

Portsmouth Local Plan

Sustainability Appraisal Report:
Site Allocations Plan (Regulation 18)
Local Wildlife Sites

Planning Services

December 2013

1. Purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal and this report

- 1.1 The process of undertaking sustainability appraisal (SA) is mandatory under the 2004 Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act for local development documents in the Local Development Framework (LDF). There is also an EU Directive which requires a 'Strategic Environment Assessment' (SEA) of plans and programmes, including development plans. Guidance for carrying out sustainability appraisal on development plan documents is included in the Communities and Local Government plan making manual. Sustainability appraisal incorporates the requirements of the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), therefore in this report SA should be understood to mean SA incorporating SEA.
- 1.2 The purpose of sustainability appraisal is to promote sustainable development through the better integration of sustainability considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans. It is an iterative process that identifies and reports on the likely significant effects of the plan, and the extent to which its implementation will achieve the social, environmental and economic objectives by which sustainable development can be defined.
- 1.3 This document is the sustainability appraisal report that sits alongside the Winter 2013/14 consultation on Local Wildlife sites, a Regulation 18 consultation under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The results of the consultation will feed into the pre-submission version of the Site Allocations Plan, which is currently being prepared.
- 1.4 The consultation document shows 24 sites that the city council is proposing to designate as locally valued, non-statutory nature conservation sites, called local wildlife sites. The city council has already set out how it will designate, preserve and monitor these through Policy PCS13 of the Portsmouth Plan.
- 1.5 The purpose of the sustainability appraisal is to investigate the social, economic and environmental effects of the plan as it is developed, so that changes can be made to improve its sustainability impacts before it is finally adopted. This report sets out how SA has been undertaken on the proposed policies and what the results of this process were.
- 1.6 Given the very focussed nature of this consultation, the SA report is proportionately short and focussed. As the designation of sites follows principles and processes already established through the Portsmouth Plan, this report largely draws on the SA of that plan, as well as that of the wider Regulation 18 consultation of the Site Allocations, published in March 2013. It should therefore also be noted that some of the requirements of the Directive have been met in those reports. They can be found on the city council's website at <http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/7923.html> and <http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/14099.html>.
- 1.7 At the next stage of that site allocations plan, the wildlife sites will be included in the site allocations, and a combined SA report will be produced.

2. Review of significant social, environmental and economic effects

- 2.1 The most important part of the sustainability appraisal is assessing the likely effects of the policy on the social, environmental and economic indicators in the city's sustainability framework (indicators are shown at the end of this report).
- 2.2 The SA of the March 2013 Site Allocations consultation considered the city's protected open spaces for development. This SA report noted that the Portsmouth Plan had already established that open spaces should be protected in their current use, in order to meet the city's green infrastructure and needs. The site allocations plan would therefore be used to confirm these protections - in themselves key sustainability criteria. This assessment resulted in all existing protected open space being removed from the list of sites potentially available for allocation for alternative uses. The vast majority of the local wildlife sites overlap with these open spaces, so have been considered through this process. This is with the exception of Kings Bastion Moat, Fort Southwick Ramparts, East of Lakeside, Horsea Island and Melville Road verge together with some sections of Hilsea Lines and Great Salterns Lake.
- 2.4 As that SA and the allocations process placed considerable weight on what had been established through the Portsmouth Plan, it is prudent to review the SA of that plan at this stage. The table below shows the SA scores and commentary for the Greener Portsmouth Policy in the Portsmouth Plan, to which the local wildlife sites designations directly relate. A column has been added with specific comments relating to local wildlife sites.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 Overall it is found that the designation of local wildlife sites has positive sustainability implications, although it is also noted that such designations could limit housing supply by restricting developable land. There is no need to mitigate against this impact, as other policies in the Portsmouth Plan, and indeed the site allocations document itself, which will contain these designations, allocate development land to meet the city's housing and other requirements.

**Sustainability Appraisal of Portsmouth Plan Policy relating to Local Wildlife Sites
With additional review of the impact of designating local wildlife sites**

PCS12* A Greener Portsmouth

*at the time the SA was done, the policy was PCS12. This changed to PCS13 in the final plan, due to a renumbering of the policies.

