



AIRE VALLEY LEEDS AREA ACTION PLAN

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (INCORPORATING STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT)

Leeds Local Plan

Development Plan Document

Adoption Statement

November 2017

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document is the Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Statement for the Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan (AVL AAP) which was adopted on 8th November 2017 by Leeds City Council.
- 1.2 The AVL AAP is a development plan document within the Local Plan for Leeds. As such it forms part of the statutory development plan alongside the Leeds Core Strategy, saved UDP Policies and the Natural Resources and Waste Local Plan (NRWLP) and any made Neighbourhood Development Plans. The AVLAAP and all adoption documents can be viewed online at: www.leeds.gov.uk/ldf
- 1.3 Aire Valley Leeds (AVL) is a major regeneration area covering 1,300 hectares of land to the south east of Leeds City Centre. The AVLAAP provides a spatial planning framework, plan wide policies, area plans and site allocation within the Plan area. The focus is to deliver an innovative and integrated approach to the sustainable regeneration of the area, reflecting the scale and opportunities in the area and links to adjacent communities in east and south Leeds. The Plan is in general conformity with the Core Strategy which identifies overall spatial priorities for the scale and distribution of growth across the district and scale of growth within the AVL area.
- 1.4 The AVLAAP has been subject to examination by an independent Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The Inspector's Report, published in August 2017 concluded that, subject to a number of main modifications set out in the report being made, the Plan satisfies the requirements of Section 20 (5) of the 2004 Act and is 'sound'. In terms of the legal requirements for SA the Inspector concluded that an adequate SA has been carried out.
- 1.5 This statement has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations). As part of this, Regulation 16 (3) and (4) which require
 - i. How environmental considerations and the SA Report have been integrated into the plan (set out in Section 2 of this statement);
 - ii. How Sustainability Appraisal has been taken into account (Section 3);
 - iii. How the opinions in response to the relevant consultations on the SA report(s) have been taken into account (Section 4);
 - iv. The reason for choosing the plan as adopted in light of other reasonable alternatives (Section 5); and
 - v. The measures agreed to monitor all the significant effects of the implementation of the plan (Section 6).

2. How sustainability, and in particular environmental considerations have been integrated into the AVLAAP

- 2.1 When preparing planning documents, such as the AVLAAP, local planning authorities must conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC. This must include assessment

of the effects of plans on the environment (the Strategic Environmental Assessment or SEA Directive). SA effectively broadens the concept of SEA to encompass economic and social impacts. The requirement to carry out SA and SEA are distinct but it is possible to satisfy both through a single appraisal process. It should be noted that where reference is made to SA it should be taken to include the requirement of the SEA Directive. The integration of sustainability considerations into the preparation and adoption of Plans is the key focus of the SA process.

- 2.2 The AVL area is identified as an ‘urban eco’ settlement (UES) under Leeds Core Strategy Policy SP5 with an objective to deliver a sustainable new district for the city providing new jobs and homes. The Core Strategy refers to delivery of commercial and residential areas which have a high quality environment, energy efficient buildings and operations, low carbon businesses, sustainable transport, community facilities and linked area of green infrastructure.
- 2.3 The AVLAAP further develops and amplifies the broad strategic vision of the area set out in the Core Strategy. It includes an UES vision underpinned by a number of supporting principles relating to sustainable transport; low carbon energy production and distribution; preserving and enhancing heritage assets and a green infrastructure network; and encouraging healthy lifestyle choices. This is translated in a spatial strategy and plan wide policies relating to:
 - Delivery of employment and housing development through land allocations to meet the requirements set out in the Core Strategy;
 - Improving public health;
 - Provision of community facilities such as schools;
 - Identification of locally significant heritage assets;
 - Provision of transport infrastructure improvement to support sustainable transport modes;
 - Defining a local green infrastructure network and protecting, improving and proposing new areas of green infrastructure and green space;
 - Proposals to energy efficiency in domestic building and promoting low carbon energy production and distribution within the area.
- 2.4 The SA was integrated into the plan-making process with a series of appraisals produced alongside key stages in preparing the Local Plan. As part of the SA Scoping process a set of SA objectives were developed. These objectives set out the basis for the SA Framework which was used to undertake all further sustainability assessment.
- 2.5 In 2005, a SA Scoping Report was produced and consulted upon with the statutory environmental consultees. This included:
 - Baseline information (economic, social and environmental) presenting the current picture of the AVL area at that time and identifying a number of sustainability issues facing the area
 - A SA Framework comprising a set of sustainability objectives and indicators (see Appendix 4 of the SA Report)

