in the scale of development proposed in Basildon Town Centre under all three options will significantly increase the amount of construction and demolition waste in the short term and local authority collected waste over the longer term. The greater the scale of development the greater the concentration of waste generation. However, given the town centre is aiming only to meet the District's growth needs, the concentration of growth in the town centre will only serve to minimise waste generation elsewhere in the Borough. Therefore, overall, all three options are likely to have a negligible effect on this SA objective.

SA objective 19: Reduce traffic congestion and its related pollution levels by improving travel choice and channelling development to sustainable locations

1.49 Revised Publication Local Plan Policy R2 (Option 1) proposes a significant amount of new development within the centre of Basildon, which will increase traffic in the centre of the town during its construction, as well as longer term through a general increase in its base population density. However, given the town centre is aiming only to meet the District's growth needs, the concentration of this growth in the town centre will only serve to avoid road-based travel elsewhere in the Borough. The relatively sustainable location of the centre ensures that the allocation of more homes and improving the range of services and facilities in the centre of the town has greater potential to reduce the need for local residents to travel by private car when compared to more remote locations where access to many of the services and facilities in the town centre are more limited. The positive

effects associated with locating more growth in such a central and sustainably accessible location offers greater scope for significant positive effects against this SA objective for Options 2 and 3. Therefore, Option 1 is judged to offer the potential for mixed minor positive and minor negative effects against this SA objective, and Options 2 and 3 have the potential to generate mixed significant positive and minor negative effects against this SA objective.

Conclusions

1.50 The three town centre growth options tested have the potential to generate similar significant effects against the SA framework. This is unsurprising given that all three options cover the same location and aspire to achieve the same regeneration goals set out in the Basildon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy (2020). However, the delivery of double the number of homes under Option 2 and potentially triple the number of homes under Option 3 increase the potential likelihood and/or significance of certain effects identified.

1.51 Option 1 delivers a significant number of homes in the town centre (up to 2,128) but forms part of the growth and spatial strategy set out in the Revised Publication Local Plan that does not allocate enough land to meet the Borough's objectively assessed housing needs. Conversely, Options 2 and 3, in the context of the wider growth and spatial strategy of the Revised Publication Local Plan, have the potential to increase the delivery of homes in the town centre by enough to meet the Borough's housing needs within the Plan period, and build in flexibility and resilience in delivery over the long term (including beyond the plan period).

1.52 Given the highly accessible and relatively environmentally unconstrained nature of the town centre, increasing the scale of growth in the town centre offers to minimise environmentally adverse effects elsewhere in the Borough in the longer term. Greater scales of growth in the town centre offer greater scope to maximise the efficient use of brownfield land and existing buildings before greenfield land is allocated, and access the economies of scale necessary to deliver highly affordable, climate change resilient and energy efficient homes.

1.53 The greater the density of development proposed under Options 2 and 3 increases the likelihood of traffic congestion and pollution in the short term during the construction of the development, and potentially reduce the climate change resilience of the town centre. However, the greater the scale of growth in such a central and accessible location the greater the potential to minimise the need for residents, workers and visitors to travel by private car in favour of more sustainable

and active modes of transport, helping to reduce air and noise pollution in the medium to long term.

LUC

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