North Lincolnshire Local Development Framework Housing & Employment Land Allocations Development Plan Document (Adoption)

The Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004 Environmental Statement

March 2016

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1 Introduction

1.1 After a nine years development period, the North Local Development Framework – Housing & Employment Land Allocations Development Plan Document (HELADPD) was found to be sound by the Planning Inspectorate in February 2016, and was formally adopted by the Full Council on 7th March 2016. This statement has been prepared under regulations 26 and 35 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

1.2 As part of the development of the HELADPD, its effects were assessed through a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). This statement explains how the SA and HRA processes affected the development of the HELADPD: it is the ‘SA statement’ for the HELADPD.

1.3 The SA identifies the social, environmental and economic impacts of a strategy and suggests ways to avoid or minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts. It is required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and also incorporates the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) requirements of the European Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive1, transposed into UK legislation through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. SA/SEA has five main stages (stages A to E). This report fulfils one of the requirements of Stage E, namely documentation of the decision-making process.

1.4 HRA assesses the impacts on the Natura 2000 network of internationally important nature conservation sites. It is required by the European Habitats Directive, transposed into UK legislation through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (and previous similar legislation). The Habitats Directive applies the precautionary principle to designated sites: plans can only be permitted if it has been shown that they will not adversely affect the designated sites, or else can go ahead only under limited and stringent requirements regarding findings of no alternatives, imperative reasons of overriding public interest and provision of compensatory measures.

1.5 Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 requires that, as soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of a plan (in this case the HELADPD) for which an SA/SEA has been carried out, the planning authority must make a copy of the plan publicly available alongside a copy of the SA report and an SA statement; and inform the public and consultation bodies about the availability of these documents. The consultation bodies are English Heritage (now Historic England), Natural England and the Environment Agency. The SA statement must explain:

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 and results of public consultation have been taken into account;
4. Why the plan or programme has been adopted rather than the other options considered;
5. How the significant environmental effects of implementing the plan or programme will be monitored.

2 HOW ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS HAVE BEEN INTEGRATED INTO THE PLAN

2.1 The HELADPD has gone through a series of stages since its inception in 2005, starting with evidence gathering, call for sites in December 2006 then Issues and Options (October- November 2007), Pre-Submission Second Stage (January to March 2009), Submission Draft (November 2010 to January 2011) and Revised Submission Draft HELADPD (April to May 2014) . The SA up to the initial submission draft version was carried out on behalf of the council by Atkins Global PLC. Subsequent stages of the SA process (the revised submission draft version and proposed main modifications) were undertaken by the council’s Research and Intelligence Team. At all stages, the findings of the SA have been fully integrated into the preparation of the HELADPD. An SA/SEA scoping report was prepared as part of the evidence gathering stage, and the sustainability impacts of the evolving HELADPD were subsequently assessed at each stage of plan-making. Table 1 (below), shows how this process has taken place.

| Table 1 - Links between Housing & Employment Land Allocations DPD development and SA/SEA |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| SA/SEA Stage                      | DPD Stage                           | Link to DPD Stage                   |
| SA/SEA Stage                      | DPD Stage                           | how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme; |
| Date                              | Evidence gathering and early community involvement. | How the environmental report has been taken into account; |
|                                | Identification of key planning issues. | How opinions expressed and results of public consultation have been taken into account; |
| October                        | Date                                 | Why the plan or programme has been adopted rather than the other options considered; |
| to December                     |                                      | How the significant environmental effects of implementing the plan or programme will be monitored. |
| 2005                            |                                      |                                      |
| 23rd to 3rd February 2006        |                                     |                                      |

1 Article 13.3 of the European Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive)

The Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004
Environmental Statement (March 2016)
2.2 An SA/SEA framework was used to structure each of the assessment stages. The framework covers all of the environmental topics listed in the SEA Directive, namely biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. This is shown in Table 2.

