



# **Sustainability Appraisal**

## Full Report

## Commenting on this Document

This Sustainability Appraisal report has been published for consultation from Friday 11 February to 12 noon on Friday 8 April 2022. Only representations made within this period will be taken into account.

This document is available on the Council's website at:

[www.testvalley.gov.uk/localplan2040](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/localplan2040)

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## List of Abbreviations

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
DPD	Development Plan Document
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
SINC	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TVBC	Test Valley Borough Council

# 1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Test Valley Borough Council to assist in the preparation of the Test Valley Local Plan 2040 Development Plan Document (DPD). This is the first such report that has been produced as part of the preparation of this Local Plan.
- 1.2 This section of the report aims to provide background information on sustainability appraisals and an overview of the Local Plan. It also provides a brief summary of the relationship with other key plans and strategies.

## ***What is sustainable development?***

- 1.3 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires that DPDs are prepared with a view to '*contributing to the achievement of sustainable development*' (Section 39(2)). This is reaffirmed in the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>1</sup> (NPPF), which also sets out that the planning system has three overarching objectives – economic, social and environmental. These are noted to be interdependent.
- 1.4 The NPPF refers to the definition of sustainable development provided by the Brundtland Commission – this states that '*sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*'.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.5 In an international setting, Member States of the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>3</sup> in 2015, which came into effect in January 2016, in order to guide decision taking. The intention is to achieve all seventeen goals by 2030. There are multiple targets and indicators in place for each of the goals. These goals are also referred to within the NPPF.

## ***What are Sustainability Appraisals?***

- 1.6 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004<sup>4</sup> includes a requirement for the appraisal of the sustainability of Development Plan Documents (DPDs). Sustainability Appraisals are intended to help promote sustainable development (including social, economic and environmental objectives) in the preparation of these documents. This includes considering different options to help prepare the plan and their likely effects, as well as opportunities to minimise negative effects and maximise positive effects.

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<sup>1</sup> Available: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

<sup>2</sup> Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future, World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission), 1987, Part I, Chapter 2. Also see, Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly.

<sup>3</sup> For more information, including details of all the goals, see: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>

<sup>4</sup> Section 180 (5) (d) of The Planning Act 2008 amended the requirements of Part 2 of Section 19 (5) (a) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 so that only Development Plan Documents need to be subject to sustainability appraisal.

- 1.7 Sustainability Appraisals inform the process of decision making when preparing plans and provide a mechanism to review reasonable alternative options. They are not intended to make decisions on policy development. Key decision makers have been informed of the legal requirements and purpose of Sustainability Appraisals.
- 1.8 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that Sustainability Appraisals incorporate the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended) (often referred to as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations). This legislation establishes a process of assessment to ensure that environmental considerations are taken into account in preparing certain plans that needs to be complied with.
- 1.9 This report also summarises some of the evidence and other considerations that have fed into the process and led to the Council's strategy as included within the Local Plan.

#### *Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report*

- 1.10 The first stage of the sustainability appraisal process is a scoping exercise. This has been undertaken separately through the preparation of a Scoping Report<sup>5</sup>. This report should be read in conjunction with the Scoping Report.
- 1.11 The Scoping Report provides contextual information, reviews other relevant plans and programmes, identifies local sustainability issues and constraints, and sets out a series of sustainability objectives that are used to test the plan and its contribution to sustainable development.

#### **Overview of the Local Plan**

- 1.12 The Council is preparing the Local Plan to set out the long term strategy to guide development over the period 2020 to 2040 (referred to as the plan period). It will provide policies to inform the determination of planning applications and strategic proposals, including allocations, in order to support the delivery of the plan objectives.
- 1.13 The Local Plan covers all of the area of Test Valley for which the Borough Council is responsible for planning purposes – this excludes a small area in the south west of the Borough which forms part of the New Forest National Park.
- 1.14 Over the plan period, provision will need to be made for development within the Borough, including for residential and economic purposes. The Local Plan will establish the levels of development and identify allocations in order to facilitate delivery. It will also include policies on a range of matters (including social, environmental and economic issues) to support the determination of

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<sup>5</sup> Available at: <https://testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/evidence-base/sustainability-appraisal>

planning applications. The Local Plan will incorporate both strategic and non-strategic policies<sup>6</sup>.

- 1.15 The Local Plan provides a mechanism for supporting the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan (more detail below).
- 1.16 The Local Plan is being prepared in stages, with the current stage focusing on strategic matters setting out the vision and objectives, spatial strategy, and the consideration of some of the development needs and certain strategic policy areas. Additional strategic and non-strategic policy areas will be considered in a subsequent stage. The work undertaken in these separate stages will be brought together in a full draft local plan due to be published for public consultation in quarter 4 of 2022<sup>7</sup>. Sustainability appraisal reports will be prepared to accompany each stage. Therefore this report only covers the policy areas being put forward at this stage and the options and effects associated with them at this stage. As the preparation of the Local Plan progresses, these will be reviewed and may be subject to change.
- 1.17 The Local Plan's draft objectives are:
- **Climate Change:** Countering climate change through transition to a net zero carbon future, where new development and local environments are adaptable and resilient to the changing climate. Seek to reduce emissions from new development, facilitate more sustainable living, and manage the risks of flooding, whilst seeking to protect our water resources.
  - **Our Communities:** Deliver and strengthen sustainable, cohesive and healthy communities in our towns and villages. Secure enhancements to social, green, health, educational and other local infrastructure through new development in sustainable locations. Support the viability of the Borough's town and local village centres in meeting many of the daily needs of our communities and residents.
  - **Town Centres:** Create cultural, adaptable, diverse and vibrant town centres in Romsey and Andover, including through regeneration schemes, and by securing high quality design and accessible mixed use development that will increase vitality, whilst protecting and enhancing their historic and green assets.
  - **Built, Historic and Natural Environment:** Conserve and enhance the built, historic and natural environment within Test Valley, including local character, identity, cultural heritage, the variety of local landscapes and the special landscape character of the Borough.
  - **Ecology and Biodiversity:** Conserve and enhance biodiversity, by taking opportunities to promote, and secure clear and measurable improvements to habitats and biodiversity. Enhance the connectivity, quantity and quality of ecological and green infrastructure networks, to help maintain and enhance

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<sup>6</sup> More information on the distinction between strategic and non-strategic policies can be found within the NPPF, section 3.

<sup>7</sup> See the Local Development Scheme for more information on the approach and timetable for the preparation of planning policy documents. Available at: <https://testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/lds>

the condition of protected nature conservation sites, protected species and the resilience of biodiverse environments to the changing climate.

- Health, Wellbeing, Culture, Leisure and Recreation: Encourage active lifestyles and enhance health and wellbeing, by providing opportunities for recreational, cultural and community activities, through the provision of open spaces, access to the countryside, sports, leisure and other community facilities and services. Work with the Council's partners to secure access to healthcare for all, including the Borough's most vulnerable residents.
- Design: Deliver safe, attractive, integrated and well-designed environments that take account of and respond positively to local context and character. Strengthen the sense of belonging and identity within Test Valley by supporting enhancements to the distinctive towns and villages of the Borough. Place-making will be integral to our design approach, helping to strengthen our connections between people and place.
- Housing: Provide a range of homes that are fit for purpose and designed to meet the needs and aspirations of different groups within the community, including a range of affordable housing and homes that meet the needs of an ageing population.
- Economy, Employment and Skills: Promote a vibrant and resilient local economy, including the visitor economy, where future sustainable growth and innovation in green, high technology and other sectors can provide for a range of job opportunities and where businesses and individuals can thrive. Support a skilled and diverse workforce so that local people can access learning opportunities and jobs and benefit from greater prosperity.
- Transport and Movement: Encourage active and sustainable modes of transport, that are accessible, safe and attractive to use, whilst also seeking to reduce the impact of travel in particular by private car. Ensure new development facilitates improvements to accessibility, safety and connectivity in our transport infrastructure.

1.18 The main impacts of the Local Plan are likely to be experienced within Test Valley, however the zone of influence extends beyond the Borough boundary (e.g. in terms of transport including the strategic road network, environmental impacts incorporating the potential impact on nature conservation designations, and the water environment). More detail is provided later within this report.

### ***Relationship between the Local Plan and other key plans***

1.19 As part of the preparation of a sustainability appraisal, there is a need to give consideration to other relevant plans and programmes – this is further considered later within this report. A brief overview of links with some of the key relevant plans and strategies is provided in this section.

1.20 The Council's Corporate Plan<sup>8</sup> sets out the Council's vision and priorities for 2019 to 2023, and as a result provides a focus for Council activities. This includes planning policy documents and other strategies / plans produced by

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<sup>8</sup> Test Valley Borough Council Corporate Plan 2019-2023: Growing Our Potential, 2019 (available: <https://testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/corporatedirection/corporate-plan-for-2019-to-2023>).

the Council. It sets out four priorities, and indicates that using the Council's investing approach it will grow the potential of town centres to adapt and be attractive, vibrant and prosperous places; communities to be empowered, connected and able to build upon their strengths; people to be able to live well and fulfil their aspirations; and the local environment for current and future generations. The Corporate Plan is likely to begin being reviewed in the near future.

- 1.21 The National Planning Policy Framework<sup>9</sup> (NPPF) provides national planning guidance, both in terms of the preparation of plans and determination of planning applications. There is a need to ensure that DPDs are prepared taking account of and to be consistent with the NPPF.
- 1.22 The Hampshire Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents<sup>10</sup> also form part of the Development Plan for Test Valley. They are prepared by Hampshire County Council in conjunction with the unitary authorities and National Park authorities in Hampshire. The Local Plan needs to be prepared and considered in the context of these documents.
- 1.23 Neighbourhood Development Plans<sup>11</sup> also form part of the Development Plan. They relate to specific areas within the Borough – likely to be based on a Parish or Town Council administrative area. At the time of producing this document, 5 Neighbourhood Development Plans have been 'made', with additional Plans being prepared.
- 1.24 Further consideration of other relevant plans, policies and programmes is provided within Chapter 3 and Appendix 1.

### ***Relationship with Habitat Regulations Assessment***

- 1.25 The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (known as the Habitat Regulations) require that land use plans that are likely to have a significant effect on certain nature conservation designations shall be subject to an appropriate assessment of the implications for each such designated site, in the context of its conservation objectives.
- 1.26 The Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) process is separate to sustainability appraisal (and has a different methodology). However, the requirements, background evidence and some of the findings of HRA process will inform the sustainability appraisal process of the Local Plan. This includes the appraisal of options (through the biodiversity related sustainability objective), identification of potential significant effects and necessary mitigation. A HRA has not been prepared at this stage of producing the Local Plan, but will be completed at future stages.

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<sup>9</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Available at: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/strategic-planning/hampshire-minerals-waste-plan>

<sup>11</sup> More details at: <https://testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/neighbourhood-planning>

### ***Structure of this report***

- 1.27 This report has been prepared taking account of the various stages that make up the sustainability appraisal process (for more information see Chapter 2). Therefore, this Sustainability Appraisal Report for the Local Plan covers the following:
- An overview of the sustainability appraisal process and the requirements of strategic environmental assessment;
  - A summary of the findings of the Scoping Report (as referred to above) and an overview of the local context;
  - An appraisal of the Local Plan objectives (the plan objectives) in terms of their compatibility with the sustainability objectives (as set out in the Sustainability Appraisal Framework within the Scoping Report);
  - Appraisal of the options and reasonable alternatives considered in preparing policies and proposals to be covered at this stage of the Local Plan to test their performance against the sustainability objectives;
  - Identification and evaluation of the likely significant effects of the Local Plan, including consideration of potential mitigation measures to minimise adverse effects;
  - An overview of how the proposed monitoring strategy to measure the effects of implementing the Local Plan will be produced in future sustainability appraisal reports; and
  - A record of where the environmental information has been incorporated into the appraisal process to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations.
- 1.28 For information, a separate Health Impact Assessment has also been prepared to accompany the Local Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Stage 1 document.



## 2 Methodology

- 2.1 This Sustainability Appraisal report has been prepared taking account of the legal requirements and national guidance on the process and methodology for sustainability appraisal / strategic environmental assessment, in addition to how they can be incorporated into plan making.
- 2.2 It is not the purpose of this report to demonstrate how the Local Plan is consistent with the NPPF.

### ***Stages of the Appraisal Process***

- 2.3 The sustainability appraisal of DPDs involves five main stages, which are set out in Table 1. Stage A has already been undertaken (through the Scoping Report). The latter stages (Stage E) of the appraisal process will be carried out following the Examination in Public of the Local Plan.

Table 1: Stages within the sustainability appraisal process<sup>12</sup>

Stage	Brief Description
A	Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope 1. Identify other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives 2. Collect baseline information 3. Identify sustainability issues and problems 4. Develop the sustainability appraisal framework 5. Consult the consultation bodies on the scope of the sustainability appraisal report
B	Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects 1. Test the Local Plan objectives against the sustainability appraisal framework 2. Develop the Local Plan options including reasonable alternatives 3. Evaluate the likely effects of the Local Plan and alternatives 4. Consider ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects 5. Proposed measures to monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan
C	Prepare the sustainability appraisal report
D	Seek representations on the sustainability appraisal report from consultation bodies and the public
E	Post adoption reporting and monitoring 1. Prepare and publish post-adoption statement 2. Monitor significant effects of implementing the Local Plan 3. Respond to adverse effects

<sup>12</sup> Based on flowchart indicating how the sustainability appraisal stages relate to plan preparation available as part of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (reference ID: 11-013-20140306) at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/580027/sea1\\_013.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/580027/sea1_013.pdf)



- 2.4 The sustainability appraisal process is undertaken alongside the preparation of the Local Plan. It should be noted that while the stages and associated tasks set out in Table 1 are listed in order, a number of the activities are iterative and subject to review as the Local Plan is developed. This includes taking account of comments received on both the sustainability appraisal and the draft local plan that it accompanies.
- 2.5 As far as possible, chapters within this report highlight the stages (and where relevant specific tasks) they relate to within the sustainability appraisal process and the relevant requirements of the strategic environmental assessment process (as set out by the Regulations).

### ***Method for Appraisal of Options***

- 2.6 Reflecting the legal requirements and national guidance, the appraisal process has involved an assessment of the compatibility and / or performance of options with the sustainability objectives<sup>13</sup>, as well as consideration of likely significant effects relative to the baseline position (as well as likely evolution of the baseline position)<sup>14</sup>. The outcomes of both aspects have been taken into account by the Council as part of the identification of a preferred strategy.
- 2.7 In summarising the performance of options against the sustainability objectives, a set of symbols has been used – these are set out in Table 2. These symbols represent the position without the identification of mitigation measures. These symbols should not be considered in isolation as they represent a broad indication of performance and need to be read in conjunction with the associated commentary and consideration of likely significant effects. In addition, while there is a temptation to sum up the symbols to indicate a ‘score’, this is not appropriate. However, they can give a simplified indication of the relative performance of options in relation to a specific issue as a starting point.

Table 2: Key to symbols used in the appraisal

Strongly positive	++
Positive	+
Mixed performance	+/-
Negative	-
Strongly negative	--
Depends on implementation	i
Uncertain	?
No effect	o

- 2.8 As part of the process of appraising options, no specific weighing system has been developed. The NPPF recognises the need for economic, social and environmental matters to be considered in mutually supportive ways

<sup>13</sup> For more information see the Sustainability Framework in Chapter 19 of the Scoping Report. With the sustainability objectives also summarised in Chapter 3 of this report.

<sup>14</sup> The SEA Regulations establish that the consideration of effects needs to account for direct and secondary (or indirect) effects; cumulative effects; synergistic effects; short, medium and long term effects; permanent and temporary effects; and positive and negative effects.

recognising that they are interdependent (paragraph 8). It was considered that the use of a standardised weighting approach may detract from the consideration of the detail that is behind the assessments. In addition, the relative importance of specific issues can vary within the appraisal, for example depending on the matter under consideration and the area under consideration (when considering allocations). In some cases, protection or designation of specific features or assets may give an indication of relative importance, but this is not always the case. The designation of certain assets / features is also a factor in identifying whether an effect may be significant<sup>15</sup>.

- 2.9 The SEA Regulations establish criteria for determining whether there is likely to be a significant effect on the environment within Schedule 1 of the legislation. These have been used to inform the identification of significant effects, as set out within this report. Potential mitigation measures have been identified alongside the consideration of significant effects, where they have the potential to prevent, reduce or as a last option offset any significant adverse effects identified. As noted above, the symbols used to summarise the performance in relation to the sustainability objectives do not account for mitigation measures discussed within associated commentary.
- 2.10 The information brought together through the assessment of options against the sustainability objectives and consideration of any significant effects has been used to gauge the scope for options to support sustainable development (including when accounting for potential mitigation measures). In some cases this can result in the identification of potential effects that cannot be mitigated; this can then inform the decisions made by the Council. It has also highlighted that in some cases options can have positive effects in relation to certain objectives, while performing less well on other matters. This provides a basis for considering the need to weigh up the implications of the effects with what the Council is seeking to achieve through the Local Plan and identify mitigation measures where necessary. In some cases trade-offs also need to be considered.

### ***Commentary on the production of the sustainability appraisal report***

- 2.11 As set out within Chapter 1, the preparation of sustainability appraisals also addresses the legal requirements established through the SEA Regulations (in relation to taking account of environmental considerations in the preparation of the plan) that need to be complied with. Table 3 sets out where the environmental information required by the SEA Regulations has been provided in order to provide clarity on how and where the requirements have been met. In addition, Table 4 sets out a summary of how the appraisal was undertaken.
- 2.12 The consideration of alternative options and their effects through the sustainability appraisal process is helping to inform the production of the Local Plan. This report also summaries some of the other sources of information / evidence that have influenced the process of developing the Local Plan. This

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<sup>15</sup> This reflects the considerations identified in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations.

sustainability appraisal process has also enabled a clearer approach to identification of the potential mitigation measures that could be implemented.

- 2.13 As is noted within Table 4, there were some difficulties experienced in the preparation of this report and the undertaking of the appraisal to date. One of the challenges has related to the preparation of the Local Plan in stages, with this Local Plan capturing strategic matters – it is not a full Local Plan. Therefore, the position set out in this sustainability appraisal will not capture the full likely significant effects of the Local Plan, resulting in uncertainties in the degree of effects, and it will not capture some policy areas that may provide mitigation in future stages of preparing the Local Plan. This will come at the next stage of preparing the Local Plan, when it will be possible to consider the full effects of the proposals and policies. It is recognised that as the preparation of the Local Plan progresses, this will present an opportunity to review the identification of reasonable alternatives, as well as the identification and assessment of their likely effects, which may result in changes to the outcomes.
- 2.14 The staged approach also means it is not appropriate at this stage to establish a framework for monitoring the likely significant effects of the plan. This will be put forward as part of the sustainability appraisal accompanying the later stages of the preparation of the Local Plan.
- 2.15 Assumptions have had to be made in making assessments of alternatives and identifying likely effects. The consideration of options and identification of effects has also required a degree of judgement, including the consideration of the significance of effects<sup>16</sup>. Where possible the assumptions have been based on baseline information and evidence based studies (which are referred to where relevant). Professional judgement has also been used taking account of baseline information.
- 2.16 A general assumption throughout the appraisal in terms of the identification and evaluation of effects is that development comes forward in line with the proposed policies within the plan. It is recognised that this may not always be the case (for example where other material considerations are relevant).

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<sup>16</sup> The SEA Regulations establish the need to consider the likely significant effects on the environment, with Schedule 1 setting out the criteria for determining whether there is a likely significant effect.