Sustainability Objectives	Contribution to SA objective	Reason for Score	Additional commentary for Local Wildlife Sites
1 Natural Resources & Climate Change	✓	This policy contributes to a number of the assessment criteria for this objective. It outlines measures to protect, enhance and increase provision of green infrastructure assets in the city which will have a positive effect on air quality in the city. The policy promotes development on brownfield sites by protecting against the loss of the city's open spaces, and encourages improved linkages to the city's green grid which could reduce the need to travel by car to these sites. Green roofs and walls are encouraged in new development which will help to manage surface water run-off and therefore reduce the risk of pollution. There is also evidence that green spaces can help reduce the urban heat island effect thereby helping to mitigate the effects of climate change.	Designating local wildlife sites across the city will help people have easy access to natural areas close to where they live, reducing the need to travel.
2 Flood Risk	(✓)	Protecting and, where possible, increasing the provision of green infrastructure in the city will help reduce the impact of surface water run-off and standing water following rainfall.	No notable additional impacts over and above those noted for PCS13.
3 Biodiversity	✓	The policy will protect and enhance the condition of the city's international, national and locally designated nature conservation sites. Wildlife sites that are not designated will be safeguarded given the policy resists development on open space and makes provision to enhance these spaces where possible. Any new green spaces delivered as a result of the policy may also contribute to supporting wildlife in the city.	Designating local wildlife sites specifically serves to safeguard locally important biodiversity areas, which would not be protected through national or international designations. Their designation therefore makes a strong contribution to this objective locally.
4 Landscape & Townscape Quality	✓	Protecting and enhancing the green grid in Portsmouth will improve the quality and appearance of the built environment and help to foster positive perceptions of the city. Contributions will be sought from developers in order to improve the quality and	Ease of access to local areas of biodiversity can make a strong contribution to people's perception of the city's attractiveness in an otherwise very built

		quantity of green spaces.	up area. Protecting these areas obviously inherently also serves to protect the greenness of the city.
5 Heritage	✓	Green spaces surrounding heritage assets will be protected, thereby contributing to the setting of historic buildings and scheduled ancient monuments. The city's historic parks and gardens are also protected and will be eligible for enhancement under the policy.	The Kings Bastion Moat had not previously been safeguarded as open space, and is proposed as a local wildlife site, giving added protection to this heritage asset.
6 Homes for Everyone	(✓)	Landscape improvements and the provision of pocket parks on larger development sites will help to improve the overall quality of homes in the city. Furthermore, the policy will ensure that financial contributions are obtained from new housing development which will help improve the quality and multifunctionality of green spaces in the city. Private amenity space will also be required from new build residential development which may also contribute to green infrastructure in the city.	Local wildlife site designation places some limitations on developable land. However, the quality of people's living environment is also key to this objective, and having access to local wildlife sites contributes positively.
7 Education, Employment & Economy	(✓)	Protecting and enhancing Portsmouth's green infrastructure assets will help to enhance the appeal of visitor attractions. This is especially true for the parks and gardens in the city. A greener city can also help improve the attractiveness of the cityscape to attract new businesses, thereby supporting economic growth.	Local wildlife sites provide education opportunities for city children.
8 Health & Wellbeing	✓	Protecting and enhancing green spaces whilst making them as multifunctional as possible will encourage people to use them for sports, leisure and healthy pursuits. The policy will improve many people's accessibility to a green space where they can partake in exercise or just enjoy a walk away from the built up areas of the city. This can help to increase perceptions of physical and mental health. It may also help to reduce health inequalities across the city. Furthermore, financial contributions may lead to enhancements within the green grid to reduce the fear of crime in some of these areas.	No notable additional impacts over and above those noted for PCS13.
9 Culture, Leisure & Recreation	✓	The policy will protect parks and gardens, enhance them where possible and improve accessibility across the city. It will also ensure the highest play value of green sites are achieved which will improve access to high quality play areas for children.	Local wildlife sites fulfil a particular recreational function distinct from parks and gardens, and can be valuable natural play areas too.
10 Social Inclusion & Quality of Life	✓	The policy will help to ensure all residents have equal access to parks, gardens and green spaces, thereby helping to reduce social disadvantage or discrimination within the city.	Disadvantaged residents often do not have the opportunity to leave the city to experience more natural landscapes. Local wildlife sites can make a small contribution to improving access to nature.

