

Local Development Framework

Core Strategy SA/SEA Scoping Report and Site Assessment Methodology and Criteria

Report on Responses to the 2011 "check-up" Consultation

May 2011



Planning Services www.basildon.gov.uk/ldf

Report on responses to the "Check-up" Consultation on SA/SEA Scoping Report and Site Assessment Methodology & Criteria

Introduction

In July 2008, the Council published both its Core Strategy SA/SEA Scoping Report and its Site Assessment Methodology & Criteria for consultation. A number of responses were received and a Consultation Statement was prepared which sets out where it is proposed to amend the documents in light of those comments. Both documents were re-drafted to take those amendments into account.

The Council intends to adopt both the Core Strategy SA/SEA Scoping Report and the Site Assessment Criteria and Methodology in June 2011, so that these can be used to assess elements of the forthcoming draft Core Strategy.

In order to check with the statutory consultees if there were any objections to adopting both documents as they have been changed following the earlier consultations, the Council organised a "check-up" consultation that took place for five weeks (21st March to 26th April 2011).

The Council also took the opportunity of this consultation to seek the statutory consultees' views regarding the need to undertake Habitats Regulation Assessment for its Core Strategy.

The three statutory consultees (the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage) were invited to comment, the responses are set out in this document. Any amendments to be made to the SA/SEA Scoping Report and its Site Assessment Methodology and Criteria as a result of this consultation are listed against the consultation responses.

Organisation	Their	Comments	Officer Response/Changes
	view		
Natural England (NE)		NE draw the Council's attention to the requirements of Regulation 12 (3) and Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations and urge them to ensure that the final draft of the SA-SEA clearly demonstrates how these requirements will be addressed.	As explained in the introduction of the Scoping

Organisation	Their view	Comments	Officer Response/Changes
			provision, open spaces, waste); and energy.
	Agree	NE are pleased to note that key environmental assets of the plan area are included within the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.	Noted
		NE note that the monitoring and review of Local Wildlife Sites and Priority Habitats in the Borough have been now resolved, and that the data gaps for both these types of indicators at regional and national levels mean that tracking comparative trends is currently not possible.	
		NE understand that there is no data available on Priority Species nor that is it possible to measure local population trends for birds and that the measurement of wild bird populations is not measured locally.	Noted
		NE recommend to include consultation with the Essex Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency and reference to the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan (Essex BAP) to the evidence for it to be robust and credible enough to support the Core Strategy.	Essex Wildlife Trust, as part of a 2007-2009 Service Level Agreement, carried out yearly monitoring of Local Wildlife Sites within which they surveyed the sites' condition, and proposed the inclusion of new sites if appropriate. The site extent of all UK BAP Priority Habitats in the Borough was also captured.
			We will update the baseline to integrate this information.
			The relevant sections of the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan are already noted in the baseline and in turn contribute to the strategic evidence base.
	Agree	NE agree with the selection of indicators to monitor its interests and the LDF Contextual Baseline Report annual update to ensure that the LDF, its Sustainability Appraisals and Annual Monitoring Report reflect and respond to the different environmental, social and economic characteristics of the Borough.	No change

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	view		
	Agree	 NE have reviewed their responses to the summer 2008 consultation on the draft Site Assessment Methodology and Criteria in the context of the current consultation and report that their views remain unchanged. Agree with the scoring system as set out in the SA/SEA document; Agree with the assessment criteria as set out in the document; With respect to the priority ratings given to the criteria, they broadly agree with the continued caveat that the potential biodiversity of brownfield land should be acknowledged in the document; Advocate that both weighting scores should be used in the appraisal (noting the exchanges between Essex County Council and Basildon Borough Council over the details of how they will be applied proportionately); and Were satisfied with the proposed method of the presentation of results (colour-coded matrices and appraisal tables). 	No change
		Habitat Regulations Assessment	
	Agree	NE concur with the Council's proposed list of sites.	No change
	Agree	NE agrees with the coverage of designated sites and the general approach. NE are happy to advise on the approach and recommendations of the HRA Screening Report as part of future consultation on the Basildon Core Strategy and related matters.	Noted

Consultees

The following organisations were invited to comment:

- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Natural England