Table 3: SEA Regulations requirements<sup>17</sup>

SEA Requirements	Where covered
<p><b>Preparation of environmental report (regulation 12)</b></p> <p>Preparation of an environmental report that identifies describes and evaluates the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme (regulation 12(2)).</p> <p>The report shall include such of the information referred to in Schedule 2 as may reasonably be required, taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, its stage in the decision-making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in the process to avoid duplication of the assessment (regulation 12(3)). Information may be provided by reference to relevant information obtained at other levels of decision-making or through other EU legislation (regulation 12 (4)).</p> <p>When deciding on the scope and level of detail of information to be included in the environmental report the consultation bodies should be consulted.</p>	<p>This report incorporates the Environmental Report required by the SEA Regulations – it should be read in conjunction with the Scoping Report (2020). It follows the relevant national planning practice guidance. Chapters 7 to 11 give consideration of the likely effects of the Local Plan.</p>
<p><b>The information referred to in Schedule 2 is:</b></p> <p><b>a)</b> An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes</p>	<p>An outline of the content and objectives of the Local Plan, at this stage in its preparation, is covered in Chapter 1 of this report. The relevant plans and programmes are covered in the SA Scoping Report and as updated within Appendix 1 to this report.</p>

<sup>17</sup> Based on Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations requirements checklist provided in the Planning Practice Guidance (Reference ID: 11-004-20150209) available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal#strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

SEA Requirements	Where covered
<b>b)</b> The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.	This is covered in the SA Scoping Report and is summarised in Chapter 4 of this report.
<b>c)</b> The environment characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	This is covered in the Scoping Report and is considered in Chapters 4 to 11 of this report.
<b>d)</b> Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 2009/147/EC (Conservation of Wild Birds) and 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive).	This is covered in the Scoping Report and is summarised in Chapters 3 and 4 of this report.
<b>e)</b> The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.	This is covered in the Scoping Report and Appendix 1 of this report. It has also been incorporated through the testing of Local Plan options against sustainability objectives (which were prepared taking account of the environmental protection objectives in other relevant plans and programmes and other environmental considerations).
<b>f)</b> The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscapes and the interrelationship between the above factors. These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.	An assessment of the likely significant effects has been undertaken as part of the consideration of alternative options and the assessment of the proposed approach to a policy area where reasonable alternatives have not been identified. There is consideration of the effects of the Plan, as it currently stands, as a whole in Chapter 11.
<b>g)</b> The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.	Mitigation measures have been considered as part of the appraisal of alternative options and the assessment of the proposed approach to a policy area where reasonable alternatives have not been identified. Additionally, mitigation measures have been set out as part of the discussion of the effects of the Plan, including in Chapter 11.

SEA Requirements	Where covered
<p><b>h)</b> An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.</p>	<p>This is provided within Chapters 6 to 10. Also see Chapter 2 for a summary of some of the difficulties encountered.</p>
<p><b>i)</b> A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with regulation 17.</p>	<p>To be undertaken at the next stage in the preparation of the Local Plan. Chapter 12 provides more information on this matter.</p>
<p><b>j)</b> A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.</p>	<p>A non-technical summary is provided for this report (produced separately from the main report) and there is a non-technical summary for the Scoping Report (2020).</p>
<p><b>Consultation procedures (regulation 13)</b> As soon as reasonably practicable after their preparation, the draft plan or programme and environmental report shall be sent to the consultation bodies and brought to the attention of the public, who should be invited to express their opinion. The period within which opinions must be sent must be of such length as will ensure an effective opportunity to express their opinion.</p>	<p>The Environmental Report (this document) has been used to inform the production of the Local Plan, including the identification of appropriate mitigation measures (based on the matters considered at this stage). This document is subject to consultation alongside the Local Plan, the statutory consultation bodies will be informed of the consultation. Representations received will be taken into account.</p>
<p><b>Information as to adoption of plan or programme (regulation 16)</b> As soon as reasonably practicable after the plan or programme is adopted, the consultation bodies, the public and the Secretary of State shall be informed and the following made available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the plan or programme adopted</li> <li>• the environmental report</li> <li>• a statement summarising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;</li> <li>(b) how the environmental report has been taken into account;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>The Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal have not yet reached this stage. This will be undertaken at the point of adoption of the Local Plan, or as soon as possible after this.</p>

SEA Requirements	Where covered
<p>(c) how opinions expressed in response to: (i) the invitation referred to in regulation 13(2)(d); (ii) action taken by the responsible authority in accordance with regulation 13(4), have been taken into account;</p> <p>(d) how the results of any consultations entered into under regulation 14(4) have been taken into account;</p> <p>(e) the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and</p> <p>(f) the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme. (regulation 16)</p>	
<p><b>Monitoring of implementation of plans or programmes (regulation 17)</b></p> <p>Monitoring of significant environmental effects of the plan's or programme's implementation with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action (regulation 17 (1)).</p> <p>Monitoring arrangements may comprise or include arrangements established for other purposes (regulation 17 (2)).</p>	<p>To be undertaken following the adoption of the Local Plan. Chapter 12 of this report indicates how the approach to monitoring arrangements will be established at future stages in the preparation of the Local Plan.</p>

Table 4: Commentary on the production of this Sustainability Appraisal  
 (Note that Stage A has been presented separately in the Scoping Report<sup>18</sup>)

Stage	Who was involved?	When was the work undertaken?	Difficulties / issues encountered
<b>Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope</b>			
1. Identify other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives	Planning Policy Team	January – July 2020, reviewed September – October 2020	Difficulties ensuring that all of the most relevant plans, policies and programmes are included (particularly whether the versions identified are the most up to date). Many documents do not have clear sustainability objectives. Sought to focus on key plans, policies and programmes as a means of minimising this issue.
2. Collect baseline information	Planning Policy Team	January – July 2020, reviewed September – October 2020	Availability and access to up to date data at a scale relevant to the scoping process (particularly from external sources) and to understand local characteristics and trends. Accessing data that helps inform future trends, as well as current / recent circumstances. Consistency of data between sources. Sought to be clear about the sources used and where possible indicate the date the data relates to.
3. Identify sustainability issues and problems	Planning Policy Team	July 2020, reviewed October 2020	Reflecting above, difficulties in establishing likely future trends, particularly where there are multiple drivers. As a result the expected issues

<sup>18</sup> Available at: <https://testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/evidence-base/sustainability-appraisal>



Stage	Who was involved?	When was the work undertaken?	Difficulties / issues encountered
			for the future were more challenging to identify.
4. Develop the sustainability appraisal framework	Planning Policy Team	July 2020, reviewed October 2020	Ensuring coverage of all the relevant issues whilst maintaining a manageable number of objectives. Phrasing the objectives to be appropriately ambitious but also achievable.
5. Consult the consultation bodies on the scope of the sustainability appraisal report	Planning Policy Team, statutory consultees and other consultees	July to September 2020	In some cases it was not appropriate / possible to amend the Scoping Report to reflect comments received. However, matters were taken into account and reflected as far as possible.
Stage B: Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects			
1. Test the Local Plan objectives against the sustainability appraisal framework	Planning Policy Team	October 2021 to January 2022	It was challenging to identify the specific effects (including their significance) of options considered for the Local Plan as a whole, particularly given the staged approach to preparation, with significant policy content, including further consideration of how we meet development needs in the Borough, is to be considered at Regulation 18 Stage 2. Additionally, it was challenging to consider specific likely effects in conjunction with other plans, policies and programmes, particularly where there are factors that influence the evolution of the environment that pull in different directions and where the wider context is evolving (for example with the
2. Develop the Local Plan options including reasonable alternatives (for stage 1)			
3. Evaluate the likely effects of the Local Plan and alternatives (for stage 1 matters)			
4. Consider ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects			

Stage	Who was involved?	When was the work undertaken?	Difficulties / issues encountered
			implementation of provisions within the Environment Act 2021). Future sustainability appraisals will be prepared to accompany later stages of the drafting of the Local Plan, which should aid in addressing some of these matters.
5. Proposed measures to monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan (for stage 1 matters)	Planning Policy Team	To be undertaken at later stage in the preparation of the Local Plan.	At this stage, the Local Plan focuses on strategic matters therefore it is not appropriate to identify measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan. This will be put forward as part of the sustainability appraisal accompanying the next stage of the Local Plan.
<b>Stage C: Prepare the sustainability appraisal report</b>			
Prepare the sustainability appraisal report	Planning Policy Team	October to December 2021	Balancing the provision of an appropriate level of detail to meet the legal requirements whilst avoiding the document being overly long or complex. This report has sought to bring together an appropriate level of detail to balance these matters.
<b>Stage D: Seek representations on the sustainability appraisal report from consultation bodies and the public</b>			
Seek representations on the sustainability appraisal report from consultation bodies and the public (for stage 1 matters)	<i>This stage is to be undertaken for the Regulation 18 stage 1 alongside consultation on the draft Local Plan document. Separate opportunities will be available to make representations on later stages of the plan preparation and associated sustainability appraisals.</i>		
<b>Stage E: Post adoption reporting and monitoring</b>			
1. Prepare and publish post-adoption statement	<i>These stages will be completed once the plan has been formally adopted. While consideration of monitoring arrangements will be undertaken at the next stage in the plan preparation, some</i>		

Stage	Who was involved?	When was the work undertaken?	Difficulties / issues encountered
2. Monitor significant effects of implementing the Local Plan	<i>initial consideration of the approach to this aspect of the sustainability appraisal process is provided in Chapter 12.</i>		
3. Respond to adverse effects			

### ***Consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal Report***

- 2.17 Public and stakeholder participation is an important element of the plan making and sustainability appraisal / strategic environmental assessment process.
- 2.18 Consultation helps to ensure that the Sustainability Appraisal Report will be robust. This includes through receiving feedback on whether all reasonable alternatives have been identified and whether all likely significant effects have been covered. Ensuring that the sustainability appraisal has considered all such matters provides a mechanism to help demonstrate how the Local Plan will contribute to achieving sustainable development.
- 2.19 The SEA Regulations set out the statutory environmental consultation bodies that have to be consulted - namely Historic England, the Environment Agency, and Natural England. Guidance recommends that consultation is undertaken more widely.
- 2.20 Consultation was undertaken separately in relation to the preparation of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (for more information, see Chapter 2 of the Scoping Report<sup>19</sup>).
- 2.21 As noted within the 'Commenting on this Document' section, this Sustainability Appraisal Report has been published for consultation for a period of eight weeks alongside the Local Plan, from Friday 11 February to 12 noon on Friday 8 April 2022. Comments on the information contained within this report, or its relationship with the Local Plan, are invited and will be taken into consideration.

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<sup>19</sup> Available at: <https://testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/evidence-base/sustainability-appraisal>

### 3 Setting the Context

#### What the SEA Regulations say (Stage A):

The Environmental Report should provide information on:

- the relationship [of the plan or programme] with other relevant plans and programmes (Schedule 2, point 1)
- the environmental protection objectives, established at international and national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation (Schedule 2, point 5)
- relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme (Schedule 2, point 2)
- the environmental characteristics of the areas likely to be significantly affected (Schedule 2, point 3)
- any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as a European site<sup>20</sup> (Schedule 2, point 4)

When deciding on the scope and level of detail of information that must be included in the environmental report, the consultation bodies shall be consulted (namely Natural England, Historic England, the Environment Agency) (Regulation 12(5))

- 3.1 This section provides a summary of the main stages of the Scoping Report, published in 2020<sup>21</sup>, with updates provided as appropriate. This document covers the Stage A tasks identified within the government guidance (see Table 1). A brief introduction is given to the work carried out in relation to Tasks A1 to A5 – for full details see the Scoping Report, available on the Council’s website (this Sustainability Appraisal Report should be read in conjunction with the Scoping Report).

#### ***Task A1: Identify other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives***

- 3.2 Appendix 2 of the Scoping Report identifies a number of policies, plans and programmes relevant to the production of the Local Plan DPD. These range from international to local level publications. This list has been updated within Appendix 1 of this Report, to include relevant plans and programmes published since the approval of the Scoping Report.
- 3.3 A summary of the key points from these documents has been provided in Table 5 – this has been adapted from the similar table in the Scoping Report,

<sup>20</sup> As defined by Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

<sup>21</sup> Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, Test Valley Borough Council, 2020 (available: <https://testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/evidence-base/sustainability-appraisal>).

to reflect more recent changes. For reference, general legislation has not been included.

Table 5: Summary of key policies, plans and programmes

Key Messages	Sources
<b>Air Quality</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor air quality can have negative impacts on health and the environment, as well as having economic implications.</li> <li>• There are national objectives on air quality, with some more localised action plans where issues have been identified.</li> </ul>	A Green Future; Clean Air Strategy; UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations; National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); Air Quality Plans; Air Quality Status Report.
<b>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal obligations to protect certain designated species and habitats, as well as a duty to have regard to the purpose of conservation of biological diversity.</li> <li>• Follow the mitigation hierarchy (avoid, then mitigation and only as a last resort compensate).</li> <li>• Provide net gains for biodiversity, including through ecological networks to retain connectivity.</li> </ul>	A Green Future; Biodiversity 2020; NPPF; Biodiversity Action Plans; designation citations; Green Infrastructure Strategies.
<b>Climate Change</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The climate is forecast to get warmer and wetter in winter and warmer and drier in summers, with increased risk of extreme weather events.</li> <li>• International aim to keep global temperature rise this century well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C. The urgency of enhancing ambition has been identified.</li> <li>• Action is needed in a range of fields to reduce emissions, improve resilience and allow adaptation.</li> </ul>	Paris Agreement; Glasgow Pact; A Green Future; Clean Growth Strategy; Net Zero Strategy; Heat and Building Strategy; NPPF; Decarbonising Transport; Climate Change Risk Register; National Adaptation Programme; TVBC Climate Emergency Action Plan.
<b>Communities and Wellbeing</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek opportunities for individuals to look after their own health and wellbeing and take action early.</li> </ul>	NPPF; Sporting Future; Public Health England Strategy; Towards an Active Nation Strategy; Noise Policy Statement for England;

Key Messages	Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce health inequalities and promote a holistic approach to healthy lifestyles.</li> <li>• Places should be designed to be accessible and safe to reduce the risk that crime / fear of crime undermine community cohesion.</li> <li>• Consider social, recreational and cultural facilities and services that meet community needs.</li> </ul>	<p>Hampshire’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; Public Health Strategy; TVBC Corporate Plan; Andover Vision; Romsey Future Strategy; Parish Plans; Green Infrastructure Strategies; Green Space Strategy; Playing Pitch Strategy; Sport Facilities Strategy..</p>
<b>Economy and Employment</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to support clean growth (that delivers economic growth whilst reducing carbon emissions).</li> <li>• Seek to support the viability and vitality of town centres.</li> <li>• Promote the development of skills and innovation.</li> <li>• Appropriate infrastructure (including digital) needs to be available to support growth.</li> <li>• Education systems should support lifelong learning and skills development.</li> </ul>	<p>NPPF; Industrial Strategy; Clean Growth Strategy; LEP plans / strategies; Economic Development Strategy (and Interim Economic Development Strategy); School Places Plan.</p>
<b>Historic Environment</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to conserve and enhance both designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting, incorporating statutorily protected heritage assets (such as listed buildings).</li> <li>• In order to successfully manage change it is important to understand the significance of assets.</li> </ul>	<p>NPPF; Conservation Area Character Appraisals; Listed Building entries and descriptions; Hampshire Historic Environment Record; Heritage at Risk Registers; Village and Town Design Statements; Scheduled Ancient Monument records; Historic Park and Garden Registers; Landscape &amp; Townscape Assessments; Historic England Advice Notes.</p>
<b>Homes and Accommodation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should plan for housing need including market and affordable housing, along with needs of different groups within the community.</li> <li>• Ensure new homes in a quality environment in which to live.</li> <li>• Local priorities for housing include enabling delivery of homes that people can afford,</li> </ul>	<p>NPPF; Planning Policy for Traveller Sites; TVBC Corporate Plan, TVBC Housing Strategy and Preventing Homelessness &amp; Rough Sleeping Strategy.</p>

Key Messages	Sources
meeting needs within the community and meeting the challenge of an ageing population.	
<b>Land and Soil</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soil is a natural resource that provides a range of services, and needs to be managed sustainably.</li> <li>• Risks to soil health including as a result of pollution should be avoided.</li> <li>• Effective use of land should be encouraged, including through the use of previously developed land.</li> </ul>	NPPF; Safeguarding our Soils Strategy; A Green Future; Minerals and Waste Plan; Contaminated Land Strategy.
<b>Landscape, Townscape and Character</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal duties in relation to the National Park and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).</li> <li>• Need to have regard to the local landscape, townscape and settlement character.</li> </ul>	NPPF; A Green Future; New Forest National Park Management Plan; North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan; Landscape Character Assessments; Village and Town Design Statements
<b>Population and Demographics</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take account of current and future demographic trends in assessing housing need</li> <li>• Have regard to the ageing population</li> <li>• Be mindful of specific needs for different groups within the community.</li> </ul>	NPPF; Planning Policy for Traveller Sites; TVBC Corporate Plan; TVBC Housing Strategy
<b>Travel and Transport</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to increase accessibility, reduce the need to travel and support more sustainable modes of travel.</li> <li>• Need to move towards cleaner road transport, including zero emissions vehicles.</li> <li>• Promote safer transport network.</li> </ul>	NPPF; Clean Growth Strategy; The Road to Zero; Gear Change (Vision for Cycling and Walking); Decarbonising Transport; Local Transport Plan; Hampshire Walking & Cycling Strategy; Hampshire Countryside Access Plan; Access Plans and Cycle Strategy
<b>Water Resources and Quality</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to ensure water abstraction takes account of the needs of the environment, as well as the demands of communities, and</li> </ul>	NPPF; A Green Future; Meeting our Future Water Needs; River Basin Management Plan; Water Resource Management Plans; Marine Plan; Abstraction Licensing Strategy;



Key Messages	Sources
<p>how both may change in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obligations through the Water Framework Directive set out certain quality standards for water bodies, including groundwater.</li> <li>• Need to follow the flood risk hierarchy and associated tests (i.e. avoid risk first).</li> </ul>	<p>Flood Risk Management Plans and Strategies; Flood Risk Assessments; Sustainable Drainage Systems Manual.</p>

- 3.4 This stage of the process enables the identification of likely changes within the area which may need to be taken into consideration when reviewing the potential for significant effects of the proposed plan. This includes consideration of the proposals of other local planning authorities, housing, employment and transport proposals for example.

**Task A2: Collect baseline information**

- 3.5 Chapters 4 to 16 of the Scoping Report provide baseline data. This has been used to inform the identification of the sustainability objectives. It provides an evidence base to support the appraisal and development of the Local Plan. It also acts as a base from which subsequent monitoring can be compared. This is based on a number of topics, including the issues highlighted in the SEA Regulations.
- 3.6 A profile of the Borough has been provided within Chapter 4 of this report which summarises the baseline information – for full details please see the Scoping Report. Updates to the profile of the Borough, relative to the information within the Scoping Report, have been included where appropriate.

**Task A3: Identify sustainability issues and problems**

- 3.7 This draws on the findings of both tasks A1 and A2 to enable the identification of the key sustainability issues. Sustainability issues were identified in Chapters 5 to 16 and summarised in Chapter 18 of the Scoping Report.
- 3.8 A summary of the key sustainability issues is provided in Table 6. For further details, please see the Scoping Report.

Table 6: Summary of key sustainability issues and problems

Air Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While there are currently no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within the Borough, there are areas nearby, in neighbouring local authority areas, that are exceeding current UK Air Quality Objective levels and therefore are identified as AQMAs.</li> <li>• Potential increases in traffic / congestion could affect air quality within and outside of the Borough – this could have knock on effects to biodiversity and human health.</li> </ul>

### Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- Direct and indirect risks to biodiversity, including through cumulative impacts (e.g. recreational pressures including for the New Forest and Solent coastline, nutrient inputs including for the Solent).
- Some biodiversity assets are in unfavourable condition.
- There is a need to consider the connectivity of habitats and issues relating to fragmentation.
- Implementing the requirements being introduced through the Environment Act 2021 (e.g. biodiversity net gain), which are currently being worked up and therefore evolving.

### Climate Change

- The climate is forecast to change with a move towards warmer, wetter winters, and warmer, drier summers; along with changes in the frequency of extreme weather events and changes in sea levels.
- Changing climate may have implications on the natural and built environment, as well as other factors including health. There is a need to consider both mitigation and adaptation options.
- Per person carbon dioxide emissions in the Borough are higher than regional and national averages, with transport being a key source of emissions.