<p>| Table 2 - SA/SEA Framework for the Housing &amp; Employment Land Allocations DPD |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA Objective</th>
<th>SEA Topic</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To promote healthier communities</td>
<td>Population and human health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To tackle poverty, social exclusion and inequality geographically as well as demographically</td>
<td>Population and human health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To enhance skills, qualifications and the overall employability of the population</td>
<td>Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To reduce crime, the fear of crime and to promote safer neighbourhoods</td>
<td>Population and human health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To improve accessibility to education, employment, recreation, health, community services and cultural facilities for all sectors of the community</td>
<td>Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. To provide a sufficient and appropriate mix of housing that is affordable, decent and designed to a high standard</td>
<td>Population</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. To encourage the participation in culture, leisure and recreational activities including in the countryside</td>
<td>Population, human health and landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. To minimise the risk of flooding</td>
<td>Water, soil, climatic factors, population and human health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. To adapt to the impacts of climate change for the built and natural environment</td>
<td>Climatic factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. To make the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings</td>
<td>Soil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. To improve air quality  
   Air quality, human health, biodiversity, fauna and flora

12. To reduce greenhouse gases emissions particularly from transport  
   Climatic factors

13. To protect and enhance biodiversity and important wildlife habitats within and outside designated sites.  
   Biodiversity, flora and fauna

14. To ensure the protection and enhancement of designated sites including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)  
   Landscape and fauna

15. To maintain and enhance the quality of countryside and wider landscape  
   Landscape

16. To reduce congestion, particularly around the South Humber Bank Ports  
   Population, human health, air and climatic factors

17. To improve public transport provision and promote sustainable modes of transport  
   Population, human health, air and climatic factors

18. To protect and enhance heritage assets including archaeological sites and monuments, historic landscapes, and local townscapes and their settings.  
   Cultural heritage and landscape

19. To increase energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy particularly from wind energy  
   Climatic factors

20. To reduce generation of waste, the proportion sent to landfill and to increase re-cycling  
   Material assets, water and soil

21. To protect local water resources, soil quality and quantity  
   Water

22. To promote the use of sustainably sourced products and resources and reusing and recycling products  
   Population, human health and climatic factors

23. To minimise noise and light pollution  
   Population, human health and climatic factors

24. To maintain and strengthen the local economy to promote future economic prosperity for North Lincolnshire in rural and urban areas  
   Population

25. To create vibrant towns and village centres in both rural and urban areas  
   Population

26. To increase diversity of employment  
   Population

27. To improve the economic activity for rural areas through the promotion of tourism and the retention of local facilities  
   Population and material assets

28. To promote and enhance opportunities for tourism, particularly in rural areas  
   Population

3 HOW THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT HAS BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

3.1 The SA Report has contributed to the development of the HELADPD by providing an independent assessment of the sustainability of the council’s proposed options and policies through the HELADPD production process. The SA Report demonstrates how the sustainability objectives have been taken into account, and integrated into the development of the HELADPD. This provides an audit trail and formal statement on the assessment of options, alongside the main document at each stage of the process.

3.2 The SA was prepared alongside, and in support of the HELADPD and is a key output of the policy development process. The process began with the production of the SA Scoping Report. This involved identifying the sustainability issues and objectives for the HELADPD, as well as identifying relevant baseline information and indicators. This document was then sent out to stakeholders for comment.

3.3 The comments received on the SA Scoping Report helped to create a final set of sustainability objectives, which were then used to test the options identified in the Issues & Options paper. A summary and detailed assessment of the options can be viewed in section 4 and Appendix C of the final SA Report respectively. The summary assessment also included suggestions for possible mitigation measures which could be included in future policies should certain options be chosen. This initial assessment, alongside policy considerations and public consultation, assisted the council in drawing up preferred policy options.

3.4 The Pre-Submission preferred site policy options were also assessed against the sustainability objectives. This assessment is set out in Chapter 5 (paragraphs 5.1 to 5.4) of the final SA Report. It identified effects of the
preferred policies, as well as mitigation measures and suggestions for amendments to the policy options to make them more sustainable. The assessment and its recommendations helped to shape a further stage of policy options which was published as part of informal consultation with key stakeholders such as government agencies and infrastructure providers.