- 2.6 The Sustainability Appraisal Framework was developed to assess policy options, draft policies and potential site allocations and designations through the preparation of the AVL AAP.
- 2.7 In April 2006, a Sustainability Appraisal commentary was prepared to accompany the AVL AAP Alternative Options consultation. This assessed a range of strategic options for topic areas such as housing and employment development against the SA Framework. These options represented reasonable alternatives to form the basis to develop the spatial strategy for the Plan area.
- 2.8 In October 2007, a Sustainability Appraisal Report was prepared to accompany the consultation on AVL AAP Preferred Options. This report evaluated the likely effects of the Preferred Options, including likely cumulative and synergistic effects, proposed mitigation measures and set out a framework for monitoring these effects.
- 2.9 Following consultation on the Preferred Options a review of the AVL AAP was undertaken. This was necessary to take proper account of emerging and changing considerations as well as responses to the consultation. Such considerations included the economic downturn in 2008, preparation of the Leeds Core Strategy, and need to promote more sustainability development allied to then Government's and Leeds City Region's emerging UES proposals.
- 2.10 As a result the Council undertook a consultation on two further alternative options in February 2011. These included an extension to the boundary of the Plan to incorporate some surrounding communities and promotion of the area as an UES. The consultation also included revised proposals for site allocations.
- 2.11 In September 2015, the AVL AAP was published for consultation. The SA Report accompanying the consultation set out an updated economic, social and environmental baseline and minor changes to the SA Framework. The SA Framework was used to assess the effects of the additional alternative options (see above), and the proposed UES supporting principles, Plan policies and proposed site allocations and alternative site proposals submitted through earlier consultations and 'call for sites' exercises. A scoring framework was devised to assess site allocations (proposed and alternative sites) against the SA objectives (see Table 3 and 4 of the SA Report). This framework is consistent with that used to assess sites under the SA of the emerging Leeds Site Allocations Plan which covers the rest of Leeds district outside the AVL area. The report sets out mitigation measures to reduce negative effects and included a framework for monitoring significant effect based on that produced for the Core Strategy. Appropriate Assessment was also undertaken under the Habitats Regulations Assessment procedures.
- 2.12 The AVLAAP was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in September 2016. An addendum to the SA Report was prepared (Addendum 1). The addendum updated baseline information and the SA Framework to reflect comments received through the consultation on the Publication Draft Plan. The pre-submission changes to the Plan, proposed to ensure that the Plan was

'sound' following representations to the Publication Draft, were also 'screened' to assess whether they would result in any changes to outcomes of the SA. Where the screening exercise concluded that the proposed change was likely to change the outcome of the SA, the Plan policies/site allocations as revised were re-assessed against the SA Framework.

- 2.13 Following the examination hearing sessions, held in January 2017, the Inspector recommended a set of proposed Main Modifications, to make the Plan sound, for consultation. These included the pre-submission proposed changes (as modified) and further Main Modifications arising through the examination. A further addendum (Addendum 2) was published which made further updates to the baseline information and screened and reassessed the revised set of proposed Main Modifications. The SA Addendum accompanied the consultation of proposed Main Modification undertaken between April and June 2017.
- 2.14 The Inspector published her report on the examination on the Plan in August 2017. Following consultation on the proposed Main Modifications, the Inspector amended two and included a further Main Modification in the schedule appended to her final report. These changes were 'screened' and results published in the revised Addendum 2 at adoption.
- 2.15 The table below summarises the stages of SA undertaken alongside production of the Plan.

AVL AAP Production Stage	Sustainability Appraisal Production Stage	Publication date
Issues and emerging options	Scoping Report	June 2005
Alternative Options	SA commentary on Alternative Options	April 2006
Preferred Options	Preferred Option SA Report	October 2007
Publication Draft Plan	Publication Draft SA Report	September 2015
Submission Draft Plan	SA Addendum 1: SA of Pre-submission Changes	September 2016
Proposed Main Modifications	SA Addendum 2: SA of Main Modifications	April 2017
Adoption	Revised SA Addendum 2: SA of Main Modifications	November 2017

3. How Sustainability Appraisal has been taken into account

- 3.1 As outlined in Section 2, the AVLAAP has evolved and been influenced by several stages of consultation and accompanied by an assessment of likely economic, social and environment effects of the Plan undertaken through the SA process and reported at each stage. This activity (and outputs at different

stages) has served to inform the overall scope of the Plan, the Plan boundary, the detail of individual policies and site-specific allocations and designations and identification of mitigation measures.