### Communities and Wellbeing

- There are pockets of deprivation within the Borough, particularly in parts of Andover.
- Some areas within Andover are within the 20% most deprived in relation to crime.
- Potential for increased pressure on existing leisure, recreation and cultural facilities. Should they not be adequately available and accessible, may have health and wellbeing effects.
- Whilst health in the Borough is generally good, there may be issues around years of ill health, changing health and care needs with an ageing population and lifestyle choices (e.g. levels of obesity) – there are also variations in health.

### Economy and Employment

- The trend towards an ageing population may influence the available work force and may result in a need for people to work until an older age and / or need additional in-commuting.
- Those living in the Borough earn more (on average) than those working in the Borough.
- Recognising the role of the rural economy.
- Variability in the education / skills levels within the Borough, with higher proportions of the population without qualifications in parts of Andover – there is a legacy of lower skilled employment in the town.
- Changes in retailing and how we use town centres.
- Additional development could increase demand for use of resources and the generation of waste (including through construction and operation phases) – this could also put pressure on the environment.

### Historic Environment

- Some designated heritage assets within the Borough are noted to be at risk (primarily relating to archaeology).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional development and other changes, if not planned sensitively, could risk adverse effects on heritage assets, particularly in relation to designated assets and their setting.</li> </ul>
<b>Homes and Accommodation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implications of changes in population and demographics in terms of the type of accommodation needed.</li> <li>• Issues of affordability of housing, including the ratio of house prices to wages, this varies within the Borough.</li> <li>• Ensuring accommodation needs of different groups within the community are appropriately met.</li> </ul>
<b>Land and Soil</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing pressure on land resources from additional development, with limited opportunities to use previously developed land</li> <li>• Additional greenfield development could include higher grade (best and most versatile) agricultural land.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape, Townscape and Character</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional development and other changes, if not planned sensitively, could risk adverse effects on the landscape, townscapes, settlement character and identity. There is a need to manage changes, particularly in relation to designated assets and their setting.</li> </ul>
<b>Population and Demographics</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projected increases in the population size along with reductions in household size may result in a need for proportionately more homes to house the increasing population.</li> <li>• Potential for reduction in population size in some communities along with changes to local demographics, which may have implications on local services, especially in rural communities.</li> <li>• Trends towards an ageing population may affect the type of accommodation needed, as well as implications for the availability of services and their accessibility.</li> </ul>
<b>Travel and Transport</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variability in access to services / facilities across the Borough (generally lower in rural areas), with some areas more dependent on private vehicles for travel, which is likely to reflect the rural nature of the majority of the Borough.</li> <li>• Higher proportion of people travelling to work by car in Test Valley</li> <li>• Additional traffic flows / congestion can have adverse impacts on a range of factors, including productivity and noise &amp; air quality (potentially with implications for health and biodiversity).</li> </ul>
<b>Water Resources and Water Quality</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In relation to water quality (including of groundwater), ensure that development (including construction) and other changes do not lead to deterioration and where possible improvements are achieved.</li> <li>• Limits on water available for abstraction, with some challenges and uncertainties in the short term for parts of the Borough in providing adequate water supplies.</li> <li>• There are current challenges associated with high levels of nutrients in some water bodies (within and close to the Borough), which are understood to be having adverse effects including on ecology.</li> </ul>

- |                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parts of the Borough are at risk of a variety of types of flooding (which may increase as a result of a changing climate).</li></ul> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

***Task A4: Develop the sustainability appraisal framework***

- 3.9 Chapter 19 of the Scoping Report provides the sustainability appraisal framework, identifying the sustainability objectives as well as associated indicative tests, targets and indicators. These were produced drawing on the outcomes of the previous tasks. It is considered that these remain appropriate in light of more recent information for tasks A1 to A3 (as summarised above).
- 3.10 The sustainability objectives developed have been used to test objectives and policies of the Local Plan within this report. The sustainability objectives are:
1. Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in an appropriate and affordable home that meets their needs.
  2. Ensure the local economy is thriving with high and stable levels of growth, whilst supporting productivity and the promotion of a diverse economy, with the availability of a skilled workforce.
  3. Maintain and improve access to services, facilities, and other infrastructure, whilst improving the efficiency and integration of transport networks and the availability and utilisation of sustainable modes of travel.
  4. Encourage the efficient use of land and conserve soil resources.
  5. Conserve and, where possible, enhance the water environment and ensure the sustainable management of water resources.
  6. Seek to avoid and reduce vulnerability to the risk of flooding and the resulting detrimental effects to the public, economy and environment.
  7. Maintain and, where possible, enhance air quality.
  8. Conserve and, where possible, enhance the Borough's landscape, townscapes and settlement character.
  9. Conserve and, where possible, enhance the historic environment and the significance of heritage assets.
  10. Conserve and, where possible, enhance biodiversity and habitat connectivity.
  11. Support the delivery of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.
  12. Seek to maintain and improve the health and wellbeing of the population.

***Task A5: Consult the consultation bodies on the scope of the sustainability appraisal report***

- 3.11 The Scoping Report was the subject of consultation (24 July to 4 September 2020) in line with the statutory requirements. The comments received were taken into account in developing the final version of the document, approved in November 2020. Chapter 2 and Appendix 1 of the Scoping Report contain more information on that consultation process.

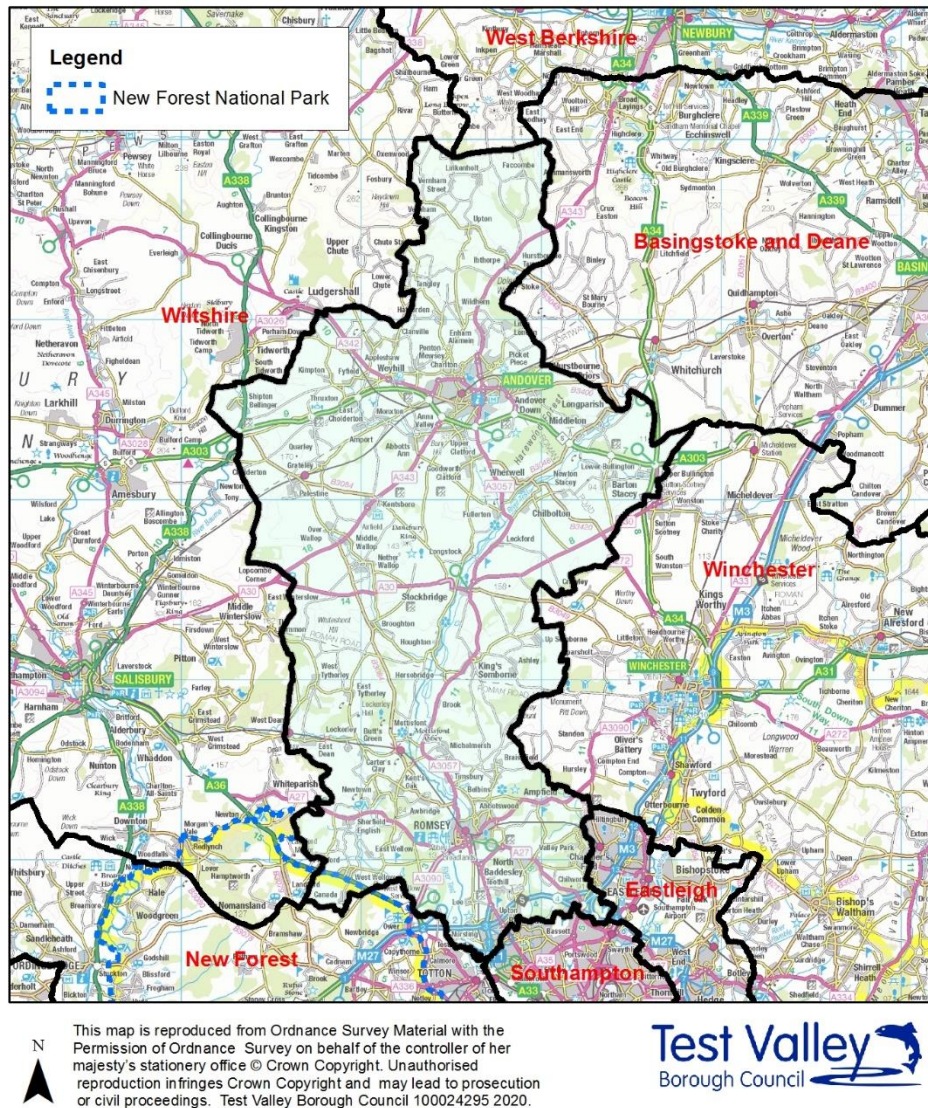
## 4 Profile of Test Valley

- 4.1 This profile provides a summary of the baseline information for the Borough; for further details (and the data sources) please see the Scoping Report. Where appropriate, data has been updated from the information provided within the Scoping Report<sup>22</sup>.
- 4.2 The Borough of Test Valley is located within west Hampshire. It is approximately 628 square kilometres (approximately 62,670 hectares) in extent. The main towns are Andover, towards the north, and Romsey, toward the south and Stockbridge which is located near the centre of the Borough. There are a number of other villages and hamlets across Test Valley. There are also a number of towns and cities nearby, including Southampton to the south; Basingstoke, Eastleigh, Chandler's Ford and Winchester to the east; and Salisbury to the west of the Borough. The location and extent of the Borough is shown in Figure 1.
- 4.3 Following the designation of the New Forest National Park, the National Park Authority has taken responsibility for planning functions (as at the 1 April 2006) for the area within Test Valley that falls within the national park boundary – this is the area to the south of the A36 in the south west of the Borough.
- 4.4 The basic underlying geology of the Borough is chalk; towards the south of the Borough the chalk layers dip and are buried by deposits of sand, gravel and clay. The soils within the Borough are mixed, as a result the quality of soil within Test Valley also varies.
- 4.5 The River Test is the key river system within the Borough, which in conjunction with the geology, has influenced the landscape of Test Valley. A large number of public and private water sources are derived from groundwater resources (particularly linked to the chalk aquifer); with the groundwater also providing the base flow for the River Test. Different parts of the Borough are vulnerable to a variety of sources of flooding (groundwater, tidal, river based, and surface water sources).
- 4.6 The most recent review of local air quality, completed in June 2021, indicated no expected exceedances of current UK Air Quality Objective levels in the Borough. Consequently there are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within the Borough at present. For information, road traffic has been identified as the most significant source of air pollution within Test Valley, and therefore the assessment of air quality focuses mostly on the road network, though industrial sources must also be considered. There are areas designated as AQMAs beyond but in close proximity to the Borough, often associated with busier roads.

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<sup>22</sup> Available at: <https://testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/evidence-base/sustainability-appraisal>

Figure 1: Location of Test Valley (showing adjoining local authorities)



4.7 Much of the Borough to the north of Andover falls within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), while a small area in the south west of the Borough lies within the New Forest National Park<sup>23</sup>. Figure 2 shows the location of these designations. A Landscape Character Assessment for the Borough has identified twelve landscape character types, whilst also identifying a series of factors that may bring changes to the landscape over time such as climatic factors, built development and land management. The south east of the Borough and Andover are the most urban areas, with the majority of the rest of Test Valley being rural in nature.

<sup>23</sup> The New Forest National Park Authority has planning responsibilities for the area within the National Park, including the area that falls within Test Valley Borough.



- 4.8 Test Valley has a rich built heritage, with just under 2,100 listed buildings<sup>24</sup>, 36 conservation areas (with some relating to more than one settlement)<sup>25</sup> and just fewer than 100 scheduled monuments<sup>26</sup>. There are also many heritage assets which are not subject to any statutory designation. Figure 2 shows the location of some of these designations.
- 4.9 The Borough also has a range of biodiversity assets, including sites designated of international, national and local nature conservation importance<sup>27</sup> as well as species of importance (including some that are protected by legislation) – see Figure 2 for the location of these designations. An ecological network has been identified across Hampshire which takes account of these designations, as well as important habitats, and opportunity areas.
- 4.10 While carbon dioxide emissions per person in Test Valley have generally been falling in recent years, they remain higher than the county and national average. For emissions that occur within the Borough, the latest data (2019) indicates that the emissions stood at 6.3 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per person. For comparison, the per person emissions for Hampshire was 4.7 tonnes, and for England was 4.9 tonnes.<sup>28</sup> The greater carbon dioxide emissions within the Borough, compared to the national picture, seem to arise in relation to domestic and transport categories, while the net emissions associated with land use, land use change and forestry activity indicates a greater level of sequestration of carbon emissions within the Borough, relative to the national position. There are variations in emissions generation within the Borough, with a number of tools available considering this in different ways<sup>29</sup>.
- 4.11 It is challenging to forecast how the environment around us may change in the future, as there are a number of factors that may have different types of implications. A changing climate is anticipated to result in warmer wetter winters, with warmer and drier summers. Continuing development may also put additional pressure on the natural and built environment, particularly if not managed carefully.

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<sup>24</sup> National Heritage List for England, Historic England (available: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>)

<sup>25</sup> Details available at: <https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/heritage/conservationarea>

<sup>26</sup> National Heritage List for England.

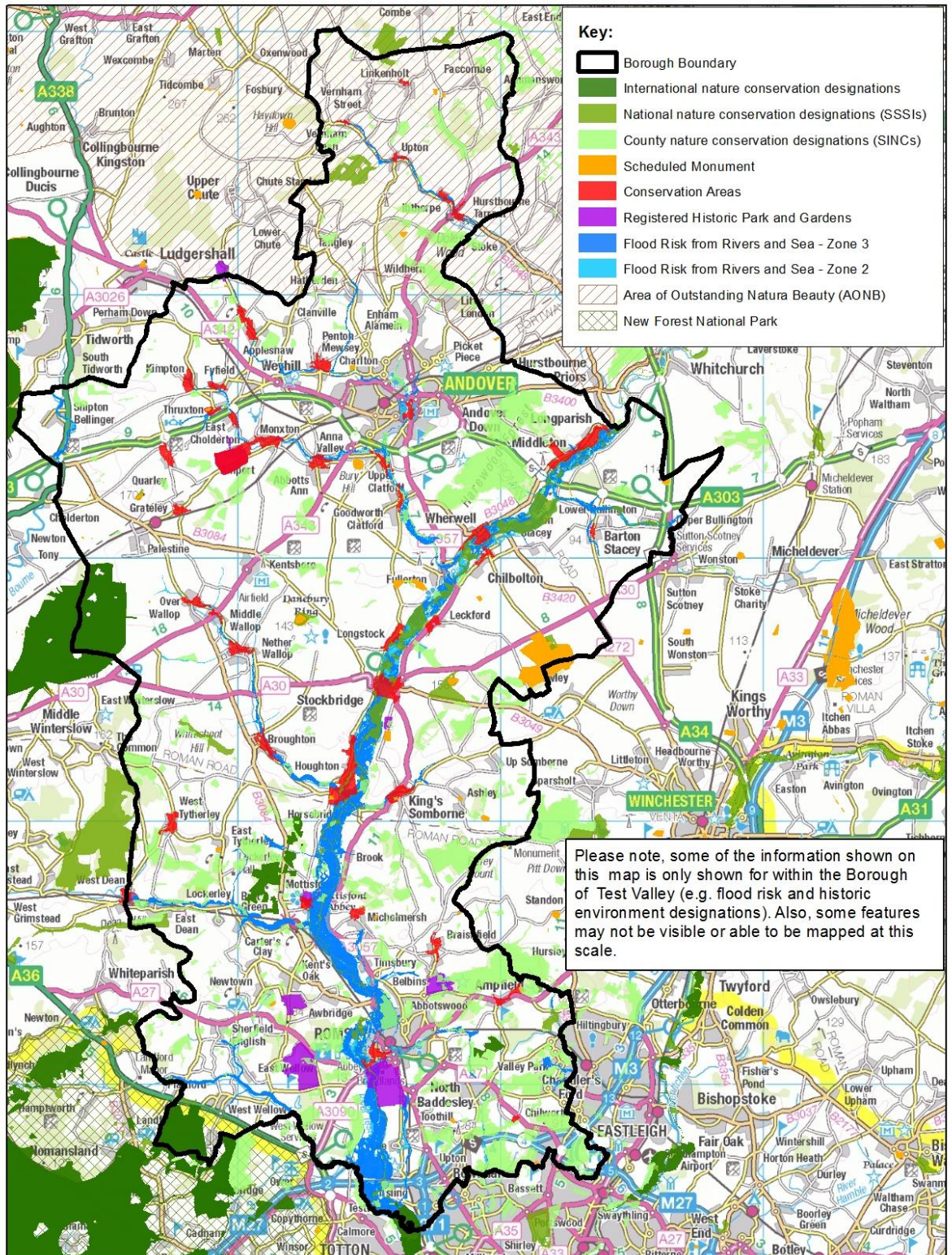
<sup>27</sup> Latest records from the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre indicate that statutory nature conservations cover about 1,930 hectares within Test Valley (SACs, SPAs, Ramsar sites, LNRs, SSSIs), with a further 5,654 hectares designated as SINC.

<sup>28</sup> UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005 to 2019, BEIS, 2021 (Available: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2019>).

<sup>29</sup> This includes the IMPACT Community Carbon Calculator (available: <https://impact-tool.org.uk/>) and the Place- Based Carbon Calculator (available: <https://www.carbon.place/>).



Figure 2: Location of some of the environmental designations and areas of flood risk (from rivers and sea) within Test Valley



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- 4.12 The environment within the Borough also provides opportunities for leisure and recreation. There are a range of leisure and cultural facilities within the Borough, some of which are also tourist attractions. Information collated by Sport England looking at activity levels of individuals suggests that the proportion of people that are active in the Borough is slightly higher than for Hampshire and England.
- 4.13 The population of the Borough is over 133,000 people<sup>30</sup>, with this figure forecast to continue to rise. The increase is not expected to be evenly distributed across the Borough. Forecasts suggest that some parts of the Borough may see a reduction in population size, it is assumed that this would be partly explained by a trend towards smaller household sizes. The age profile of the Borough (i.e. the age of people living within the Borough) is also changing, with an increase in the ageing population.
- 4.14 It is estimated that there are over 57,000 homes within the Borough<sup>31</sup>. The adopted Local Plan<sup>32</sup> for the Borough proposed at least 10,584 additional homes between 2011 and 2029 (equating to an annual average of 588). The price of housing relative to income is higher for Test Valley than the national average. There is a continuing need to provide affordable housing, as part of a wider mix of housing types, in the future. There is also a need to provide for other types of accommodation, including for the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities.
- 4.15 The proportion of the population in Test Valley that are in employment is higher than the national position but lower than the regional position, with 81.4% of those aged 16 to 64 in employment<sup>33</sup>. The number of jobs available in the Borough is forecast to continue to grow. However, there are a number of uncertainties, particularly at present, for example taking account of the implications of the Coronavirus pandemic (both now and in the longer term).
- 4.16 In terms of education and qualifications, Test Valley is broadly performing more positively than the national picture. However, there is variation across the Borough, with parts of Andover performing less well. In some parts of the Borough there may be opportunities to address gaps in skills, which may also support the local economy. This is recognised within the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan.
- 4.17 Health within the Borough is generally good and tends to be above the national averages in a range of measures (including life expectancy). There are however variations across the Borough. There are matters that will need further consideration including the gap between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy. The type of health facilities and services to be provided will need to be considered, alongside seeking to promote healthy lifestyle choices.

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<sup>30</sup> Small Area Population Forecasts, Hampshire County Council, 2020

<sup>31</sup> Small Area Population Forecasts, Hampshire County Council, 2020

<sup>32</sup> Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan DPD 2011-2029, Test Valley Borough Council, 2016.