3.5 This further stage of policy options was also subject to SA. This assessment is set out in Chapter 5 (paragraphs 5.1 & 5.4; Table 6.3) and Appendix G of the final SA Report. It identified effects of the policy options, as well as mitigation measures and suggestions for amendments to the policy options to make them more sustainable. The assessment and its recommendations help to shape the policies and proposals of the Submission Draft Housing & Employment Land Allocations DPD.

3.6 The initial policies of the HELADPD Submission Draft which were drawn up in 2010, was subject of a Sustainability Appraisal. This assessment is set out in Chapter 5 (paragraphs 5.5 to 5.11; Table 5.1). As in previous stages the assessment identified the effects of the policies and suggested mitigation measures and changes.

3.7 The HELADPD Revised Submission Draft (April 2014) was subject of a Sustainability Appraisal. This assessment is set out in Chapter 6 (paragraph 6.1 to 6.100; Tables 6.1 to 6.11) and identified the effects of the policies and suggested mitigation measures and changes. Following the examination hearing days the Inspector suggested modifications to the HELADPD and the SA was updated to consider the proposed modifications. This assessment is set out in Appendices M and N.

4 HOW THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED AND RESULTS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

4.1 The HELADPD has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, as well as previous regulations issued in 2004 and 2008, which require that a DPD be accompanied by a statement regarding consultation. The HELADPD also complies with the council’s Statement of Community Involvement.

4.2 Consultations throughout the SA process have been undertaken in accordance with Article 6(3) of the SEA Directive, the SA/SEA regulations and the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement. The SA/SEA regulations require three (previously four) key bodies to be consulted. These are statutory consultees and consist of the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England (formerly English Nature and the Countryside Agency).

4.3 Formal consultation on the SA, with the statutory consultees and other organisations with an environmental, economic or social interest, was carried out at the following stages of the HELADPD:

- Issues and Options – October to November 2007
- Pre-Submission Second Stage – January to March 2009
- Publication of Submission Draft and Sustainability Appraisal Report – November to December 2010
- Publication of Revised Submission Draft and Sustainability Appraisal – 25th April to 6th June 2014
- Publication of Proposed Main Modifications – 10th June to 22nd July 2015

4.4 Comments were received on the SA Scoping Report from English Nature, English Heritage, Environment Agency, Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, North Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust, Humber Forum, the Highways Agency and the Countryside Agency. Internal comments were received from Adult Social Care Services, Environment Team, Strategic Housing, Transport and the Waste Management Team. As part of the process, the comments were considered by Atkins and fed into the sustainability framework. Details of these comments and how they were taken on board can be found in Chapter 2 (paragraphs 2.1 to 2.22) of the final SA Report. The Draft SA Report was issued alongside the HELADPD: Pre-Submission Second Stage (January to March 2009). A range of comments were received from statutory bodies and the Council’s Environment Team.

4.5 The SA Report was also published in November to December 2010 alongside the HELADPD Submission Draft public consultation. The SA reflected comments received previously. Comments were received from English Heritage, Natural England, RSPB, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency. Details of the responses received and the action taken are set out in Chapter 2 Table 2.5 of the final SA Report.

4.6 The SA was revised based on the previous responses and a final version issued alongside the HELADPD Revised Submission Draft (April 2014). A number of representations were received and forwarded to the Inspector for consideration.
4.7 During the HELADPD Examination hearing the Council requested the Inspector to suggest main modifications under Section 20 (7)(2c) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The SA was amended to appraise the main modifications and is set out in Appendices M and N of the final SA report.

5 WHY THE PLAN OR PROGRAMME HAS BEEN ADOPTED RATHER THAN THE OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED.

5.1 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (12) (2) requires SA/SEAs to consider any reasonable alternatives to the plan or programme, taking into account the objectives and scope of the document. The requirement to conform to national planning guidance resulted in the restriction of the number of reasonable alternative policy options that could be considered. The council did not consider alternatives that were in conflict with planning guidance or sustainable development principles or which were inappropriate for dealing with local conditions or priorities. This process is set out clearly within the HELADPD (chapter 1) and in the council’s statements put forward at the examination.