- 3.2 At early stages of Plan preparation, undertaken between 2005 and 2007, the SA process was used to support the identification of Preferred Options from a range of Alternative Options relating to the most appropriate type of land uses for AVL, the scale of provision required and where they are best located within the area and the requirements for infrastructure to deliver the sustainable regeneration. Sections 5.4 and 5.5 of the Preferred Options SA Report (October 2007) explains how, as a general rule, the option that performed best overall against the range of social, environmental and economic objectives formed the basis of the Preferred Option for that theme and why other alternative approaches were rejected.
- 3.3 Before the publication of the draft Plan in 2015, further alternative options to improve economic, social and environmental effects of the Plan and reduce potential adverse effects were considered and consulted upon in 2011. These options included:
- Extending the Plan boundary to encompass surrounding communities to the former Plan area to ensure that the Plan was able to include proposals to improve links between these communities and the new opportunities, such as new jobs and recreational opportunities, proposed
 - Proposing the creation of an UES for the wider Plan boundary with a focus on delivery of sustainable economic development and housing growth and promoting a place making approach and high quality development. This approach was then embedded within the Core Strategy and set out in detail through the development of vision with supporting principles in the AVL AAP.
 - Revised site allocation proposals. The revisions took account of negative effects noted in relation to development in flood risk areas and re-allocated areas previously allocated for residential uses to employment uses on the basis that requirements of the flood risk exception test, set out in national planning policy, were unable to be satisfied by the approach set out in the Preferred Options.
- 3.4 The SA of the revised alternative options is set out in Section 4 and Appendix 5 of the Publication Draft SA Report. This demonstrates that the revised approach would be more sustainable overall than the approach set out in the Preferred Options and thus formed an appropriate basis for developing the Plan spatial strategy, area-wide policies and site allocations.
- 3.5 As part of the preparation of the Publication Draft Plan, SA was undertaken on the UES principles, plan policies and proposed and alternative site allocations. The SA showed that the UES principles and plan policies clearly supported positive economic, social and environmental outcomes overall. The results are set out in Section 5 and Appendices 9 & 10 of the SA Report. The SA identified where Plan policies had likely significant adverse economic, social and/or

environmental effects when considered in isolation. An important role of the SA was to demonstrate where policies in other Local Plan documents or elsewhere in the AVL AAP would help to mitigate any adverse effects. Appendix 11 of the SA Report identifies proposed mitigation measures for potential adverse effects. Identifying where mitigation (including compensatory measures) could be addressed through changes to policies or site allocation requirements elsewhere in the AVL AAP was done as an iterative process.

- 3.6 The SA was part of the decision making process on the selection of sites for housing, mixed use and employment development. SA was undertaken on all proposed and alternative sites for housing and employment uses submitted through consultation. This was undertaken objectively using the standard methodology (set out in Tables 3 and 4 of the SA Report) that sought to identify any potential positive and adverse significant economic, social and environmental effects before any mitigation or compensatory measures were taken into account. The tables in Appendices 8 and 9 of the SA Report show the results of this exercise. Where adverse significant effects were identified for proposed sites, Table 7 clearly recommends mitigation measures to address these, where possible, or explains other policy reasons for the site being selected. Mitigation measures either refer to other Local Plan policy requirements or to the need for to insert site requirements that would need to be met for the development of the site to be appropriate. These site requirements applied to the site allocations and set out in the five area plans in the AVL AAP. Although the SA process played a key role in site selection, sites were also rejected for other reasons such as on deliverability or availability grounds or because the site could not comply with key policy tests such as the flood risk sequential and exceptions test set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 3.7 Before submission of the Plan for examination, and during the examination, SA was also used to screen proposed changes and Main Modifications to ensure that they did not affect overall SA outcomes or would have likely positive effects against economic, social and environmental objectives.

4. How the opinions in response to the relevant consultations on the SA reports have been taken into account

- 4.1 As highlighted in Section 2, the adopted AVL AAP and SA Report has evolved through several stages of public consultation. At each stage comments received on the SA methodology and results have been used to inform SA of the subsequent stages. This is summarised below.
- 4.2 The statutory environmental consultees were consulted on the SA Scoping Report and comments were taken into account in the development of the SA Framework (including the SA objectives) used to assess plan options, objectives, policies, allocations and designations. Appendix 2 of the Preferred Options SA Report set out the changes made in response to that consultation.