<sup>33</sup> NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics, ONS (available: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157309/report.aspx>)

- 4.18 As a whole the Borough is not deprived, ranking in the 20% least deprived areas in the country (based on 2019 assessment). However, there are pockets of deprivation within the Borough, most notably in parts of Andover.
- 4.19 Crime rates in the Borough (for total recorded crime) are lower than the position across the Hampshire Police Force area, with the level of recorded crime broadly similar to the previous year. In terms of deprivation assessed in relation to crime, the Borough as a whole generally performs well (i.e. not deprived), however there are variations.
- 4.20 Test Valley is crossed by a number of main roads, including the M27 towards the south and the A303 just south of Andover. Car ownership levels in the Borough are relatively high when compared to regional and national averages – however there are variations across the Borough. The majority of residents travel to work by car, which may be partly linked to the rural nature of the Borough.
- 4.21 Access to facilities and services across the Borough varies, in part reflecting the mix of urban and rural areas (including relationships with surrounding urban areas). A number of more strategic facilities are located in Andover and Romsey. The national government collates data on Indices of Deprivation, part of which relates to ‘geographical barriers’ on physical proximity of local services. Using this measure, over half of the Lower Super Output Areas<sup>34</sup> within Test Valley are within the 20% most deprived areas for England.
- 4.22 A number of communities within the Borough have come together to consider issues affecting them (now and in the future) and try to focus discussion on how to address them moving forward. This includes the Romsey Future and Andover Vision initiatives, as well as Parish Plans. As noted earlier within this report, some communities have prepared / are preparing or are considering whether to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan<sup>35</sup>.

### ***Likely changes in the future without the Local Plan***

- 4.23 The SEA Regulations require consideration of the likely evolution without the implementation of the Plan. At this time, the Revised Local Plan (2016) effectively provides the ‘business as usual’ position. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration.
- 4.24 The Revised Local Plan provides policy on the requirement for additional residential development (in terms of housing numbers) for the period to 2011 to 2029. It sets out the housing requirement is for a minimum of 10,584 homes over this period, with the figure sub-divided to specific parts of the Borough. As at the end March 2021, 7,939 homes have been completed of this minimum requirement. One of the means for meeting this requirement was through allocations – most of the allocations are under construction or

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<sup>34</sup> These are areas used for monitoring purposes (linked to censuses) that include between 1,000 and 3,000 residents.

<sup>35</sup> Neighbourhood Plans are one of the tools available for community planning – for more information see: <https://testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/neighbourhood-planning>

have gained planning permission. As has been indicated in the latest housing trajectories, there is the expectation that the number of homes delivered over the period up to 2029 may exceed the minimum requirement. Projections from Hampshire County Council indicated that between 2020 and 2027 there would be an increase in the dwelling stock of Test Valley of about 7%<sup>36</sup>.

- 4.25 There is uncertainty over the likely levels of growth in the future (and its location), particularly beyond the plan period for the Revised Local Plan and when allowing for sites that do not yet have planning permission. As at March 2021, there was planning permission for approximately 2,731 dwellings across the Borough which are not complete. This does not mean that there will be no further provision, as windfall sites are likely to continue to come forward.
- 4.26 The Revised Local Plan did not establish firm requirements for additional provision for economic development, retail and other uses across the Borough. There were however some indications of additional employment floorspace needed in the south of the Borough and how this could be met through allocations. Some of the allocations have come forward, or been granted planning permission but not all. The Revised Local Plan also includes other policies that related to additional provisions of this nature subject to certain criteria being satisfied.
- 4.27 Consideration of likely changes in the future is summarised below, grouped into three main sections. It needs to be taken into account that other plans, programmes and projects (including those beyond the Test Valley) could have cumulative impacts that occur within and beyond the Borough, such as on the water environment. Additional traffic levels within and beyond the Borough are also likely to be higher when accounting for development across the wider area, which may result in further increases in air pollution. There is also the potential for in-combination effects on international nature conservation sites, including as a result of recreational use, indirect air and water quality effects. Development within neighbouring authorities in conjunction with that which may come forward within the Borough has the potential to support the wider economy.

#### *Environment*

- 4.28 As noted above, there is likely to continue to be development within the Borough, including for residential and economic development purposes. This is likely to continue to put pressure the on water resources that serve the Borough (through increased demand), including the River Test catchment. The Revised Local Plan incorporates policies that seek to ensure that sufficient infrastructure is available to support additional development (policy COM15) and to minimise the impact on water resources (policy E7). The future water resource plans of the relevant local water companies also propose measures, including to increase water efficiency and reduce leakage, that are likely to have an in-combination effect.

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<sup>36</sup> Small Area Population Forecasts, Hampshire County Council, 2020.

- 4.29 It is anticipated that in the medium to long term there will be an increase in areas that will be subject to a risk of flooding within the Borough – this is largely driven by forecast changes to climate. It is recognised that development within the Borough also has the potential to increase flood risk to others, particularly in terms of surface water flooding, whilst also resulting in a greater number of people and properties being vulnerable to flood risk if inappropriately located or planned. The implications of national policy, along with local policy (policy E7), are likely to reduce the risk of this.
- 4.30 The most recent review of local air quality (completed in June 2021) did not result in the need to designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). Future trends are uncertain. Cumulative increases in traffic levels and changes in congestion may need to be balanced against other factors, including the anticipated move away from petrol and diesel powered vehicles and national air quality targets. The Adopted Revised Local Plan incorporates a policy to seek to control forms of development that would result in pollution (including to the air) that would have an adverse impact on the environment (policy E8). This would be most likely to apply to more direct forms of pollution, rather than indirect, cumulative effects associated with transport. Changes in technology to reduce emissions to the air, in conjunction with measures to promote more sustainable modes of travel (e.g. policy T1) may go some way to mitigate any impacts but there remains uncertainty over residual effects. This may have knock on effects on other matters, such as biodiversity and health.
- 4.31 There remain greenfield allocations to come forward through the Revised Local Plan, with the likelihood of additional windfall development. This is likely to have an adverse impact on soil resources in the future (in the short, medium and long term), which may include the best and most versatile agricultural land. The NPPF includes provisions in relation to high quality agricultural land. There are also some policies in place which support the re-use of buildings and the remediation of contaminated land. The latter may have a positive effect on soil resources. There are a range of other factors that may have an indirect effect on soil resources, for example, forecast changes in climate may affect the condition and quality of soil.
- 4.32 Additional development is likely to have an effect on landscape and settlement character. However, there remains uncertainty as to whether these effects will be adverse. Other factors also have the potential to affect the Borough's landscape, such as the climate, agriculture and land management, recreation and tourism, energy generation, minerals extraction and waste management, and military activities. Policies within the Revised Local Plan (including policies E1 and E2) and provisions within the NPPF seek to deliver high quality development and conserve landscape character, including designated areas. This combination of policies should seek to reduce the risk of adverse effects on the landscape quality and settlement character in the future. Masterplans have recently been prepared and approved by the Council for Andover town centre and an area to the south of Romsey town centre,

which could result in significant implications for these areas, including their appearance.

- 4.33 In relation to the historic environment, while further development within the Borough is likely, policies are in place through the Adopted Revised Local Plan (policy E9) and the NPPF, as well as provisions within legislation, which should conserve and potentially enhance the historic environment. It is however challenging to project how the historic environment is likely to evolve in the future when accounting for the range of factors involved (including those outside the planning system).
- 4.34 National policy has set out aspirations to support nature's recovery and deliver net biodiversity gains through the planning system (latter secured through the Environment Act 2021). The implementation of such policies and provisions provides opportunities to have positive effects on biodiversity but will need to be balanced with other impacts, including implications of a changing climate. The Revised Local Plan includes a policy (E5) that seeks to support proposals that conserve and enhance biodiversity, while setting out how schemes would be dealt with that are likely to result in the loss, deterioration or harm to habitats or species of importance.
- 4.35 The use of resources is likely to increase in conjunction with additional development coming forward through the Adopted Revised Local Plan. Additional development within the Borough is anticipated to result in an increase in the amount of waste generated. The Revised Local Plan policies are unlikely to result in a significant change in the amount of waste that is generated per person or household, or the proportion of waste that is reused, recycled or composted. There has been a trend towards reductions in the amount of residual household waste that is produced per household. While recycling rates have varied, it increased in the most recent reporting year. There are other plans and projects in place that seek to reduce the amount of waste generated and increase the proportion of waste that is reused or recycled. The resultant balance of these drivers is uncertain.
- 4.36 Future development is likely to be increasingly energy efficient in line with planned and proposed increases in Building Regulation requirements. There is uncertainty as to the extent to which this will mitigate for increased consumption associated with new development. The NPPF and supporting text within the Revised Local Plan support the principle of renewable and low carbon energy proposals, with it anticipated that the generation of such forms of energy will continue to increase. While this will not necessarily affect the demand for energy (in fact there may be an increased demand for electricity for example as a result of changes to Building Regulations and proposals to move away from fossil fuel systems), it may reduce the impacts of this consumption, for example in relation to the resultant greenhouse gas emissions.
- 4.37 As has been referred to above, the climate is forecast to continue to change, particularly in the medium to longer term. Forecasts are available through the UK Climate Projections 2018 (UKCP18) which provides a range of scenarios.

The Scoping Report refers to scenarios for the South East region, reflecting the headline expectations of warmer and wetter winters, as well as hotter and drier summers.

- 4.38 There are also likely to be changes in rainfall patterns, which may also include changes in seasonal rainfall patterns. There remains uncertainty as to how this will affect groundwater levels (which is a key source of water for the Borough). The most southern extent of the Borough may also be affected by forecast rising sea levels, which may also result in changes in habitats in the vicinity of the lower Test, with saline areas moving further north along the River Test.

#### *Local Community*

- 4.39 Using national datasets, the population of the Borough is anticipated to increase by approximately 10% between 2021 and 2041. However, there may be parts of the Borough that experience a reduction in population in the future. The age profile of the Borough is also anticipated to change with a trend towards an ageing population – national datasets project that by 2041 approximately 28% of the population would be aged 65+, compared to approximately 22% in 2021 (again, this would vary across the Borough). This may have knock on effects, including for the economy, needs for health infrastructure and local services.
- 4.40 It is anticipated there will continue to be changes in the household composition, with recent trends indicating a reduction in the average number of people per dwelling – this has potential implications for the use of resources (with the per person use of resources including energy and water generally being higher in one person households in comparison to larger household sizes). The population projections have implications for other considerations, including the potential labour force for the Borough.
- 4.41 It is anticipated that the level of housing provision within the Borough is unlikely to have a significant impact on the affordability of housing. It would have a more direct impact on the availability of affordable housing. The Revised Local Plan (policies COM7 and COM8) provides a framework to support additional rural affordable housing and for a proportion of additional residential development to be affordable. As such, it would be anticipated that additional affordable housing would continue to be provided but there is uncertainty over the precise quantity and location.
- 4.42 Policies within the Revised Local Plan require the provision of public open space to support new residential development along with the retention of existing provisions (policy LHW1). Access to leisure and recreation provisions is variable across the Borough and this is likely to remain the case in the future. It is difficult to forecast likely changes in the availability and demand for leisure and cultural facilities. Increases in population has the potential to put greater pressure on infrastructure, services and facilities that support communities – the Revised Local Plan includes a policy (COM15) that seeks

to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided to support new development.

- 4.43 There is uncertainty about the future position in relation to community safety and crime levels. In recent years recorded crime rates within the Borough have remained broadly similar. The Revised Local Plan includes a policy (CS1) that seeks to ensure that schemes are designed to deliver safe and liveable environments and minimise the risk of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 4.44 Generally, the health of residents within the Borough is good and in some cases above the average for England (including in terms of life expectancy), however there are variations within the Borough. There are no specific policies within the Revised Local Plan directly linked to health; however there are a number that may have an indirect effect, including supporting the availability of infrastructure for new development, providing public open space and promoting pedestrian and cycle routes. There are a number of inter-related factors that will influence future health and wellbeing trends. It would be anticipated that, existing trends are likely to continue at least in the short to medium term. However, there is low confidence in this.

#### *Local Economy*

- 4.45 The local economy is being affected by wider trends, such as the implications of the Coronavirus pandemic. This in particular makes it particularly challenging at present to understand or project how the economy may change, both nationally and locally. Recent data has indicated that economic activity levels of the population were marginally higher than the position for Great Britain and the South East. Changes in the demographics of the population may have implication on employment rates in the future.
- 4.46 As noted above, there are outstanding allocations within the Revised Local Plan for additional employment sites (including sites which have permission that have not been fully implemented). There are also policies within the Revised Local Plan supporting additional economic development floorspace, considering the redevelopment of employment sites and the re-use of buildings for employment purposes (including policies LE10, LE11, LE16 and LE17). On this basis, it is assumed that additional land for economic development purposes is likely to continue to come forward in the future.
- 4.47 Changes to permitted development rights could continue to influence the availability of some economic development uses, including office space and retail space.
- 4.48 In terms of education, the Revised Local Plan seeks to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided to support new developments within the Borough (policy COM15) and for developments of a scale that could impact the local labour market seeks contributions to enhance skills training and the provision of apprenticeships. There are a number of other plans and programmes in place seeking to promote educational performance and

access to skills development. At this time there is not sufficient certainty over likely evolution in relation to this topic within the Borough.

- 4.49 It is challenging to project how traffic levels and travel patterns will change in the future, for example with additional development potentially increasing the number of people travelling, while there are policy proposals (nationally and more locally) to try and increase sustainable modes of travel. The proportion of trips to work undertaken by car may remain relatively high, reflecting the rural nature of the Borough. However, the implications of the Coronavirus pandemic on longer term rates of home working are yet to be established. There has also been a trend towards higher levels of car ownership within the Borough, based on Census results.
- 4.50 Policies within the Revised Local Plan seek to ensure development is located with access to a range of facilities and services, with opportunities to take advantage of more sustainable modes of travel (policy T1). Additional larger scale development within the Borough, that incorporates additional community facilities and services, has the potential to improve the accessibility of such provisions to existing residents. There are no new major travel related infrastructure proposals planned within or in close proximity to the Borough in the foreseeable future, although there may continue to be more localised enhancements to walking and cycling routes for example.



## 5 Assessing the Local Plan Objectives

### What the SEA Regulations says (Stages B and C):

An environmental report shall be prepared in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated” (Regulation 12). Information to be provided in the Environmental Report includes an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (Schedule 2, point 8).

The environmental report shall include information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, its stage in the decision-making process, and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels (Regulation 12(3)).

Information to be provided in the Environmental Report includes:

- the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as 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 these factors. These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects (Schedule 2, point 6)
- the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme (Schedule 2, point 7)

- 5.1 The objectives of the plan (in this case the Local Plan 2040), which underpin what the plan and the policies it contains intend to achieve, should be tested for compatibility with the sustainability objectives (as set out in the Scoping Report and listed in Chapter 3). This helps to test whether there is compatibility between the plan objectives and the local sustainability objectives.
- 5.2 Where there are potential conflicts this can inform further work in the preparation of the Plan. It does not necessarily mean that objectives need to be amended. In some cases, adverse effects may be mitigated, and tensions between the objectives resolved. If development takes place in accordance with all of the strategic objectives, any potential incompatibility may not necessarily be an insurmountable issue. However, this matter may need to be considered in the development of policies.

### 5.3 The plan objectives are:

- **Climate Change:** Countering climate change through transition to a net zero carbon future, where new development and local environments are adaptable and resilient to the changing climate. Seek to reduce emissions from new development, facilitate more sustainable living, and manage the risks of flooding, whilst seeking to protect our water resources.
- **Our Communities:** Deliver and strengthen sustainable, cohesive and healthy communities in our towns and villages. Secure enhancements to social, green, health, educational and other local infrastructure through new development in sustainable locations. Support the viability of the Borough's town and local village centres in meeting many of the daily needs of our communities and residents.
- **Town Centres:** Create cultural, adaptable, diverse and vibrant town centres in Romsey and Andover, including through regeneration schemes, and by securing high quality design and accessible mixed use development that will increase vitality, whilst protecting and enhancing their historic and green assets.
- **Built, Historic and Natural Environment:** Conserve and enhance the built, historic and natural environment within Test Valley, including local character, identity, cultural heritage, the variety of local landscapes and the special landscape character of the Borough.
- **Ecology and Biodiversity:** Conserve and enhance biodiversity, by taking opportunities to promote, and secure clear and measurable improvements to habitats and biodiversity. Enhance the connectivity, quantity and quality of ecological and green infrastructure networks, to help maintain and enhance the condition of protected nature conservation sites, protected species and the resilience of biodiverse environments to the changing climate.
- **Health, Wellbeing, Culture, Leisure and Recreation:** Encourage active lifestyles and enhance health and wellbeing, by providing opportunities for recreational, cultural and community activities, through the provision of open spaces, access to the countryside, sports, leisure and other community facilities and services. Work with the Council's partners to secure access to healthcare for all, including the Borough's most vulnerable residents.
- **Design:** Deliver safe, attractive, integrated and well-designed environments that take account of and respond positively to local context and character. Strengthen the sense of belonging and identity within Test Valley by supporting enhancements to the distinctive towns and villages of the Borough. Place-making will be integral to our design approach, helping to strengthen our connections between people and place.
- **Housing:** Provide a range of homes that are fit for purpose and designed to meet the needs and aspirations of different groups within the community, including a range of affordable housing and homes that meet the needs of an ageing population.
- **Economy, Employment and Skills:** Promote a vibrant and resilient local economy, including the visitor economy, where future sustainable growth and innovation in green, high technology and other sectors can provide for a range of job opportunities and where businesses and individuals can thrive. Support a skilled and diverse workforce so that local people can access learning opportunities and jobs and benefit from greater prosperity.

- Transport and Movement: Encourage active and sustainable modes of transport, that are accessible, safe and attractive to use, whilst also seeking to reduce the impact of travel in particular by private car. Ensure new development facilitates improvements to accessibility, safety and connectivity in our transport infrastructure.

5.4 The assessment of the Local Plan objectives is provided in Table 8. This consists of a matrix testing the compatibility of each Local Plan objective with each sustainability objective. An assessment of the cumulative impact of the plan objectives is provided in Table 9. The coding uses within these tables is explained below.

Table 7: Codes used for the compatibility assessment of the Local Plan and Sustainability Objectives

✓	Broadly compatible: pursuing the Local Plan objective is likely to help achieve the sustainability objective
i	Depends on implementation: by pursuing the Local Plan objective there may be mixed implications for the sustainability objective, depending on how it is pursued.
X	Potential conflict: pursuing the Local Plan objective may work against or prevent the sustainability objective being achieved.
	No relationship: the Local Plan objective is unlikely to have any direct influence on the sustainability objective.

Table 8: Local Plan Objectives Compatibility Matrix

		Local Plan Objectives <sup>37</sup>									
		Climate	Communities	Town Centres	Environment	Ecology	Health	Design	Housing	Economy	Transport
Sustainability Objective <sup>38</sup>	1	i	✓	i	i	X		i	✓	✓	i
	2	i	✓	✓	i	i		i	✓	✓	i
	3	✓	✓	i		i	✓			i	✓
	4	✓	i	✓	X	✓	i	i	X	i	
	5	✓	i	i	✓	✓			X	i	
	6	✓	i	i	✓	✓		i	i	i	
	7	✓	i	i	✓	✓		i	i	i	✓
	8	i	i	✓	✓	i	i	✓	i	i	
	9	i	i	✓	✓	i	i	✓	i	i	
	10	✓	i	i	✓	✓	i	i	X	i	i
	11	✓	i	i	i	✓	i	i	X	i	✓
	12	✓	✓	i	i	i	✓	✓	i		✓

<sup>37</sup> Shortened versions of the themes have been used for convenience, the full wording of the Local Plan objectives is set out within this chapter.