5.2 Within the SA/SEA process, all of the sites submitted to the Council through the Call for Sites consultation and Issues and Option Stage for the HELADPD were tested against the sustainability objectives. The Pre Submission Second stage sites were selected based on the outcomes of the SA as well as policy considerations and public consultation. As the HELADPD developed the SA process has been used to strengthen policies in order to ensure that negative sustainability impacts are minimised or mitigated.

6 HOW THE SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN OR PROGRAMME WILL BE MONITORED.

6.1 The North Lincolnshire Local Development Framework will be kept under continuous review through an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR sets out the extent to which the policies and objectives of the DPDs and the SPDs making up the LDF are being achieved. The AMR will monitor whether a policy is delivering sustainable development and achieving the sustainability objectives and contains indicators that monitor the significant environmental, social and economic effects of the HELADPD.

6.2 The SA provides a framework for monitoring the key effects of the HELADPD and includes a wide range of baseline information and a number of indicators for each Sustainability Objective.

7 HABITATS REGULATION ASSESSMENT

7.1 Following a 2006 European Court of Justice ruling which found that the United Kingdom had not fully interpreted the European Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) into UK Law, the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) announced that Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) must be undertaken for any land use plan affecting a European nature conservation site. In North Lincolnshire there are several areas which fall within this definition - Humber Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA); Humber Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC); Humber Estuary Ramsar site; Thorne Moor SAC; Hatfield Moor SAC; and Thorne and Hatfield Moors SPA. The Humber Estuary Ramsar site also falls within this designation for the purposes of the HRA.

7.2 The HRA process involves up to four consecutive stages, with the conclusions of each stage determining whether the next stage is required:

1. Screening: Determining whether the plan - ‘in combination’ with other plans and projects - is likely to have an adverse effect on a European site

2. Appropriate Assessment: Determining whether, in view of the site’s conservation objectives, the plan - ‘in combination’ with other plans and projects - would have an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of the site (s). If it doesn’t, the plan can proceed

3. Assessment of Alternative Solutions: Where the plan is assessed as having an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of a site(s), there should be an examination of alternatives.

4. Assessment where no alternative solutions remain and where adverse impacts remain.

7.3 Accordingly, a HRA Stage 1 (Screening) of the HELADPD Pre-submission Second Stage version was undertaken in January 2007 and issued for consultation between January and March 2009. It assessed the impacts of the...
HELADPD upon sites designated as of European importance for their nature conservation value and within or around the North Lincolnshire boundary. Further HRAs Stage 1 (Screening) and Stage 2 (Appropriate Assessment) were undertaken for the publications of the Submission Draft in November 2010 and Revised Submission Draft April 2014. The findings of the HRAs were included, where appropriate as the policies in the HELADPD have developed.

7.4 During the HELADPD Examination Hearing the Council requested the Inspector to suggest main modifications under section 20 (7)(2c) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The HRA was updated to assess the impacts of the main modifications upon sites designated as European importance for their nature conservation value and within or around North Lincolnshire boundary.

8 PUBLIC EXAMINATION OF THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL.

8.1 The Planning Inspector who undertook a public examination of the HELADPD noted under paragraph 89 of Inspectors Final Report that the “SA has been carried out appropriately at each stage of the Plan’s preparation and is adequate, including a supplementary SA to accompany the proposed modifications”. The Inspector was also satisfied that the Habitats Regulation Assessment had been carried out in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2010.

9.0 FURTHER INFORMATION

9.1 Full copies of the Sustainability Appraisal Report, the Habitat Regulations Assessment and the HELADPD and other related documents can be downloaded from the council’s website www.northlincs.gov.uk. For further information please contact Spatial Planning on 01724 297573 / 297574 or e-mail: spatial.planning@northlincs.gov.uk