- 4.3 Following consultation on the Preferred Options in 2007, a number of representations were received relating to the SA. These are set out in Appendix 1 of the Publication Draft SA Report and were addressed as follows

Summary of sustainability or SA process issue	How this has been addressed
Need to identify and take into account relevant registered historic parks and gardens and other heritage designations	Site requirements have been included for all sites within, adjacent to, and likely to have an impact on the setting of heritage assets, including historic parks and gardens.
Need reference to ecological assessments and use of SUDs	Reference to the need for ecological assessments has been included in site requirements where necessary and appropriate.
Flood risk issues	Flood risk sequential and exception tests have been undertaken. Site allocations which failed to satisfy these requirements have not been carried forward into the adopted Plan.
Contaminated land	This is a matter for the planning application to ensure the site is safe to be developed for the intended use. However, where evidence has clearly demonstrated that abnormal costs associated with remediation would make the site unviable for development, allocations have not been carried forward into the adopted Plan.
Should reference the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP), a statutory document under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000,	This has been referenced in the Plan.
Traffic modelling is out of date	Further strategic traffic modelling was undertaken before the Plan was published and updated to take account of any subsequent modifications to the plan and the emerging Leeds Site Allocations Plan in terms of cumulative impacts.
AAP is being produced prematurely and should not be advanced before the district wide strategic plan has been prepared and subject to SA/SEA	This point was accepted and publication of the draft Plan was delayed until after the Leeds Core Strategy had been adopted in November 2014.
Consider local provision of replacement playing pitches lost to development proposals	One of the playing pitches at the site has been retained for local use.
Leisure options at the Stourton North site are not sustainable and inconsistent with national policy	This leisure allocation was deleted from the adopted Plan.
Plan should have specific targets for CO ₂ emission reductions	The Core Strategy includes policies specifically related to CO ₂ emissions from buildings. The AAP includes a number of policies and proposals to promote low carbon energy production and distribution and sustainable transport options. Specific targets for CO ₂ emissions were not considered to be appropriate.

- 4.4 The SA Report accompanying the Publication Draft Plan consultation in September 2015 received a number of specific representations relating to the methodology and assessment results. As a result a number of changes to the SA methodology and baseline data were made. These are set out in detail Addendum 1 and Addendum 2 to the SA Report and summarised below.
- 4.5 The representation from the Coal Authority noted that the Plan and SA methodology took insufficient account of land stability issues. As a result a further sub-objective '*will it prevent unacceptable risks from land instability?*' was included under Sustainability objective SA18 'pollution' in a revised SA Framework; baseline information was updated to include Coal Authority Development High Risk Areas and Mine Entry Zones of Influence in the area;; and plan options, policies and proposed and alternative site allocations were assessed against this sub-objective.
- 4.6 Following submission of the Plan in September 2016 and as part of continuing dialogue with the Environment Agency (EA), baseline information relating to flood risk was updated to reflect changes to the EA's flood maps for the area that were made in November 2016. The amendment to the flood map resulted in changes to the SA outcomes as the flood risk zones applying to certain sites had changed. As a result the assessment of site allocations was also brought up-to-date and subsequent site requirements relating to flood risk were modified accordingly.

5. The reason for choosing the plan as adopted in light of other reasonable alternatives

- 5.1 The process of preparing the Plan is itself one that involves the consideration of issues and options. Consideration of alternatives as required by the SEA Regulations has therefore been an integral part of that process. The reason for developing and selecting the strategy, policies and site allocations as chosen at different stages has been outlined in previous SA Reports.
- 5.2 The Preferred Option SA Report (October 2007) explained at Sections 5.4 and 5.5 why preferred options for each topic area had been selected. Para 3.2 of this statement also summarises this. SA of the alternatives had an important role to play in selecting these options with the demonstrably most sustainable option preferred in most cases. Further alternative options were introduced through an informal consultation in 2011, partly in response to the responses received to the October 2007 consultation, and to ensure that the Plan maximised positive sustainability outcomes. This included extending the Plan area and introducing the UES concept and approach. There were no objections in principle to this approach received through the consultation although there were queries about specific detailed matters and how it would be applied. These options were carried forward as the basis for preparing the Publication Draft version of the Plan.

5.3 Alternative site allocations were considered throughout the period of Plan preparation and the preferred site allocation at the time were consulted upon in 2007 and 2011 before the draft plan was published. Appendix 6 of the Publication Draft SA Report sets out the reasons for changes in allocations over this period. Landowners and developers were given the opportunity to put forward potential housing sites through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process and employment and retail site through a separate 'call for sites' exercise undertaken in 2012. The SA was used to assess the potential sites alongside other considerations, particularly the deliverability and availability of sites and whether they were suitable in accordance with the NPPF and strategic policies in the Core Strategy. The housing and employment background papers which accompanied the submission of the Plan provided specific reasons for the selection of proposed site allocations and the reasons for rejecting alternatives.

6. The measures agreed to monitor all the significant effects of the implementation of the plan.

- 6.1 The SEA Directive requires the monitoring of significant environmental effects resulting from the implementation of the AVLAAP. The Core Strategy has established a monitoring framework which will also be used to assess the effects of the AVLAAP. The monitoring framework is provided in Appendix 12 of the SA Report.
- 6.2 These will be reported on in detail via the Authority Monitoring Report and where appropriate specific monitoring information will be included for the AVL AAP area.