<sup>38</sup> For more detail on the sustainability objectives, please see the Scoping Report (2020) at: <https://testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/evidence-base/sustainability-appraisal>

Table 9: Assessment of the cumulative compatibility of the Local Plan Objectives

Sustainability Objective	Cumulative Compatibility	Commentary
1. Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in an appropriate and affordable home that meets their needs.	✓	The Local Plan objectives include provisions that will support the achievement of the sustainability objective. Other objectives, may be seeking to pull in a different direction which could have implications for the extent to which this could be achieved (for example through the conservation of the wider environment). However, overall the Local Plan objectives are considered to be broadly compatible with this.
2. Ensure the local economy is thriving with high and stable levels of growth, whilst supporting productivity and the promotion of a diverse economy, with the availability of a skilled workforce.	✓	Across the Local Plan objectives, there are provisions that align closely with this objective, including in relation to the local economy, town centres, and skills & learning. While there are some objectives that have the potential to moderate this, the Local Plan objectives are broadly compatible with this objective when considered collectively.
3. Maintain and improve access to services, facilities, and other infrastructure, whilst improving the efficiency and integration of transport networks and the availability and utilisation of sustainable modes of travel.	✓	Cumulatively, the Local Plan objectives are anticipated to be broadly compatible with this objective. This includes through encouraging active & sustainable travel and ensuring appropriate infrastructure is available.
4. Encourage the efficient use of land and conserve soil resources.	i	The Local Plan objectives do not specifically refer to matters directly related to this objective; however a number could have implications for the use of

Sustainability Objective	Cumulative Compatibility	Commentary
		land and conservation of soil resources. These could pull in both directions. Therefore it is considered that the potential compatibility will depend on implementation.
5. Conserve and, where possible, enhance the water environment and ensure the sustainable management of water resources.	✓	A number of the Local Plan objectives may lead to additional development, which is likely to generate additional demand for water resources and have potential implications on the water environment. However, this needs to be balanced with other Local Plan objectives that would support this, including in relation to protecting water resources, securing infrastructure enhancements and conserving the natural environment.
6. Seek to avoid and reduce vulnerability to the risk of flooding and the resulting detrimental effects to the public, economy and environment.	✓	When considering the objectives individually, the responses were either broadly compatible, depends on implementation, or no relationship. Within the objectives there is specific reference to managing the risk of flooding. There are objectives that will facilitate development, with others that may indirectly support the attainment of this objective. National policy on this matter is also likely to reduce the risk of conflicts as a result of development that comes forward through the Local Plan. Overall, the Local Plan objectives are considered to be broadly compatible with this sustainability objective.

Sustainability Objective	Cumulative Compatibility	Commentary
7. Maintain and, where possible, enhance air quality.	i	The Local Plan objectives do not specifically refer to air quality; however a number could have implications for this. Additional development supported by some objectives (and transport associated with it) could be a source of air pollution. However, other Local Plan objectives seek to reduce the impact of travel and conserve & enhance the environment. Therefore the cumulative impact is likely to depend on implementation.
8. Conserve and, where possible, enhance the Borough's landscape, townscapes and settlement character.	✓	When considering the objectives individually, the responses were either broadly compatible, depends on implementation, or no relationship. There are provisions within the Local Plan objectives that seek to conserve and enhance local character, identity and the variety of local landscapes and the special landscape character of the Borough. In this context, it is considered that the Local Plan objectives are broadly compatible with this objective.
9. Conserve and, where possible, enhance the historic environment and the significance of heritage assets.	✓	When considering the objectives individually, the responses were either broadly compatible, depends on implementation, or no relationship. The Local Plan objectives specifically seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment, including cultural heritage, therefore on balance cumulatively they are considered to be broadly

Sustainability Objective	Cumulative Compatibility	Commentary
		compatible with this objective.
10. Conserve and, where possible, enhance biodiversity and habitat connectivity.	✓	When considered individually, the Local Plan objectives could result in potential conflict, as well as having areas of compatibility. When considered in combination, the Local Plan objectives are considered to be broadly compatible, including reflecting provisions regarding the natural environment, biodiversity, and the connectivity of ecological networks.
11. Support the delivery of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.	✓	Akin to the above, individual Local Plan objectives could result in potential conflict as well as areas of compatibility. The Local Plan objectives specifically cover climate change mitigation and adaptation, including in terms of the resilience of biodiverse environments. Therefore, overall the Local Plan objectives are considered to be broadly compatible with this objective.
12. Seek to maintain and improve the health and wellbeing of the population.	✓	The Local Plan objectives are likely to be broadly compatible with this objective, given content on encouraging active lifestyles, enhancing health and wellbeing and strengthening cohesive and healthy communities.

5.5 The appraisal of the Local Plan objectives has identified that whilst they are compatible with the sustainability objectives and are likely to contribute to achieving sustainable development, there are some areas of potential conflict when looking at individual objectives. This is inevitable considering the need to balance social, economic and environmental objectives and to accommodate growth whilst protecting the high quality of the Borough's

environment. As noted above, the potential conflict between objectives is not necessarily an insurmountable issue, particularly when they are considered together.

- 5.6 In a number of cases it is difficult to judge the degree of compatibility between the sustainability and plan objectives as a whole given the broad level of detail and some uncertainty as to how they will be implemented. For example, development within the Borough has the potential to adversely affect the landscape if delivered in an inappropriate way, however, other objectives seek to conserve and enhance the landscape of the Borough.
- 5.7 Taking account of the general compatibility between the objectives, it is not recommended to make any changes to the Local Plan 2040 objectives.
- 5.8 The process of assessing the compatibility of the Local Plan objectives against the sustainability objectives has highlighted where Local Plan policies and proposals need to have clear regard to the sustainability objectives and inform decisions around potential mitigation measures.



## 6 Assessing Plan Options

- 6.1 The next stage of the process involves appraising options that the Council has identified based on alternative ways of supporting the delivery of the plan objectives. This assessment has been undertaken based on the opportunities and constraints in the plan area, whilst also giving consideration to all reasonable alternatives.
- 6.2 Based on the stages of sustainability appraisals identified in Chapter 2, this part of the process focuses on stage B, particularly in relation to the below points:
- Develop the Local Plan options including reasonable alternatives;
  - Evaluate the likely effects of the Local Plan and alternatives; and
  - Consider ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects.
- 6.3 This is an iterative process, which makes use of the sustainability objectives and the assessment of the potential for significant effects on the environment, in appraising the alternative options identified, to help inform the choices made in developing the plan (acting as a tool in the decision making process).
- 6.4 The following chapters provide a commentary of the appraisal findings and explain why some of the options were rejected and why others have been preferred. This only relates to matters that have been covered in stage 1 of the draft Local Plan – additional topics and policy areas will be reflected in stage 2, which will be accompanied by its own sustainability appraisal report. Reflecting the iterative nature of the process, matters considered at this stage will be revisited as the plan preparation progresses, which may result in changes to the identification of reasonable alternatives and the identification of likely effects.
- 6.5 It is acknowledged that there is a degree of subjectivity to the sustainability appraisal process; therefore the commentary provided attempts to highlight where assumptions have been made and how recommendations have been reached. As noted earlier within this report, the evidence base has been drawn on to inform the consideration of options, therefore assumptions made within these documents will have fed into this work. Similarly professional judgement has been used.
- 6.6 As was identified in Chapter 2, as part of the appraisal of options against the sustainability objectives, a summary of the performance is indicated through the use of symbols (duplicated in Table 10). These symbols represent a broad indication of performance and need to be read in conjunction with the commentary. They should not be ‘summed up’ to indicate a ‘score’. While consideration against the sustainability objectives and in relation to the baseline has considered the potential to provide mitigation measures to lessen the risk of adverse effects, this has not been reflected within the use of the symbols to summarise performance.

Table 10: Key to symbols used in the appraisal

Strongly positive	++
Positive	+
Mixed performance	+/-
Negative	-
Strongly negative	--
Depends on implementation	i
Uncertain	?
No effect	o

- 6.7 The proceeding chapters look at the different matters in turn, comprising:
- Establishing the Spatial Strategy;
  - Settlement Hierarchy;
  - The approach to strategic policies, comprising:
    - Countering Climate Change;
    - Delivering Healthy, Well-Designed Development;
    - Delivering Development and Regeneration in Andover and Romsey Town Centres;
    - Delivering High Quality Development in Town Centres;
    - Delivering Infrastructure;
  - Scale of Housing Need.
- 6.8 Some of the tables assessing the alternatives have been included within the appendices to this report.

## 7 Establishing the Spatial Strategy

### ***Background and National Policy***

- 7.1 The NPPF sets out that in applying a presumption in favour of sustainable development “*all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development*” that meets our needs, aligns growth with infrastructure, improves the environment and mitigates and adapts to climate change (paragraph 11). Additional detail is provided recognising that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, making provision for the identified needs (paragraph 20).
- 7.2 A spatial strategy provides the overall direction of growth for development, following on from the Local Plan vision and objectives. At a high level, it sets out the location, type and shape of growth that is to be delivered. Additional policies and proposals within the Local Plan provide more detail on how this will be implemented over the plan period.

### ***Identifying and Assessing Reasonable Alternatives***

- 7.3 Through earlier stages in the preparation of the Local Plan, a number of different approaches were identified to how development could be distributed across the Borough. At the Issues and Options stage (July 2018) the below possible options were referred to, in a context of meeting housing need:
- Community led distribution, through the use of Neighbourhood Plans or other types of community led development, with the Local Plan considering the distribution of the residual need for development.
  - Proportionate distribution to parishes, whereby needs would be distributed on a pro rata basis reflecting the existing population.
  - Local Plan allocations, whereby the most appropriate locations for development would be identified by the Council with a small residual amount (windfall) coming forward from sites that have not been identified across the Borough.
  - New villages, with the establishment of a new community supported by facilities, services and transport infrastructure.
  - Mixed approach, which could include a combination of some of the options referred to.
- 7.4 At the Refined Issues & Options stage (June 2020) it was recognised that respondents to the earlier consultation had tended to support a wider distribution of housing to a larger number of settlements, including the provision of sites across the rural area.
- 7.5 The potential options for distributing development were reviewed as part preparation of the Local Plan, with more detail set out within the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper. These comprise:
- Growth is focused through the provision of new villages.

- Concentrating development at key sustainable transport hubs along public transport routes and stops;
- Concentrating development at key economic centres;
- Focusing development at Andover and Romsey;
- Distributing development in order to support the largest settlements (incorporating more urban and rural locations); and
- Growth is dispersed to all parishes.

7.6 Through taking an iterative process, the first option, of growth being focused on the provision of new villages, is not considered to represent a reasonable alternative. This position has been reached on the basis that the overall level of housing need does not lead to the need for new settlements and that the lead in times for such an approach would be highly unlikely to meet the development needs in the shorter term. On this basis, it has been concluded that there is no justification for this being considered as a reasonable alternative.

7.7 All of the remaining options were considered to be reasonable for further consideration and therefore have been assessed against the sustainability objectives – these are set out in Appendix 2. It should be noted that the options do not necessarily represent wholly distinct approaches, with the potential for combinations of options or approaches being taken forward. Therefore the initial assessment of the options can be used to inform such further consideration.

7.8 Table 11 sets out the summary of the symbols identified for each of the sustainability objectives in relation to the options considered. This should be read in conjunction with the commentary provided within Appendix 2.

Table 11: Summary of the Assessment of Spatial Strategy Options against the Sustainability Objectives

Sustainability Objective	Sustainable Transport Hubs	Economic Centres	Focus on Andover & Romsey	Support Largest Settlements	Dispersed to all parishes
1	i	i	i	i	i
2	+/-	+	+	++	+/-
3	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-
4	i	i	i	i	-
5	i	i	i	i	i
6	i	i	i	i	i
7	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-
8	i	i	i	i	i
9	i	i	i	i	i
10	i	i	i	i	i
11	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-

Sustainability Objective	Sustainable Transport Hubs	Economic Centres	Focus on Andover & Romsey	Support Largest Settlements	Dispersed to all parishes
12	i	i	i	i	i

- 7.9 As can be seen from the assessments within Appendix 2, in many cases the implications of all of the options would depend on the way the options are implemented, including the specific locations where development comes forward and how this is delivered, for example in relation to effects on biodiversity. However, some of the approaches may be more likely to lead to / create impact pathways where effects could arise. This highlights the importance of ensuring mitigation measures or mechanisms are in place to ensure that such development is sensitive to these matters, with opportunities also taken to maximise any positive effects that could arise.
- 7.10 Some of the sustainability objectives saw different effects, or implications with different combinations of the options considered. This particularly related to objectives 2, 3, 4, 7, and 11 – the considerations in relation to a number of these objectives were often interrelated. In terms of objective 2, which focuses on the local economy, the different options resulted had varying potential to support different parts of the economy, including in relation to the town centres and rural economy. The concentration on sustainable transport hubs and dispersing growth to all parishes were considered to have a mixed performance on this matter, including when accounting for opportunities to support the vitality and viability of the town centres within the Borough. In comparison, a strongly positive performance was identified for the option relating to distributing development in order to support the largest settlements.
- 7.11 The majority of the options were indicated to have a mixed performance in relation to implications on maintaining and improving access to facilities, services and infrastructure, along with integration with transport networks and opportunities for sustainable travel (objective 3), with ramifications for the performance in relation to other sustainability objectives. In some cases this was linked to positive and negative effects on different components of this objective, or different implications for different parts of the Borough. For example, concentrating development at sustainable transport hubs should support the utilisation of such opportunities but some of these locations were not as well served by other facilities, services and infrastructure, which may generate a need for additional travel unless there was a significant scale of development to support such facilities (which may not be justified or appropriate in the context of other sustainability or plan objectives).
- 7.12 For sustainability objective 1, while all options were identified as depending on implementation, it was recognised that there may be implications of the distribution of development on meeting local housing needs (including for

affordable homes). For example, if development was focused in Andover and Romsey. This risk may be lessened through the option distributing development the largest settlements but would still remain in relation to the smaller communities within the Borough.

- 7.13 Taking account of the appraisal of the identified options, dispersing growth to all parishes has been identified as not being a preferred approach to take forward. While this presents the greatest opportunities to contribute to supporting housing need in all communities, it performs less favourability in terms of bringing forward development in locations that are not as well served by a range of existing facilities, services and infrastructure, and where there is less access to sustainable travel networks, which may result in a greater dependence on travel by private vehicles; is anticipated to present less opportunities to utilise previously developed land; have implications for the ability to mitigate climate change and on air quality; and potentially have a greater effect on the character and identity of settlements, as well as the rural landscape of the Borough.
- 7.14 The option of concentrating development at key sustainable transport hubs is also not a preferred option. This performed in a more comparable way to some of the options identified, and positive effects were identified in relation to the access to sustainable transport modes. However, the location of sustainable transport hubs within the Borough does not always align with access to other facilities, services, infrastructure and employment options. Therefore, while development should be located in locations where opportunities to utilise sustainable transport can be maximised, this should not be the only driver for distributing development within the Borough.
- 7.15 The remaining three options perform similarly, with the commentary within Appendix 2 providing more detailed summaries on the issues and potential effects that have been identified. These tend to focus on maximising opportunities for new development to be located in locations with access to key facilities, services, infrastructure, and employment, whilst not undermining opportunities for some development within rural areas and smaller communities to enable local housing needs (including for affordable housing) to be met and to help sustain existing local facilities and services within these communities. Some of the options also present greater scope for supporting the vitality and viability of the town centres within the Borough (which also links to a Local Plan objective). In this context, it is put forward that there may be greater scope for positive effects through bringing aspects of these three options together in a hybrid approach.
- 7.16 Either through this hybrid approach, or through other policies, there would be value in ensuring that the distribution of development also considers the wider objectives, including but not restricted to biodiversity, settlement character, the landscape, the historic environment and climate change.
- 7.17 A spatial strategy approach has been put forward for the Test Valley having regard to the above considerations. This has also been assessed against the sustainability objectives – this is set out in Appendix 2.

- 7.18 The hybrid approach is anticipated to have strong positive effects in relation to the local economy, including supporting the town centres and the rural economy; with positive effects for objectives on maintaining and improving access to services, facilities, and infrastructure and sustainable travel modes; and in relation to the health and wellbeing of the population. Mixed performance is indicated in relation to air quality and climate change. In relation to both sustainability objectives, the implementation of national policy may have implications on these matters in the medium to longer term in conjunction with the hybrid approach – this is likely to also be relevant for other objectives (for example in relation to biodiversity).
- 7.19 This hybrid approach continues to reflect that in relation to a number of sustainability objectives, the implications will depend on implementation, including in relation to the scale of development that comes forward, its location and its interaction or links with receptors of relevance to the specific objectives (e.g. heritage assets for sustainability objective 9). As part of the assessment within Appendix 2, some specific recommendations are made for additional policy coverage (e.g. for the historic environment and climate change).

## **8 Settlement Hierarchy**

- 8.1 In order to assist with the delivery of the Spatial Strategy, the Council intends to use a settlement hierarchy as a framework to identify and group towns and villages based on their sustainability, role and function. This is intended to aid with setting out the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development within the Borough. A similar approach was taken in the adopted Local Plan (2016).
- 8.2 Reflecting the intention of a settlement hierarchy, as set out above, the access to facilities and services within each settlement or nearby larger towns or villages has been used as the basis for identifying groupings. The outcome of this process would result in the more sustainable settlements, identified in higher tiers in the hierarchy, representing places where those in these settlements are able to access a greater range of services and facilities more readily, without the need to travel as far or to travel by less sustainable modes.
- 8.3 No reasonable alternatives have been identified for the approach to establishing the hierarchy, taking account of national planning policy and guidance, as well as the objectives of the Local Plan. In terms of the criteria used to assess the settlements, this has been undertaken as a technical exercise, with no sufficiently distinct alternatives identified in terms of assessment in relation to the sustainability objectives. More detail is provided in the Settlement Hierarchy Topic Paper on the criteria used and why they were selected. Additionally, the identification of specific tiers within the hierarchy has been undertaken as a technical exercise, accounting for the outcomes of the review of settlements and natural groupings / clustering.
- 8.4 At this stage, the grouping of the settlements into a hierarchy does not have any specific implications in terms of the delivery of the Spatial Strategy, or distribution of development. Therefore, no assessment of likely effects or the need for mitigation has been undertaken at this stage.
- 8.5 At Regulation 18 Stage 2 of the preparation of the Local Plan, there will be further consideration of the distribution of development within the Borough. This will include considering whether appropriate levels of growth can be distributed to specific tiers within the settlement hierarchy. This would need to be considered through the Sustainability Appraisal alongside future stages of the preparation of the Local Plan.



## **9 Approach to Strategic Policies**

- 9.1 This chapter identifies the approach that has been taken, including the consideration of reasonable alternatives, in relation to strategic policies put forward within Stage 1 of the Regulation 18 step of preparing the Local Plan. These policy areas were identified reflecting the priorities associated with the Local Plan objectives, with emphasis on delivering corporate objectives.
- 9.2 These policies will seek to inform the consideration of the appropriateness of development over the plan period (in line with the plan objectives and national policy) and will be supported by more detailed policies at later stages in the preparation of the Local Plan. It should be noted that later stages of the preparation of the Local Plan may also identify additional strategic policy areas. Some of the policies considered in this chapter in effect provide a means of mitigating impacts of potential development within the Borough.
- 9.3 Where relevant, alternative policy options have been subject to appraisal to consider their sustainability implications. In some cases no alternatives have been identified by the Council, primarily as a result of a lack of distinct reasonable options being available and taking account of national planning policy and the Local Plan objectives. Where a broad approach to a policy is akin to that within the adopted Local Plan (2016), a ‘business as usual’ approach has not been appraised. Additionally, options of ‘no policy’ have not been considered on matters where national policy indicates policies should give coverage to such matters.

### ***Countering Climate Change***

#### *Background and National Policy*

- 9.4 The NPPF sets out that plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, with the planning system supporting the transition to a low carbon future. Additionally, there is a role in minimising vulnerability and improving resilience. There is also a legal obligation to include policies in local plans to ensure that they are designed to secure development and use of land that contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.
- 9.5 At a more local scale, the Council’s Climate Emergency Action Plan (2020) includes a specific action to ensure that policies in the Local Plan are written to facilitate the move towards carbon neutrality. There is also a specific Local Plan objective relating to climate change.

#### *Identifying and Assessing Reasonable Alternatives*

- 9.6 The approach set out in national policy, in addition to the direction established through the Local Plan objectives, influences the matters that would need to be covered in policy relation to climate change. This needs to cover mitigation, adaptation and resilience. On this basis, no reasonable alternatives

have been identified for the approach to this matter, particularly where more detailed policies will be considered at Regulation 18 Stage 2.

