



Executive Summary of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Post Submission Modifications Basildon Local Plan (2022)

Basildon Borough Council

Final report

Prepared by LUC

December 2021

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Introduction

1.1 The Sustainability Appraisal Report has been prepared by LUC, on behalf of Basildon Borough Council (the Council) as part of the integrated Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Post Submission Modifications version of the Basildon Borough Local Plan (hereafter referred to as the “2022 Local Plan”).

1.2 This Executive Summary relates to the SA Report for the Basildon 2022 Local Plan, containing Strategic and Spatial Policies, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies and addenda. It is a very brief summary of the key findings of the SA process and does not constitute the statutory Non-Technical Summary (NTS) that is legally required by the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations (there is a separate NTS document that meets those requirements).

1.3 An SA is a systematic process that must be carried out during the preparation of a Local Plan. Its role is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives. This process is an opportunity to consider ways by which the Local Plan can contribute to improvements in environmental, social and economic conditions, as well as a means of identifying and mitigating any

potential adverse effects that the plan might otherwise have. SA should be applied as an iterative process informing the development of the Local Plan at each stage, as has been the case throughout the preparation of the Basildon Borough Local Plan. A description and summary of all the previous SA work that has been undertaken is provided in Chapters 2 and 4 of the full SA Report.

Findings

1.4 The policies and site allocations within the 2022 Local Plan were appraised against a set of 19 sustainability objectives, and the overall effects of the whole plan are as follows.

1.5 Provision of development through the 2022 Local Plan has potential to result in a number of cumulative significant positive effects on the social and economic SA objectives due to meeting the Borough's need for new housing and employment land and the benefits and opportunities that provides residents. Conversely, a significant proportion of the growth planned within the Borough will be on greenfield land within the Borough's Green Belt, potentially resulting in significant adverse effects on the more environmental sustainability objectives including effects on species and habitats, natural and historic landscapes, townscapes and countryside. However, the 2022 Local Plan prioritises the development and regeneration of previously developed land in the existing urban areas of the Borough's settlements, including 4,738 homes in Basildon town centre, and many of the strategic allocations promote and offer opportunities to enhance the setting and special characteristics of the Borough's historic and natural environment, therefore some significant positive effects are also identified. The opportunities extend to actively managing and reducing the Borough's greenhouse gas emissions in the face of sustained and significant population growth through the construction of energy efficient and decentralised energy networks.

1.6 The allocation policies include delivery criteria that are designed to ensure that any significant adverse effects are minimised as far as possible. These delivery criteria are of particular importance:

- In Basildon Town Centre outlined in Policy R2, which is earmarked for the greatest scale and density of development over the Plan period (4,738 dwellings).
- To the east of Basildon within and around the development allocation outlined in Policy H11 and SD3 (1,350 homes in the Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet Neighbourhood Plan Area), where the delivery of a landscape buffer between the settlements of Pitsea and Bowers Gifford is essential to avoid coalescence of these settlements by maintaining the integrity of this strategic gap as Green Belt, green infrastructure and open space.
- To the south west of Billericay within and around the consolidated development allocations outlined in Policy H17a-H17d, where the significant scale of development in this location will facilitate the delivery of a much needed link road to alleviate congestion.

1.7 The larger scale developments will, in many instances, be capable of delivering a wider range of benefits than smaller developments, such as the inclusion of new community facilities or investment in existing community facilities (e.g. local schools and healthcare), support for public transport, and in some allocations the incorporation of employment land to allow for mixed-uses.

1.8 The 2022 Local Plan provides policy guidance and criteria on how development will be planned, delivered and managed, in order to ensure that the social, economic and environmental benefits that the Local Plan aims to deliver are actually delivered in practice. There will need to be considerable investment in infrastructure, including green infrastructure, transport and community services and facilities, and also water and sewerage services. The funding and timing of this investment will influence the phasing of delivery of the housing and employment land.

1.9 It also needs to be borne in mind that Basildon does not exist in isolation. Like Basildon, neighbouring districts and boroughs are also planning to deliver considerable amounts of development. This will result in in-combination effects, which will give the impression of increased urbanisation including the generation of additional traffic, and put pressure on resources, such as water, air quality, tranquillity and on ecological networks. It is therefore important that the districts and boroughs continue to work closely together on the South Essex Plan to make sure that their plans are co-ordinated to provide an integrated approach to maintaining and enhancing quality of life for all their residents, and to ensure that a rich, high quality and resilient environment is created.

Next Steps

1.10 Following the technical consultation on the 2022 Local Plan, all consultation comments received will be forwarded to the independent Planning Inspector, Paul Griffiths, to be considered as part of the ongoing Examination, along with the proposed modifications and new evidence. Assuming the Local Plan is found sound by the independent Planning Inspector, and subject to modifications which may need to be subject to further SA work and public consultation, the Council expect the Local Plan to be adopted towards the end of 2022.

LUC

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