4. Consultation Arrangements

- 4.1 This SA report is subject to consultation alongside the Regulation 18 stage of the local wildlife sites designation. Comments are invited on both documents by 24th January 2014. Please address any representations to:

Planning Policy
City Development & Culture
Portsmouth City Council
Civic Offices
Guildhall Square
Portsmouth
PO1 2AU

Or to planningpolicy@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

- 4.2 If you have any questions regarding the proposed local wildlife sites or this report, please call the planning policy team on 023 9268 8633.

**Sustainability Appraisal Framework (2010) –
Summary of SA Objectives & Assessment Criteria**

ISSUE & SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: “What contribution does the policy make to...”
<p>1 Natural Resources & Climate Change To protect the quality and minimise the consumption of natural resources, and minimise emissions to address the causes of climate change</p>	<p>Minimising the need to travel? Reducing the reliance on, and the consumption of, finite fossil fuels in transport and reducing emissions? Reducing the reliance on, and the consumption of, finite fossil fuels through energy efficiency in development? Improving air quality? Reducing final disposal of waste, including avoiding waste, re-using and recycling? Reducing the extraction of minerals and increasing the use of recycled aggregate? Maintaining and enhancing water quality? Conserving water resources? Re-using brownfield land, vacant sites and buildings? The density of development?</p>
<p>2 Flood Risk To reduce flood risk from all sources of flooding</p>	<p>Avoiding development in flood risk areas? Managing flood risk on sites at risk of flooding? Minimising the impact of development on the city's sewer system?</p>
<p>3 Biodiversity To make sure that the city's most important wildlife species and habitats are protected and enhanced</p>	<p>Maintaining and/or improving the condition of internationally, nationally and locally designated nature conservation sites? Safeguarding the role of non-designated sites in supporting wildlife in the city?</p>
<p>4 Landscape & Townscape Quality To preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the city and its surroundings, including its built-up areas and its open spaces</p>	<p>The quality / appearance of the built environment? Fostering positive perceptions of the city's attractiveness? To protecting and enhancing the greenness of the city, by improving the quality and quantity of open spaces and trees?</p>
<p>5 Heritage To protect and conserve Portsmouth's historic, cultural and maritime heritage</p>	<p>Maintaining and protecting conservation areas? Maintaining and protecting listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments and their settings?</p>
<p>6 Homes for Everyone To ensure that good quality housing is readily available and attainable to all those who need it</p>	<p>Delivering sufficient housing numbers to satisfy overall housing need within the city? Delivering sufficient affordable housing units to satisfy the needs of those on lower incomes? Ensuring an appropriate mix and balance of housing types and tenures across the city and at neighbourhood level? Promoting good quality homes that will stand the test of time?</p>
<p>7 Education, Employment & Economy To ensure that the city's economy is buoyant and diverse, and to develop and maintain a skilled workforce to support long-term competitiveness</p>	<p>Employment levels? Supporting new and existing businesses? Economic growth? Maintaining and enhancing the appeal of Portsmouth's visitor attractions? The provision of adequate education & training facilities? Creating opportunities to increase the skills level of the local population?</p>
<p>8 Health & Wellbeing To promote standards of health within the city's population and to make Portsmouth a city where everyone feels safe and is safe</p>	<p>Improving people's perception of their own health? Improving the health of the city's population? Increasing opportunities for healthy pursuits? Ensuring access to adequate healthcare facilities? Reducing Health inequalities? Reducing danger to all road users and the potential for accidents? Reducing the fear of crime and levels of crime, in particular violent crime and anti-social behaviour?</p>
<p>9 Culture, Leisure & Recreation To ensure that there are opportunities for everyone to participate in fulfilling healthy and rewarding leisure activities to suit a full range of needs and interests</p>	<p>Ensuring that everyone has easy access to pleasant, multi-functional green spaces across the city? (NB sports facilities are covered in 'health' objective) Ensuring that all the city's children have easy access to a high quality play area? Ensuring that the city maintains adequate cultural and entertainment facilities to satisfy residents' expectations</p>
<p>10 Social Inclusion & Quality of Life To minimise unfair disadvantage or discrimination, so that all people in the city have equal access to facilities & services, feel part of a community and have a sense of pride in Portsmouth</p>	<p>Maintaining the role of the city's town and local centres and ensuring their continued vitality and viability? Ensuring that as many people as possible have good access to shops and services? Reducing concentrations of social disadvantage in certain areas of the city?</p>