- 9.7 The proposed policy approach to countering climate change has been assessed against the sustainability objectives – this is provided within Appendix 3. Through this assessment, the proposed policy is anticipated to generally perform positively in relation to the sustainability objectives, with a mixed performance indicated in relation to objectives in relation to landscape, townscape and settlement character, and the historic environment. This policy has the potential to act as a form of mitigation in relation to climatic factors in particular.
- 9.8 The policy is anticipated to have a positive effect in relation to climatic factors, with specific provisions to minimise greenhouse gas emissions, including through application of the energy hierarchy and maximising the potential for active and sustainable travel. This would form part of a wider cumulative impact, particularly in the medium to long term, taking account of national policy (see Appendix 1 and the Scoping Report for more detail). While the policy itself would be most likely to have implications on greenhouse gas emissions within the Borough, the implications could extend further, for example as a result of changing approaches to travel (and thus transport related emissions), and contribute in a small way towards global efforts on this.
- 9.9 It is likely that there would be positive effects in relation to biodiversity (including on flora and fauna), as well as for soil, water, and air considerations (with the implications for soil anticipated to be quite localised). The policy includes provisions that will have implications for all of these matters, such as promoting the efficient use of land and water resources, as well as conserving and enhancing ecological networks, whilst delivering biodiversity net gains. The implications for air would be indirect, through the provisions in relation to promoting active and sustainable travel, as well as minimising unnecessary travel. This could also have knock on (indirect) implications for human health, along with the provisions to ensuring appropriate resilience and reducing vulnerability to some of the possible implications of climate change, including as a result of higher temperatures.
- 9.10 While the requirements of this policy have the potential to increase costs of delivering housing (particularly in the shorter term), there may be longer term benefits in terms of ensuring homes are appropriate to meet the needs of the population, particularly as changes to the climate become more pronounced, and for the affordability of living in the homes.
- 9.11 There is less certainty regarding the effects on local character, landscapes, and the historic environment. As reflected within Appendix 3, while there may be potential positive effects through some of the policy provisions, the use of alternative construction approaches (which could include different materials, designs and layouts), introduction of new technologies and infrastructure to aid with mitigation and adaptation may conflict with the conservation of heritage assets, local character and landscape character, particularly if not

undertaken sensitively. Mitigation measures are likely to be needed through ensuring such factors are taken into account – the balancing of these considerations may need further consideration in relation to specific proposals. This will also need to be further considered at the Regulation 18, Stage 2 step in preparing the Local Plan and more detailed policies, as well as subsequent decision making.

### ***Delivering Healthy, Well-Designed Development***

#### *Background and National Policy*

- 9.12 The NPPF sets out that planning policies should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places. It also highlights that creating high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental, with good design a key aspect of sustainable development. It is indicated that plan should set out a clear design vision and expectations. The Planning Practice Guidance, National Design Guide and National Model Design Code are also relevant to considering the approach to this matter.
- 9.13 The Local Plan includes a specific objective in relation to design, with further objectives also being relevant to this matter. As noted within the Scoping Report, a number of communities within the Borough have prepared village or town design statements, to help inform the understanding of local design considerations and characteristics.

#### *Identifying and Assessing Reasonable Alternatives*

- 9.14 The approach set out in national policy and guidance, in addition to the direction established through the Local Plan objectives, influences the approach to this policy. On this basis, no reasonable alternatives have been identified for the approach to this matter at this stage.
- 9.15 The proposed policy approach to delivering healthy and well-designed development has been assessed against the sustainability objectives – this is provided within Appendix 3. Through this assessment, the proposed policy is anticipated to generally perform positively in relation to the sustainability objectives, with a mixed performance identified in relation to the efficient use of land and conservation of soil resources, while the effect in relation to ensuring homes meet the needs is recorded as depending on implementation in relation to affordability considerations. This policy has the potential to act as a form of mitigation in relation to managing the effects of development on aspects of the local environment.
- 9.16 A positive effect, anticipated to be permanent, is identified in relation to the effects on landscape and settlement character, with the policy including multiple provisions that support the conservation and enhancement of the character and identity of places and the landscape within the Borough. While these effects are likely to primarily occur within the Borough, there could be wider implications, for example when taking account of wider viewpoints and

implications on landscape characters (including designated landscapes) that extend beyond the Borough.

- 9.17 The policy is also anticipated to have positive (in many cases indirect) effects on biodiversity (including flora and fauna), air, water, climatic factors, and the historic environment (including cultural heritage) when accounting for specific provisions within the policy. There are also likely to be positive effects on health (mental and physical) and wellbeing, through the prioritisation of active and sustainable travel, ensuring permeable layouts, the provision of green and blue infrastructure and improving the public realm.
- 9.18 There is the potential for an indirect positive effect on the local economy (including visitor economy) through ensuring development is well designed, conserving local character and identity. In terms of soil resources, in some situations responding to the local character and identity may result in a less efficient use of land. This would need to be balanced with aspirations in national policy and other policies within the emerging Local Plan that seek to encourage the efficient use of land.

### ***Delivering Development and Regeneration in Andover and Romsey Town Centres***

#### *Background and National Policy*

- 9.19 The NPPF states that planning policies should support the role of town centres play at the heart of local communities, with policies promoting their long term vitality and viability. It goes on to set out that policies should define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, making clear the range of uses that would be acceptable in such locations. The NPPF provides a number of definitions that are relevant to these matters.
- 9.20 The Council's Corporate Plan includes a priority of growing the potential of town centres to adapt and be attractive, vibrant, and prosperous places. Masterplans have subsequently been prepared for Andover town centre and south of Romsey town centre. The Local Plan includes an objective on town centres, which focuses on Romsey and Andover, seeking to create cultural, adaptable, diverse and vibrant centres. This informs the focus of the strategic policies at this stage of the preparation of the Local Plan.

#### *Identifying and Assessing Reasonable Alternatives*

- 9.21 With regard to identifying the extent of Andover and Romsey town centres for the application of policy, no reasonable alternatives have been identified when accounting for the approach set out in national policy (particularly through the definition of 'town centre'). Similarly, national policy establishes that policy should identify the extent of primary shopping areas, which represent the area where retail development is concentrated, therefore no reasonable alternatives have been identified. In both cases, for both Andover and Romsey town centres, the identification of the extent of these areas / zones has been undertaken as a technical exercise.

9.22 National policy sets out that planning policies should define the uses that would be permitted within the town centre and primary shopping area. There is some indication on the broad types of uses that are likely to be appropriate, in the form of the definition of main town centre uses. However, the Council has identified a series of options for different approaches to this matter, with varying degrees of flexibility, particularly in relation to the primary shopping area. These comprise:

- Option 1: Continuing a retail focused approach to ground floor uses in the primary shopping area, with further uses identified as acceptable in the wider town centre and in upper floors.
- Option 2: Identifying a set range of main town centre uses that would be acceptable at ground floor level within the primary shopping area, with further uses identified as acceptable in the wider town centre and in upper floors.
- Option 3: Greater flexibility of uses within both primary shopping area and whole of town centre that would be acceptable (i.e. no focus on particular uses in different locations).

9.23 The three identified options have been assessed against the sustainability objectives – these are set out in Appendix 3. Table 12 sets out the summary of the symbols identified for each of the sustainability objectives in relation to the options considered. This should be read in conjunction with the commentary provided within the Appendix.

Table 12: Summary of the Assessment of Town Centre Options against the Sustainability Objectives

Sustainability Objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
1	i	i	i
2	+/-	+	+
3	i	i	i
4	+	+	+
5	o	o	o
6	o	o	o
7	o	o	o
8	i	i	i
9	i	i	i
10	o	o	o
11	i	i	i
12	i	+	+

9.24 As can be seen, for many of the sustainability objectives, there was either no effect identified, or the implications depended on implementation. Additionally, all three options performed in a similar way in relation to the objectives, with the commentary seeking to draw out any differences (as is the case for objective 1 and 11). The objectives that see a difference in performance identified relate to the local economy (objective 2) and maintaining and

improving health and wellbeing (objective 12). The lesser degree of flexibility associated with option 1 is driving this.

- 9.25 Having regard to the outcome of the assessment, option 1 has been rejected on the basis that a continued retail focused approach, particularly in the heart of the town centres, has the potential to undermine the attainment of the objectives in relation to the town centres, including in relation to supporting their vibrancy, including in the context of changing retail habits.
- 9.26 While the outcomes of the assessment are broadly comparable for options 2 and 3, the Council has sought to proceed with an approach that aligns with option 2. This will help provide greater clarity to potential developers on the types of uses that would be acceptable within these locations and provide a means of seeking to concentrate activity within the core of the town centres.
- 9.27 The proposed policy approach has been put forward for Andover and Romsey town centre having regard to the above considerations. This has also been assessed against the sustainability objectives – this is set out in Appendix 3. Reflecting the assessment of the identified policy options, in many cases the implications of the proposed policy approach will depend on its implementation, including the type of schemes that come forward within these locations.
- 9.28 In this context, there is some uncertainty regarding the likely effects on biodiversity (including flora and fauna), water, air, landscape, the historic environment, and climate factors. Effects are likely to be permanent and in some cases may be indirect (for example on air quality as a result of changes in transport and travel, as well as the potential for pollutants to disperse<sup>39</sup>). In these cases, it has been identified that additional policy content is likely to be beneficial in order to act as a form of mitigation – in some cases this would be building on legal requirements and national policy.
- 9.29 Positive effects are identified in relation to the local economy, including supporting the vitality of the town centres, health and wellbeing of the population, and for soil resources. The latter arises through the opportunities to promote the efficient use of land and buildings (including through conversion to alternative uses).

### ***Delivering High Quality Development in Town Centres***

#### ***Background and National Policy***

- 9.30 The national policy context in relation to this matter has largely already been reflected through the combination of the two prior policy areas, in relation to development and regeneration in the town centres, and delivering high quality design. As such, it is not replicated here. Similarly, the priority given to town

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<sup>39</sup> In this case effects could be cumulative or synergistic, depending on how they are implemented, including accounting for other policies, proposals and projects.

centres through the Council's Corporate Plan has been recognised, with a number of Local Plan objectives relevant to this matter.

*Identifying and Assessing Reasonable Alternatives*

- 9.31 The priority given locally to Andover and Romsey town centres, as reflected through the approval of masterplans relating to both centres, has informed the identification of this as a strategic policy area for inclusion within the Local Plan, which can add more detail to the broader requirements identified for delivering healthy, well-designed development across the Borough.
- 9.32 Taking account of the approach set out in national policy and guidance, in addition to the direction established through the Local Plan objectives, and other local plans and policies, no reasonable alternatives have been identified for the approach to this matter at this stage.
- 9.33 The proposed policy approach to delivering high quality development in the town centres has been assessed against the sustainability objectives – this is provided within Appendix 3. Through this assessment, the proposed policy is anticipated to generally perform positively in relation to the sustainability objectives, with a mixed performance identified in relation to ensuring everyone has the opportunity to live in an appropriate and affordable home, while the effect in relation to air quality and climate change is recorded as depending on implementation. This policy has the potential to act as a form of mitigation in relation to managing the effects of development in Andover and Romsey town centres on aspects of the local environment.
- 9.34 The effects of this policy are likely to be concentrated on the town centres of Romsey and Andover themselves, as well as locations that have views into / of the centres. Positive effects, that are likely to be permanent, are anticipated in relation to the townscapes, the historic environment, and biodiversity when accounting for the provisions of the policy.
- 9.35 There is some uncertainty in relation to the implications on air and climate factors – these matters are not specifically covered in the policy but there may be indirect effects, for example as a result of provisions seeking to improve or enlarge existing green spaces, and contribute to new provisions or other green infrastructure assets. There is also some uncertainty in relation to implications on opportunities to live in homes that meet needs – this is linked to the potential implications of affordability of such accommodation. In these cases, there is likely to be value in considering policy content in relation to the provision of affordable housing, and ensuring air quality and climate factors are taken into account for all development.
- 9.36 There is the potential for positive indirect effects on health and wellbeing, through seeking to encourage vibrant and safe environments, that are well connected, and where green spaces are improved or enhanced. Similarly, there is anticipated to be a positive effect on the local economy in relation to supporting the vitality and viability of the town centres through ensuring

development that comes forward is of a high quality, which could also support the local visitor economy.

### ***Delivering Infrastructure***

#### *Background and National Policy*

- 9.37 The NPPF is clear that growth and infrastructure need to be aligned through local plans as part of promoting a sustainable pattern of growth. It sets out that local plans should include strategic policies that make provision for infrastructure, including in relation to transport, telecommunications, water supply and waste water. Additionally, community facilities need to be provided for, including for health, education and culture.
- 9.38 A number of the proposed objectives for the Local Plan 2040 refer to the provision and enhancement of infrastructure, facilities and services to support new development. It is also reflected upon in the Council's Corporate Plan, including in relation to priorities associated with people and the local environment.

#### *Identifying and Assessing Reasonable Alternatives*

- 9.39 The approach set out in national policy and guidance, as well as the Local Plan 2040 objectives, has implications for the approach to this policy. On the basis of the approach set through national policy and guidance, and the Local Plan objectives, no reasonable alternatives have been identified for the policy approach to this matter at this stage.
- 9.40 The proposed policy approach to delivering infrastructure has been assessed against the sustainability objectives – this is provided within Appendix 3. This policy has the potential to act as a form of mitigation in relation to managing the effects of development.
- 9.41 The policy approach focuses on the mechanisms for securing and delivering infrastructure, rather than detail the specific needs that are to be met. It is indicated that further detail will come at later stages in the preparation of the Local Plan 2040. As set out in Appendix 3, while the policy approach is anticipated to have positive effects in relation to some objectives (including in relation to the economy, and health and wellbeing), in a number of cases a mixed performance is recorded, or that the implications will depend on the implementation of the policy.
- 9.42 Through the assessment of the policy, it has been identified that there is uncertainty on the type and nature of effects of this policy, including on landscape, settlement character, biodiversity (including flora and fauna), the historic environment, and air quality. In most cases, this uncertainty reflects that securing infrastructure could be a means of providing mitigation for potential adverse effects but the infrastructure itself may also result in its own implications that are not currently known. In order to mitigate this, additional policy content should be provided to ensure consideration of such matters (as



far as possible, recognising that not all infrastructure may need planning permission) in a sensitive way. For the most part, this is likely to be provided at the next stage of preparing the Local Plan (i.e. Regulation 18, Stage 2). However, some of the strategic policies at this stage may also provide a form of mitigation for this policy (for example in relation to Delivering Healthy, Well-Designed Development).

- 9.43 Another form of uncertainty is the availability of other funding sources and appropriate delivery mechanisms to help deliver infrastructure. The policy provisions seek to minimise this risk in relation to infrastructure required to mitigate the impact of development, including through provisions in relation to the timing of its delivery.
- 9.44 Indirect positive effects are identified in relation to the economy and health and wellbeing. In relation to the latter, this is likely to arise through ensuring appropriate health infrastructure is provided to support new development, alongside other forms of infrastructure that could have implications on human health (physical and mental), such as green infrastructure, social infrastructure, and walking and cycling routes.
- 9.45 While the effects of this policy are likely to be permanent, in many cases cumulative, and focused within the Borough, they would not be limited to this geographic extent. For example, the provision of transport infrastructure within the Borough could have implications for traffic levels beyond the Borough boundaries<sup>40</sup> as well as those who live outside the Borough but use transport infrastructure within Test Valley. Similarly, there could be implications on receptors outside the Borough when accounting for relevant pathways, such as river catchments in terms of the water environment, habitats and residents in close proximity to road networks (with possible indirect air quality implications on human health and ecology).

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<sup>40</sup> The Scoping Report (2020) referred to the five top destinations for out-commuting as Southampton, Winchester, Eastleigh, Wiltshire and Basingstoke and Deane, based on Census data.

## 10 Scale of Housing Need

### ***Background and National Policy & Guidance***

- 10.1 National planning policy highlights that as part of promoting a sustainable pattern of development, all local plans should seek to meet the development needs of their area. This includes, as a minimum, providing for objectively assessed needs for housing, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless the provisions set out within paragraph 11b)i) or 11b)ii) apply<sup>41</sup>.
- 10.2 Section 5 of the NPPF provides more detail on delivering a sufficient supply of homes. It is set out that a local housing needs assessment, using the standard method in national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)<sup>42</sup>, should be undertaken to determine the minimum number of homes needed. The standard method assesses the number of new homes needed as a result of demographic changes and then applies an affordability adjustment. The NPPF indicates that there may be exceptional circumstances when an alternative approach would be justified.
- 10.3 The PPG<sup>43</sup> also indicates scenarios when it may be appropriate to plan for a higher housing need figure. This includes accounting for growth strategies for the area that are likely to be deliverable, in order to support the delivery of strategic infrastructure improvements, or through agreeing to take on unmet housing need from a neighbouring authority.
- 10.4 In relation to the latter point, the PPG<sup>44</sup> refers to Housing Market Areas (HMAs) as a type of geographical area that may be an appropriate basis for preparing statements of common ground in relation to co-operating with relevant authorities and public bodies on strategic policy matters.

### ***Local Evidence***

- 10.5 In order to undertake the assessments referred to in national policy and guidance, and to inform the consideration of the scale of housing need within Test Valley, the Council has prepared a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and a Housing Market Area Study (HMAS). The SHMA considers overall housing need, affordable housing need, and specialist housing need. The HMAS considers the housing market areas that exist in the Borough. The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), which helps to identify land promoted as available for development, also forms part of the local evidence.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Available: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

<sup>42</sup> Available: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments#housing-need>

<sup>43</sup> Paragraph Reference ID: 2a-010-20201216.

<sup>44</sup> Paragraph Reference IDs: 61-017-20190315 and 61-018-20190315, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making#maintaining-effective-cooperation>

<sup>45</sup> Local evidence is available at: <https://testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/evidence-base>

### ***Identifying and Assessing Reasonable Alternatives***

- 10.6 The NPPF, PPG and local evidence have informed the identification of approaches regarding the scale of housing needed and the assessment of whether they represent reasonable alternatives for Test Valley through this sustainability appraisal.

#### *Identification of Housing Market Areas*

- 10.7 As indicated above, the HMAS reviewed the approach to the identification and definition of housing market areas that exist within Test Valley as a technical exercise, based on the PPG. The Borough has been identified as falling into two Housing Market Areas for some time, reflecting the relationship with surrounding areas. The HMAS has confirmed that there remain two Housing Market Areas. In light of the latest evidence<sup>46</sup>, the geographical areas covered by the separate Housing Market Areas has been updated. These are referred to as the Southern Test Valley Housing Market Area and the Northern Test Valley Housing Market Area. The extent of the Housing Market Areas as identified in the previous SHMA (2014) has not been considered as a reasonable alternative for assessment for the Local Plan 2040 taking account of the outcomes of the HMAS.

#### *Identification of the Scale of Housing Need across the Borough*

- 10.8 Table 13 provides an overview of approaches identified in relation to the scale of housing need and whether they are considered to be reasonable alternatives or not, and why. The approaches were identified having regard to national policy and guidance.

Table 13: Identification of Reasonable Alternatives for the Scale of Housing Need

Approach	Reasonable Alternative?	Explanation
Standard method for local housing needs (as set out in PPG)	Yes	n/a
Higher level of housing need to support a growth strategy	No	There is no such growth strategy in place therefore there is no justification for this to be considered as a reasonable alternative.
Higher level of housing need to support the delivery of strategic infrastructure improvements	No	No strategic infrastructure requirements have been identified that would necessitate higher levels of housing to be delivered therefore there is no

<sup>46</sup> For a full explanation, please see the Housing Market Areas Study.

Approach	Reasonable Alternative?	Explanation
		justification for this to be considered as a reasonable alternative.
Higher level of housing to deliver unmet housing need from neighbouring authority	No	No formal requests have been received at present regarding any unmet housing need in neighbouring local authority areas that would need to be addressed in Test Valley. Therefore there is no justification for this to be considered as a reasonable alternative. This will need to be kept under review as preparation on the plan progresses.
Higher level of housing need to help meet the identified local affordable housing need	No	The standard method for local housing need includes an uplift to aid in addressing this matter. The SHMA advises that caution needs to be taken when trying to make a direct link between affordable need and planned housing delivery figures. The output of the standard method for housing need and the outcome of the assessment of affordable housing need are not directly comparable figures. The need for affordable housing does not generally lead to a need to increase overall provision. Therefore there is no justification for this to be considered as a reasonable alternative, as recommended by the SHMA.
Lower level of housing than identified through the standard method for local housing needs	No	The NPPF states that the level of local housing need identified through the standard method is a minimum, unless specific circumstances apply. None of these such circumstances have been identified as relevant (e.g. in terms of the available capacity or any unresolvable constraints within the Borough) that would influence the potential to deliver this housing need. Therefore there is no justification for this to

Approach	Reasonable Alternative?	Explanation
		be considered as a reasonable alternative.

- 10.9 As can be seen, only one reasonable option has been identified at this stage, which is applying the standard method to identify our local housing needs. This has been assessed against the sustainability objectives, as set out in Appendix 4.

*Identification of Split of Housing Need within the Housing Market Areas in Test Valley*

- 10.10 In addition to considering the overall approach to the scale of housing need across the Borough, there is also a need to consider whether there are alternative approaches to how this is distributed. This will be considered more fully at Regulation 18, Stage 2. At this stage, the focus is on the distribution of housing in the context of the identified Housing Market Areas (referred to above). Reflecting the identification of the separate Housing Market Areas, it would not be a reasonable alternative to disregard them when considering the distribution of housing need. It has been a long standing approach for the housing need for the Borough to be divided into two parts. This includes the adopted Local Plan (2016), which identifies separate housing need figures for each Housing Market Area.

- 10.11 The calculation of local housing need using the standard method (as set out in the PPG) is based on demographic data. In light of this, at present the only reasonable alternative that has been identified is to split the housing need between the Housing Market Areas on a demographic basis. The implication of this would be that 43% of the housing need would be delivered in the Southern Test Valley Housing Market Area, and 57% would be delivered in the Northern Test Valley Housing Market Area, based on the existing population within them.

- 10.12 At Regulation 18 Stage 2, additional work will be undertaken in relation to the distribution of development, including housing need, within the Borough. This may identify additional approaches to distributing the housing need within the Housing Market Areas, however it is too premature to identify such approaches now. Therefore this will be revisited through the Sustainability Appraisal alongside future stages of the preparation of the Local Plan.

*Assessing Reasonable Alternatives*

- 10.13 As identified above, one option in relation to the scale of housing need has been subject to assessment against the sustainability objectives – this is provided within Appendix 4. This is based on using the standard method for local housing need, which generates a requirement of 541 dwellings per annum, or 10,820 homes over the plan period of 2020 to 2040, with a split of this requirement between the two identified Housing Market Areas. It is recognised that given the identified plan period, some of the housing that will

be contributing to this scale will have already been completed or have planning permissions. There will however be a residual requirement that remains to be met.

- 10.14 The option is anticipated to have a positive effect in meeting the housing needs of the population, when accounting for anticipated demographic changes (through household growth). Based on household formation within the Borough, it is likely that in order to occupy the housing provided, there would be additional migration into the Borough over the plan period, which may have knock on implications for the age profile of the resultant population.
- 10.15 The proposed policy approach does not make any specific provision for affordable housing or the mix of accommodation to be provided. An assumption was made that a portion of homes being delivered would come forward as affordable housing (taking account of national planning policy). It would be important to ensure that additional policy content is provided to seek to ensure that the scale of housing need being delivered helps to meet the specific needs for different types and tenures of accommodation (the Scoping Report identified an ageing population as a potential issue).
- 10.16 There is uncertainty over the likely effects on human health and wellbeing, as this is likely to be linked to the way the housing is delivered, including the infrastructure that supports it.
- 10.17 A positive effect is anticipated in relation to the local economy, with the proposed scale of housing provision anticipated to support additional jobs. There is the potential for the growth to support the vitality and viability of the town centres within the Borough, however this may be influenced by where the housing comes forward. As set out within Appendix 4, it is anticipated that economy implications associated with this scale of growth are likely to be experienced beyond the Borough, when accounting for live-work patterns, commuting patterns, and spending patterns for example. Some of these relationships are likely to have been influenced by the Coronavirus pandemic (for example, more home working could influence spending and commuting patterns).
- 10.18 A negative effect is identified in relation to soil resources, reflecting that additional greenfield development would be needed in order to deliver this scale of housing provision. There may be opportunities to minimise the degree of effect through the promotion of re-use of existing buildings and previously developed land, as well as the efficient use of land (subject to other considerations). The spatial strategy (considered separately) seeks to provide a mechanism to do this. The effects on soil resources are anticipated to be permanent and would predominately arise within Test Valley.
- 10.19 Similarly, a negative effect is anticipated in relation to the water environment, reflecting additional water consumption associated with new development. There is some uncertainty over the cumulative effect, when accounting for wider proposals to improve water efficiency rates of existing users. There would also be value in seeking to minimise the degree of the effect on water

resources, by seeking to maximise the efficient use of water resources by new development. There are also likely to be cumulative effects on the quality of the water environment in the absence of mitigation measures. Therefore, policy content should be considered in order to minimise adverse effects on water quality (taking account of relevant pathways and receptors), including through securing appropriate and timely provision of infrastructure. These effects will extend beyond the Borough boundary, reflecting the relevant catchment areas (this may include the catchments of the Avon, Itchen, and Test for example).

- 10.20 There is some uncertainty relating to effects on air quality, as to some degree this will be dependent on where the housing is located, the infrastructure available to support it, and other policies and proposals that will influence air quality (particularly in relation to the transition towards electric and alternative fuel vehicles, as well as possible changes to air quality objective levels). While some temporarily effects may arise associated with construction, more permanent cumulative effects are also anticipated. The most significant source of air pollution in Test Valley is road traffic. Air quality effects are also anticipated to arise outside the Borough from this source as well. Air quality implications are also likely to result in additional indirect effects, for example on human health, flora and biodiversity. In order to minimise effects, consideration will need to be given to the location of housing, ways to maximise the uptake of sustainable modes of travel, and minimise unnecessary travel.
- 10.21 Permanent effects on the local landscape and settlement character is likely as a result of the provision of additional housing, however the scale and degree of effect at this stage is uncertain. Similarly, there is some uncertainty regarding the effects on the historic environment. The implications would be influenced by the way the housing comes forward, including the location.. As reflected for other matters, it would be appropriate to put in place mitigation measures to minimise the risk of adverse effects, including through considering how the proposed housing is brought forward.
- 10.22 A potential negative effect has been identified in relation to biodiversity, flora and fauna when assuming no mitigation is being secured. This is likely to include significant (cumulative and indirect) effects on international nature conservation designations, when accounting for known issues including in relation to excess nutrient input to certain water bodies and recreational pressure on designations. A Habitat Regulations Assessment is to be prepared at the next stage of the preparation of the Local Plan 2040 – this would consider such matters in more detail. Effects on other ecological assets, including ecological networks, is likely to depend how the development comes forward, including its location and the potential impact pathways. Mitigation would need to be secured, this would initially seek to avoid adverse effects, which could include through the location of housing development. Additional policy content is likely to be appropriate to consider such matters. It is recognised that there are legal requirements (current and emerging) that would also have implications for this matter. While effects are

likely to be focused within the Borough, there is the potential for implications on biodiversity and ecology beyond this area.

- 10.23 A potential negative effect has also been identified in relation to climate factors, with the potential for additional housing to contribute to the generation of additional greenhouse gas emissions, which could contribute to a cumulative significant effect. There is also the potential for the housing proposals to increase the vulnerability of residents and others if not delivered in a sensitive way (which could have other implications, for example on human health and the economy). Other policy drivers are likely to have implications for the extent of effect, for example, changes in Building Regulations. However, it would be important to consider options to mitigate the potential adverse effects, in terms of both mitigation and adaptation.

#### *Summary of Initial Mitigation Measures*

- 10.24 Through the appraisal of the identified option for the scale of housing need within the Borough, a number of opportunities for mitigation measures have been identified to lessen the risk of adverse effects.
- 10.25 It is recognised that the effects are likely to be influenced by the way that the housing need is delivered, including the location of housing sites and the way these sites come forward (including the infrastructure supporting them). This includes implications on the physical environment, access to facilities and services, and the availability of sustainable modes of travel. Therefore, when sites are being identified in order to meet the need, a key mitigation measures will relate to ensuring that development is sensitively located. Additionally, further policy content would be appropriate to ensure such matters are also considered when assessing any specific proposals that come forward. For the most part, this is likely to be provided at the next stage of preparing the Local Plan (i.e. Regulation 18, Stage 2). However, strategic policies proposed at this stage (e.g. Delivering Infrastructure) would also contribute.
- 10.26 Other factors may be relevant to the preparation of the Local Plan as a whole, including the consideration of affordable housing provision (to maximise delivery), seeking to ensure that the mix of housing provided helps to meet the identified need, and ensuring sufficient infrastructure is available (at the right time) to support the new development – the latter is reflected within the proposed policy on delivering infrastructure. It would also be appropriate to ensure that new development is delivered in such a way as to minimise use of resources, including but not restricted to, energy and water (there are links to the proposed policy on climate change for these matters).



## 11 Predicting and Evaluating Cumulative Effects of the Local Plan

- 11.1 This section of the appraisal focuses on Tasks B3 and B4 (referred to in Chapter 2), which includes evaluating the likely effects of the Local Plan and considering ways to mitigate adverse effects and maximise beneficial effects. It is intended to provide an account of the predicted effects of the draft Local Plan, accounting for other relevant plans, policies and programmes.
- 11.2 The SEA Regulations establish that the consideration of effects needs to account for secondary (or indirect), cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects. Cumulative effects normally reflect situations where individual projects or proposals may not have a significant effect when considered on their own, but when considered in conjunction with other plans / projects, the sum of the smaller effects results in a more significant effect. Synergistic effects move a step further, whereby the combined projects / plans have a greater effect than the individual projects / plans. There is not always a clear distinction between these different types of effects.
- 11.3 One of the challenges with undertaking such an assessment at this stage is that only some of the policies that will make up the full Local Plan 2040 have currently been developed, with more detail to be added. Additionally, given the strategic nature of the Local Plan, and the dependence on the applications received, it is difficult to be precise about the effects of the plan and the potential interactions with other plans, policies and programmes.
- 11.4 Table 14 identifies the effects of the Local Plan, at Regulation 18, Stage 1, taken as a whole, in relation to the sustainability objectives and a summary of the effects.

Table 14: Effects of the Local Plan on the Sustainability Objectives

Sustainability Objective <sup>47</sup>	Performance	Commentary
1. Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in an appropriate and affordable home that meets their needs.	+	<p>The Local Plan is proposing a scale of housing delivery that is anticipated to meet and exceed the needs associated with demographic change within the Borough. The spatial strategy seeks to help sustain communities including through supporting the role of settlements and meeting the needs in larger settlements.</p> <p>At this stage, the Local Plan does not include any specific provisions or</p>

<sup>47</sup> For more detail on the objectives and the associated indicative tests, please see the Scoping Report (2020) at: <https://testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/evidence-base/sustainability-appraisal>

Sustainability Objective <sup>47</sup>	Performance	Commentary
		proposals to secure the delivery of affordable housing or ensure the mix of accommodation meets the local needs. Such matters will need to be addressed at the next stage in the preparation of the Local Plan.
2. Ensure the local economy is thriving with high and stable levels of growth, whilst supporting productivity and the promotion of a diverse economy, with the availability of a skilled workforce.	+	The scale of housing to be provided is anticipated to support additional population being available to fill jobs locally. The spatial strategy seeks to support the economy, with the distribution of growth taking account of the key economic centres in the Borough. There is also support for ensuring appropriate infrastructure alongside growth (including in relation to education). Policies seek to support development and regeneration within the main town centres of the Borough, to support their vitality and viability.
3. Maintain and improve access to services, facilities, and other infrastructure, whilst improving the efficiency and integration of transport networks and the availability and utilisation of sustainable modes of travel.	+	<p>The spatial strategy seeks to focus development in locations within the Borough that have the greatest existing access to facilities, services and infrastructure, and availability of sustainable modes of travel. There is also recognition of supporting the role of settlements of different scales.</p> <p>A number of policies, particularly in relation to delivering infrastructure, seek to ensure that appropriate provisions are made alongside growth to ensure that appropriate facilities, services and infrastructure (including for sustainable travel) are available to meet needs.</p> <p>At present, there are no provisions that seek to retain existing facilities and services, which is something that should be considered as part of future stages of preparing the Local Plan.</p>
4. Encourage the efficient use of land and conserve soil resources.	-	The scale of housing growth proposed is anticipated to require additional development of greenfield sites, which is likely to have effects on soil resources in the Borough. Some of the proposed policies promote the efficient

Sustainability Objective <sup>47</sup>	Performance	Commentary
		<p>use of land and the re-use of previously developed land and buildings (including in Andover and Romsey town centres). At this stage, it is uncertain whether there will be implications for best and most versatile agricultural land within the Borough.</p> <p>There are no specific provisions within the current policies in relation to avoiding the risk of land contamination, or providing opportunities to address potential historic contamination. This should be further considered at the next stage of preparing the Local Plan.</p>
<p>5. Conserve and, where possible, enhance the water environment and ensure the sustainable management of water resources.</p>	<p>+/-</p>	<p>Additional development within the Borough has the potential to put pressure on the water environment (including in terms of water resource availability and water quality). Policies seek to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided to support growth (including water infrastructure), that development makes efficient use of water, and there may be indirect implications through the promotion of green infrastructure for example.</p> <p>There are no specific provisions in relation to safeguarding groundwater resources, or conserving the water environment in general. These matters will need to be considered further as part of the plan preparation.</p>
<p>6. Seek to avoid and reduce vulnerability to the risk of flooding and the resulting detrimental effects to the public, economy and environment.</p>	<p>i</p>	<p>The Local Plan will bring forward additional development, which could have implications in terms of flood risk depending on the way this development comes forward. A number of policies seek to ensure that development takes account of vulnerabilities and designs in appropriate resilience for both now and into the future, this includes a specific reference to flooding as part of the climate change policy.</p> <p>It is likely to be appropriate to include more explicit provisions within the Local</p>

Sustainability Objective <sup>47</sup>	Performance	Commentary
		Plan on the approach to avoiding and reducing vulnerability to flood risk, taking account of national policy on this matter, as well as the potential implications of a changing climate.
7. Maintain and, where possible, enhance air quality.	+/-	Additional development within the Borough (and beyond the Borough through other plans / policies) has the potential to influence air quality. Road traffic is the most significant source of air pollution in Test Valley (implications could also be experienced beyond the Borough). A number of policy provisions seek to focus development in locations where there is greatest opportunity for sustainable travel and access to facilities, services and infrastructure. Along with wider national changes, this may help to minimise the potential effects. However, it is likely to be appropriate to consider specific policy content in relation to air pollution, including possible point sources that may arise over the course of the plan period.
8. Conserve and, where possible, enhance the Borough's landscape, townscapes and settlement character.	+/-	<p>Additional development within the Borough has the potential to effect local landscapes, townscapes and settlement character, as well as sense of place and settlement identity. Some of this will depend on the way such development comes forwards. Policy provisions seek to ensure that such matters are taken into account in bringing development forward, which should minimise the risk of adverse effects.</p> <p>At this stage, there is uncertainty regarding the potential for implications on statutory designations. There is no specific policy content on such designations (beyond consideration as part of wider character, identity and landscape considerations). Therefore it will be appropriate to assess how this be covered explicitly at future stages of preparing the Local Plan.</p>

Sustainability Objective <sup>47</sup>	Performance	Commentary
9. Conserve and, where possible, enhance the historic environment and the significance of heritage assets.	i	<p>Some of the locations where development is to be focused (accounting for the spatial strategy and policy on development and regeneration in Andover and Romsey town centres) incorporate heritage assets. However, the potential for implications on the historic environment, specific assets and their setting, is likely to depend on implementation. A possible risk has also been identified in relation to implications of the approach to climate change on heritage assets.</p> <p>Proposed policies on design include provisions to ensure that consideration is given to heritage assets. However, it would be appropriate to provide more detailed policy content on this matter as part of the Local Plan.</p>
10. Conserve and, where possible, enhance biodiversity and habitat connectivity.	+/-	<p>In the absence of mitigation, negative effects on biodiversity are anticipated as a result of development within the Borough. These effects could arise beyond the Borough boundary. However, there are provisions within some of the proposed policies that seek to conserve ecological networks, deliver net gains in biodiversity and integrate biodiversity enhancements into development. Ensuring the appropriate provision of infrastructure is also likely to be important. Other legal provisions are also likely to have implications for how development comes forward taking account of such matters.</p> <p>However, it is recommended that as part of the preparation of the Local Plan further specific policy content is provided to ensure the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, ecological networks, and habitats and species of importance.</p>
11. Support the delivery of climate	+/-	Additional development would be likely to increase the generation of greenhouse gas emissions (directly and

Sustainability Objective <sup>47</sup>	Performance	Commentary
change mitigation and adaptation measures.		indirectly) and potentially contribute to increasing vulnerability to the effects of a changing climate in the absence of mitigation measures, thus potentially having a negative effect. A number of policies, most notably that relating to climate change, are likely to have a positive influence through minimise such effects such as via provisions to minimise greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce vulnerability. It may be beneficial to include additional specific policy content to direct how this is to be achieved, taking account of national ambition and direction in relation to climate change.
12. Seek to maintain and improve the health and wellbeing of the population.	+	Policies seek to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided alongside development, including in relation to health and wellbeing (this includes specific health infrastructure, as well as provisions that may have indirect benefits such as green space). Additional provisions across a number of policies seek to enable opportunities for active travel, the integration of green infrastructure and create inclusive and safe places. Some policies also seek to ensure communities have an opportunity to be involved in delivering sustainable communities.

11.5 Based on the consideration of the Local Plan, as it currently stands, against the sustainability objectives, in most cases positive or mixed performance is expected. One negative effect has been identified at this stage, in relation to soil resources. In many cases, the mixed or negative performance relates to environmental objectives, as a result of the potential implications (direct or indirect) of additional development within the Borough over the plan period. The same development results in some positive implications in relation to other sustainability objectives and would be required in order to be consistent with national planning policy.

11.6 There is a need to consider the implications of the Local Plan in the context of other plans, policies and programmes, as these will contribute to effects in combination with the emerging Local Plan. These will not be restricted to effects within the Borough. For example, development occurring outside Test Valley (such as through Local Plans of neighbouring areas), in conjunction with the implications of the Test Valley Local Plan 2040 will see implications

both within and beyond Test Valley, taking account of different impact pathways. For example, additional traffic generated across the wider area may contribute to cumulative effects on air quality (along with indirect implications on ecological receptors plus human health) that would not be limited by administrative boundaries. Similarly, effects on the water environment are more likely to arise based on specific catchment areas, some of which span multiple administrative areas. Evidence on such matters would need to ensure that such considerations are appropriately reflected upon.

- 11.7 The sections below seek to provide a discussion of the likely effects of the Local Plan in combination with other plans, policies and programmes. This has sought to cover all of the topics identified through the SEA Regulations and all the sustainability objectives.

### ***Discussion of the Effects of the Local Plan***

#### *Air Quality*

- 11.8 Impacts on air quality can arise as a result of short term, often temporary, factors such as through construction processes, as well as longer term implications, for example associated with changes in traffic levels and transport. The short term construction related implications can to some extent be mitigated through the management of construction processes and may be localised to the vicinity of the areas of works (and transport corridors used by construction vehicles, which are likely to extend beyond the Borough boundary).
- 11.9 While detailed assessments are not available, it is anticipated that despite policy provisions seeking to reduce necessary travel and promote sustainable travel opportunities, there is likely to be an increase in road traffic generation over time as a result of additional development within and beyond the Borough. This has the potential to result in cumulative adverse effects on air quality over time. There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) currently identified within the Borough, however there are such designations beyond the Borough boundary which may be indirectly affected by additional development associated with the Local Plan. Additionally, any increases in traffic congestion (most likely to occur at pinch points) would potentially result in a greater risk to localised air quality.
- 11.10 . Wider changes being brought forward in the context of climate change policy (in the medium to longer term) may also have implications on some pollutants associated with transport. In addition to implications on human health, changes in air quality can also have implications for habitats through nutrient enrichment – reflecting likely transport and travel routes, such receptors may also be located outside the Borough. Taking account of the in combination effects, there is uncertainty over the significance of effects on air quality and the distribution of such effects (spatially and temporally) at this stage.

## *Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna*

- 11.11 There remains uncertainty at this stage on the specific effects on these matters, reflecting that at present the Local Plan has not fully captured the scale of all types of development that may need to come forward and allocations have not yet been identified, as well as specific policies on this matter being brought forward at a later stage (Regulation 18, Stage 2).
- 11.12 While it is not possible to confirm it at this stage, it is anticipated to be unlikely that the Local Plan would result in significant adverse direct effects on designated sites of nature conservation value. The greater risk is anticipated to come from indirect, cumulative, and synergistic effects. These would not be limited to the Borough itself, depending on relevant impact pathways (for example via the waterbodies).
- 11.13 The scale of housing proposed over the plan period is anticipated to have the potential to contribute to known cumulative significant effects on internationally important nature conservation designations as a result of nutrient inputs (for example to the Solent coastal designations) and recreational impacts (for example to the Solent and New Forest designations). Effects on such designations will be further scrutinised at the next stage of preparing the Local Plan, including through a Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- 11.14 There is the potential for temporary effects associated with construction activities (e.g. noise disturbance and air quality impacts) to have implications on local biodiversity. The permanence and magnitude of these effects is likely to depend on the sensitivity of the receptors. It would be anticipated that in most cases such impacts would be addressed through the determination of planning applications (which may be accompanied by Environmental Impact Assessments).
- 11.15 The Local Plan includes provisions seeking to conserve ecological networks and deliver net gains in biodiversity. Such provisions, along with forthcoming legal obligations (such as the introduction of mandatory biodiversity net gain through the planning system, and preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies), have the potential to enhance local biodiversity, for example through habitat restoration.
- 11.16 There are a number of other factors that could influence biodiversity, flora and fauna over the plan period in combination with development coming forward linked to the Local Plan (and equivalent Local Plans in neighbouring areas). For example, the changing climate is anticipated to result in a range of effects (many of which would be indirect) on biodiversity. It would be important to account for these long term trends and their implications (which could include synergistic changes).



## *Climate Change*

- 11.17 Based on the known scale of additional development within the Borough over the plan period at this stage, additional energy use and travel (not just limited to within the Borough) is likely to result in the generation of increased greenhouse gas emissions. There are Local Plan policies that seek to minimise this (e.g. through the spatial strategy and climate change policy), with other national policies and provisions likely to also be relevant (such as forthcoming changes to Building Regulations in relation to the energy performance of new buildings, and proposals to decarbonise transport). This will also need to be considered in the wider context, accounting for overall net emissions and the targets set out within the Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended). It is recognised that changes to the climate, as a result of greenhouse gas emissions, are likely to result in cumulative, indirect effects on a range of receptors, including flora, fauna, human health, and the water environment for example.
- 11.18 Additional development could potentially contribute to increasing the vulnerability to the effects of a changing climate, if not planned sensitively and accounting for future risks (such as flooding, or extreme weather conditions). Policies within the Local Plan seek to provide a framework to help ensure such matters are taken into account.

## *Health and Wellbeing*

- 11.19 At this stage, the Local Plan has the potential to have an indirect positive effect on the health (mental and physical) and wellbeing of the population of the Borough, likely to be in the medium to longer term. This arises through a number of provisions relating to infrastructure provision (including for health infrastructure and green infrastructure), promotion of opportunities for active travel, and seeking to design out crime. However, there is uncertainty over long term effects when accounting for other drivers, including through plans, policies and programmes, as well as the implications of a changing climate.
- 11.20 More detailed consideration of this matter is available within the separate Health Impact Assessment.

## *Historic Environment*

- 11.21 Based on the proposed policies within the Local Plan at this stage, it is recognised that some of the locations where development may be focused incorporate heritage assets. However, at present the specific locations and nature of such development is unknown. This results in uncertainty in relation to the potential effects on the historic environment, and specific assets and their setting.
- 11.22 Effects on the historic environment can be relatively localised in relation to the special features of interest (but this may not always be the case, for example in the context of the historic landscape). Additionally, effects tend to be permanent in nature (this could be through direct or indirect effects).

- 11.23 Proposed policies on design include provisions in relation to ensuring that there is consideration of the historic environment. Some assets would also receive a form of protection through legal requirements. Additionally, there are a number of sources of information that can help ensure that development is brought forward in a sensitive way, such as listing descriptions (for listed buildings) and Conservation Area Character Appraisals (where available).
- 11.24 As indicated within the Scoping Report, there are a number of heritage assets within the Borough that are considered to be 'at risk'. Theoretically, development over the plan period has the potential to influence such assets, which could aid with restoration. However, this would depend on opportunities coming forward. The Local Plan does not make any specific provisions in this regard.

#### *Landscape and Settlement Character*

- 11.25 At this stage, the scale of all types of development that may need to be brought forward within the plan period have not yet been identified. Also, while the spatial strategy indicates the high level approach to distribution of development, no allocations have yet been identified. This results in some uncertainties in relation to the effects on these matters.
- 11.26 Based on the spatial strategy, the largest scale of growth is likely to be focused within and in the vicinity of the larger settlements within the Borough, including to support the regeneration of Andover town centre and the south of Romsey town centre. There may be some development within smaller communities. This is likely to have implications for settlement character, townscape and landscapes, with effects arising throughout the planning period, many of which would be permanent in nature (the degree of effect in some cases may lessen over time where landscaping schemes take time to establish). A policy has been proposed to help provide a form of mitigation to ensure these matters are considered when designing proposals.
- 11.27 Guidance is available for a number of the settlements within the Borough to help ensure that new development is not out of character – this includes through made Neighbourhood Development Plans, Town and Village Design Statements, the Landscape Character Assessment, and townscape assessments.
- 11.28 There is the potential for development to occur within the North Wessex Downs AONB and within locations that could affect the setting of this designation, as well as the New Forest National Park. At this stage the significance of such effects is unknown. The above mentioned proposed policy, guidance documents, and additional guidance documents specifically prepared for these designations, may aid in minimising the risk of adverse effects.

- 11.29 Additionally, it should be noted that effects on these matters may occur beyond the Borough boundary, for example when accounting for viewpoints or landscapes within the Borough contributing to wider character areas.
- 11.30 It is recognised that over the plan period there are likely to be changes to the landscape and settlement character that occur outside the control of the planning system, for example potentially arising out of changes to agriculture or land management. It is challenging to establish whether these cumulative changes would necessarily be positive or negative, as opposed to just being part of the evolution of the landscape of the Borough.

#### *Local Communities and Population*

- 11.31 Based on current proposals within the Local Plan, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in the housing stock in the Borough in the order of 19% over the plan period, along with an increase in the population of the Borough. However, this may not be a comparable increase when accounting for changing household sizes and other factors.
- 11.32 At this stage, the distribution of the housing and population changes is not known; however, the spatial strategy indicates that this is likely to be focused on the larger settlements in the Borough. The Scoping Report identified that in some parts of the Borough, there may be localised reductions in the population in the medium term. At this stage, it is unknown whether the Local Plan proposals are likely to alter this trend, which tended to be focused on smaller communities that were anticipated to see a smaller scale of development.
- 11.33 The Local Plan proposals may also have implications for how the age profile of the Borough changes in the medium to longer term. Within the Scoping Report it was highlighted that population of the Borough is ageing, and this is not occurring evenly across the Borough. The scale of housing proposed is likely to result in in-migration, which may have implications for the age profile.
- 11.34 Population changes in the Borough could have knock on implications, for example in relation to the use of resources and infrastructure needs.
- 11.35 At this stage, the Local Plan does not include any specific provisions for meeting affordable housing need. However, in light of national planning policy it is anticipated that additional affordable housing would come forward as a portion of the overall housing delivery. This is a matter that will be further considered as part of the preparation of the Local Plan (Regulation 18, Stage 2). However, at this stage, it is anticipated that the proposals within the Local Plan alone are unlikely to be able to meet the fully deliver on the identified affordable housing need (as assessed at a Borough-wide scale). Similarly, at this stage, there is uncertainty on whether the Local Plan would ensure that the mix of accommodation would help to meet local needs. Specific policies on this matter will also be considered at a later stage in preparing the Local Plan (Regulation 18, Stage 2).

- 11.36 Aside from the provision of affordable housing, the effect on the actual affordability of housing over the plan period is uncertain. There are a number of factors within the Local Plan that have the potential to impact on affordability (both in terms of the upfront and ongoing costs); however, it is anticipated that other external factors are likely to be more important in influencing this matter.
- 11.37 The Local Plan spatial strategy seeks to distribute development to those areas with greater access to existing facilities and services, whilst also ensuring that additional infrastructure is provided to support growth. This could have knock on effects, for example in relation to health and wellbeing, the local economy, and the wider environment.

### *Local Economy*

- 11.38 At this stage, the Local Plan has not identified a strategic policy setting out whether additional commercial floorspace is required in order to support the local economy. Further evidence is required to be undertaken to inform this. There are however general provisions in relation to supporting the economy, including through the approach to Andover and Romsey town centres and in securing appropriate infrastructure to support new development. Such provisions are also anticipated to have a positive effect in the medium to long term on the vitality and viability of these centres.
- 11.39 As indicated in Chapter 4, the local economy is being affected by a number of wider trends, at present this includes the implications of the Coronavirus pandemic. There are also likely to need to be significant changes to the economy in the short to medium term in order to reflect the transition to a net zero carbon future. When considering these matters together, it results in considerable uncertainty in the likely effects on the local economy in the future.
- 11.40 Changes in the local economy are not only influenced by wider external factors but can have implications beyond the Borough boundary, which could include parts of the Enterprise M3 LEP area and neighbouring administrative areas.
- 11.41 While the Local Plan supports the provision of infrastructure in conjunction with new development, which will include educational infrastructure, at this stage it is considered that there are unlikely to be significant effects on this.
- 11.42 Car ownership within the Borough is relatively high, which is likely to be in part related to the rural nature and relative affluence of the Borough (recognising there are variations within Test Valley). Car use is currently anticipated to remain relatively high over the plan period, although provisions are made through the Local Plan (and other relevant plans, policies and programmes) to facilitate and promote the use of active and sustainable modes of travel. The provision of additional walking and cycling routes as part of new development, has the potential to benefit existing and new residents, as well as those outside the Borough. Additional traffic would not just be limited to within the

Borough; while development outside Test Valley is also likely to contribute to additional vehicle movements within the Borough.

### *Soil and Geology*

- 11.43 The Local Plan 2040 will result in the development of greenfield sites, which will have a permanent adverse effect on soil resources (which are considered to be non-renewable). At this stage, it is uncertain if there will be implications on best and most versatile agricultural land. Other factors are also likely to have implications for soil resources, for example, the changing climate and changes to land management (including for agricultural land).
- 11.44 In addition to the direct effects of additional development, there can be implications through the compression of soil, which can have implications for the water environment and the risk of flooding. There may be some opportunities to reduce the extent of this through the management of construction activities (not linked to any policy content within the Local Plan) and in the medium to longer term through the use of sustainable drainage systems.
- 11.45 There may also be wider implications on soil and geological resources, for example through the import of materials for construction. This would contribute to cumulative effects, the significance of which is unknown. The Minerals and Waste Plan (developed by Hampshire County Council) will seek to ensure appropriate mineral resources are available, along with sufficient waste processing facilities, to meet the identified needs.
- 11.46 There are no specific provisions within the Local Plan (at this stage) in relation to avoiding the risk of land contamination, or providing opportunities to address potential historic contamination. The Scoping Report identified that as at 2017 there were no areas formally designated as contaminated land within Test Valley, although sources of possible contamination had been identified.

### *Water Environment*

- 11.47 The water environment plays a number of important roles, including as a source of drinking water and supporting habitats and species in the locality. Catchments that fall within the Borough include those of the Test, Itchen and Avon.
- 11.48 Over the course of the plan period, the demand for water consumption is anticipated to increase as a result of the rising population of the Borough (and surrounding areas that form part of the same water supply areas, with cumulative effects as a result). This needs to be considered in conjunction with changing demand for water from existing users and potential implications of a changing climate – the latter may act as a driver for increased demand for water resources and a reduction in the availability of supplies. It is also recognising that policies within the Local Plan promote the efficient use of water resources.

- 11.49 Increased demand for water for public use has the potential to result in indirect adverse effects on biodiversity, flora and fauna if not appropriately regulated. However, water abstraction is controlled by the Environment Agency, which includes consideration of the needs of the environment as well as demand for water consumption. There have been recent changes to licenses affecting supplies that serve parts of the Borough to enable more sustainable abstraction rates (yet to be fully implemented), with further resources subject to investigation. The relevant water companies are exploring and delivering measures that will seek to manage water resources taking account of the abstraction license requirements. This includes programmes to reduce abstraction and promote water efficiency.
- 11.50 In the short term, it is recognised that temporary measures are in place that may allow additional water abstraction in dry periods that could have adverse effects on the environment. Mitigation measures have been secured through other regulatory processes to seek to minimise the risk of adverse effects.
- 11.51 Levels of water use may also have implications on water quality, along with other impact pathways, such as through the generation of waste water from development and surface water runoff. At present, there are no specific provisions within the Local Plan to safeguard the water environment, including groundwater resources (which are a source of water supply within the Borough). The Local Plan does however include a policy seeking to ensure appropriate infrastructure is delivered to support development, including in relation to waste water treatment capacity.
- 11.52 Further work will be undertaken, as part of the consideration of the distribution of development within the Borough through the Local Plan, to understand infrastructure capacity, and thus the potential for effects on the water environment. Water treatment infrastructure serving development in Test Valley is sometimes located beyond the Borough boundary. Cumulative effects are likely to arise in relation to this matter, with the potential for synergistic effects, including when accounting for development outside the Borough. It is also recognised that parts of the Borough are not connected to the mains sewerage network, therefore would need to have bespoke waste water treatment measures in place. Any measures to enhance the efficient use of water, could also have implications for the capacity needed for the treatment of waste water.
- 11.53 There are a number of potential implications on the water environment that fall outside the remit of the Local Plan, including in relation to diffuse water pollution sources, which are more challenging to regulate. There are a range of regulatory frameworks in place that have implications for water quality and the water environment, including those linked to the Water Framework Directive, as transposed into UK legislation following the withdrawal from the European Union (which also consider ecological receptors). This focuses on the water bodies themselves, so should be a driver towards positive action across point and diffuse water sources.

11.54 Parts of the Borough are at risk to a variety of sources of flooding. The changing climate is anticipated to have implications for the increasing areas that may be at risk of flooding (for example as a result of changes in rainfall intensity). Additional development has the potential to add to this if not planned in a sensitive way (for example in terms of managing run off rates) and also increase the risk of people being vulnerable to the effects of flooding. There could also be knock on effects on the economy and the environment. There is reference within the Local Plan policies to taking account of flood risk, with a clear steer also provided within national planning policy and guidance.

### ***Initial Identification of Mitigation Measures***

11.55 Mitigation measures have started to be incorporated into the Local Plan, however this is likely to continue to be undertaken in future stages as more policy content is added. Through the appraisal of options and the proposed approach to specific policy areas, opportunities have been taken to identify where mitigation measures may need to be considered.

11.56 One such form of mitigation will be to avoid vulnerable or sensitive locations for development – this will need to be taken on board when considering site allocations in order to meet identified needs, as well as providing a policy framework to ensure this is also carried out through the determination of planning applications. In this context, it will be important to ensure that the resultant Local Plan would need to be considered as a whole.

11.57 In many cases, while policies within Local Plans provide a means to highlight issues that will need to be taken into account, individual mitigation packages will need to be developed as part of planning applications.

11.58 There are likely to be some residual impacts on the environment, when accounting for the implications of the Local Plan, in conjunction with other relevant plans, policies and programmes. At this stage, this is anticipated to include permanent effects on soil resources where housing development comes forward on greenfield sites. This is not anticipated to be a significant effect.

11.59 Below are some of the mitigation measures that have been identified that would be appropriate to consider at the next stage of preparing the Local Plan 2040 alongside the preparation of further detailed policies.

- Securing the delivery of affordable housing to contribute towards meeting identified needs;
- Seeking to ensure an appropriate mix of accommodation to meet needs, this could include for different household types and / or communities;
- Ensuring that existing facilities, services, infrastructure and employment opportunities are retained as far as is possible / appropriate to do so;
- Provisions are made to avoid the risk of pollution to the environment (including land, air and water), ideally from point and diffused sources, with opportunities to address or remediate historic pollution as appropriate;

- Potentially consider policy options around maximising the potential for the appropriate re-use of buildings and the efficient use of land (including for any allocations that are proposed to meet development needs);
- Potentially more detailed climate change policy content;
- Set out more detail on the approach to managing flood risk and avoiding vulnerable development in locations at risk (either now or in the future);
- Potentially specific policy content in relation to conserving and, where possible enhancing, statutory landscape designations;
- Set out more detail on the approach to managing the historic environment; and
- Set out more detail on the approach to conserving and enhancing biodiversity, habitats and species of importance; and ecological networks.



## 12 Monitoring the Significant Effects of the Plan

**What the SEA Regulations say:**

The authority shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action (Regulation 17(1)).

The Environmental Report shall include a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring (Schedule 2, point 9).

- 12.1 Monitoring of the Local Plan allows the actual significant effects of implementation to be tested against those predicted as part of the sustainability appraisal process. It can aid in the future identification of sustainability problems and issues and enables more accurate predictions of likely effects. Monitoring can also be used to inform the baseline information for future plans. Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the plan forms part of stage B of the appraisal process.
- 12.2 The Local Plan is being developed in stages, with the current stage focusing on strategic matters. Therefore it is not considered to be appropriate to identify measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan at this point. Therefore a proposed strategy to monitor the implementation of the Local Plan will be provided at later stages, rather than as part of this sustainability appraisal report. This will also identify which key bodies will be the source or provider of the monitoring information.
- 12.3 It is recognised that the information available for monitoring does not always align easily with the items identified as potentially being significantly affected by the plan. Therefore, where available proxies, or alternative indicators may need to be identified.
- 12.4 As far as possible, the indicators will be reported in monitoring reports produced on an annual basis; this will be through the Authority's Monitoring Report. If some of the indicators are not available annually they will be updated as regularly as possible. The list of indicators for monitoring will be reviewed regularly with the potential for indicators and targets to be added or amended as appropriate to help measure the effects of the Local Plan.

## 13 Conclusions

- 13.1 This Sustainability Appraisal report has been prepared in line with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the SEA Regulations 2004 (as amended). This report has set out how sustainability matters have been considered and used to help inform the preparation of the Council's emerging Local Plan.
- 13.2 The sustainability objectives<sup>48</sup>, set out in the Scoping Report (2020) and also provided in Chapter 3 of this report, have been used as a basis for appraising options and the effects of the proposals that the Council has identified.
- 13.3 The Local Plan objectives have been tested for their compatibility with the sustainability objectives. While some areas of potential conflict were identified, this was to be expected given the need for additional development whilst also seeking to conserve and enhance the environment.
- 13.4 Options for the distribution of development (to inform the spatial strategy within the Local Plan) and for the approach to development and regeneration in Andover and Romsey town centres have been tested against the sustainability objectives.
- 13.5 For some of the policy areas identified, there were no reasonable alternatives available that were sufficiently distinct to enable testing against the sustainability objectives, particularly when accounting for national policy and guidance, local evidence, and the Local Plan objectives.
- 13.6 Following the consideration of options, or proposed policy approaches where no reasonable alternatives were identified, there has been prediction and evaluation of the likely effects of the Local Plan, as it stands at this stage of its preparation.
- 13.7 The outputs of the appraisal process and identification of likely effects have been used to help inform the Council's decisions in preparing the Local Plan. This includes the identification of mitigation measures that should be integrated into the next stage of preparing the Local Plan.
- 13.8 The matters covered in this Sustainability Appraisal report will be revisited as the preparation of the Local Plan progresses, which each of the forthcoming stages of the Local Plan production being accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal report.
- 13.9 This report has been published for consultation alongside the Local Plan Regulation 18, Stage 1 document.

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<sup>48</sup> Which form part of the sustainability appraisal framework.

