



Sustainability Appraisal

Summary

Commenting on this Document

The Sustainability Appraisal report (including this summary) 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:

<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/localplan2040>

If you would like to comment on this document, please send your views to the address or email address below. Should you have any questions, please contact the Planning Policy Team.

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1 Introduction

What is the Sustainability Appraisal and why is it required?

- 1.1 This Sustainability Appraisal report has been produced to explain how sustainability matters have been considered and taken into account to date in the preparation of the Test Valley Local Plan 2040 Development Plan Document (DPD). It also helps to ensure that the Local Plan contributes to delivering sustainable development.
- 1.2 Sustainable development is often taken to mean ‘*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*’¹. Sustainability covers environmental, social and economic matters.
- 1.3 Sustainability Appraisals are intended to support the selection of options in the preparation of plans. This document is a summary of the full Sustainability Appraisal report.
- 1.4 The Council has a duty to consider the sustainability of its plans through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). It also has to prepare an environmental report of its plans as a result of requirements contained in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended)². The requirements of both pieces of legislation have been met through the Sustainability Appraisal report, which has also been prepared taking account of Government guidance.
- 1.5 The Sustainability Appraisal Report should be read in conjunction with the Local Plan 2040 Regulation 18, Stage 1 document and the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report³. The Scoping Report includes the first stage of the sustainability appraisal process and has been prepared as a standalone document (a summary of the Scoping Report is also available).

Which Plan is being assessed?

- 1.6 The Council is preparing the Local Plan 2040 to set out the long term strategy to direct development for 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.
- 1.7 The Local Plan 2040 will cover all of the area of Test Valley for which the Council has responsibility for planning functions. This excludes a small area in

¹ 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.

² This legislation is also referred to as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations.

³ Available at: <https://testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/evidence-base/sustainability-appraisal>

the south west of the Borough, which forms part of the New Forest National Park.

- 1.8 The Local Plan 2040 has a role in supporting the implementation of some of the priorities and aspirations of the Council's Corporate Plan. It needs to reflect national planning policy, which is mainly provided through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.9 The Local Plan 2040 is being prepared in stages, with the current stage focusing on setting out the vision and objectives, spatial strategy, and the consideration of some of the development needs and certain strategic policy areas. Additional policy areas will be considered in a subsequent stage. Sustainability appraisal reports will be prepared to accompany each stage. Therefore this Sustainability Appraisal report only covers the policy areas being put forward at this stage – namely the Local Plan 2040 Regulation 18, Stage 1 document.
- 1.10 The proposed objectives of the Local Plan 2040 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.

2 Sustainability Appraisal Methodology

- 2.1 The sustainability appraisal process is undertaken alongside the preparation of the Local Plan 2040. There are a number of stages to the sustainability appraisal process, based on the legal requirements and government guidance⁴, these are:
- Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope
 - Stage B: Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects
 - Stage C: Prepare the sustainability appraisal report
 - Stage D: Seek representations on the sustainability appraisal report from consultation bodies and the public
 - Stage E: Post adoption reporting and monitoring
- 2.2 The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report⁵ has covered Stage A and should be read in conjunction with this Sustainability Appraisal report. For information, a summary of the Scoping Report is also available, which incorporates updates to the information, where relevant, that have occurred since the Scoping Report was prepared.
- 2.3 This summary and the main report for the Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan 2040 focus on Stages B and C. Stage E is undertaken after the Local Plan is adopted, however consideration will be given to the approach to monitoring in advance of this⁶.
- 2.4 Taking account of the above, the Sustainability Appraisal Report for the Local Plan 2040 covers the following:
- A summary of the Scoping Report, including reference to the sustainability objectives;
 - An assessment of the compatibility of the Local Plan 2040 objectives against the sustainability objectives;
 - An assessment of the sustainability of options and reasonable alternatives considered for the matters covered in the Local Plan 2040 Regulation 18, Stage 1 document; and
 - Identification of the potential significant effects as a result of the Local Plan 2040, as it currently stands.
- 2.5 There is a requirement to describe how the assessment of the sustainability of the Local Plan 2040 has been carried out and any difficulties that were encountered. This is provided in the main report of the Sustainability Appraisal. One of the challenges relates to the preparation of the Local Plan

⁴ This includes the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

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

⁶ This has not been done at this stage of preparing the Local Plan as it only incorporates aspects of what will be the full remit of the document; therefore it is premature to identify measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan when considered as a whole.

in stages, so the position set out in Sustainability Appraisal at this stage 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 also recognised that assumptions have had to be made as part of the appraisal process. For example, in Test Valley one of the main sources of air pollution is from road traffic, therefore, where options are anticipated to result in an increase in traffic levels, this is assumed to have the potential to result in an increase in air pollution.

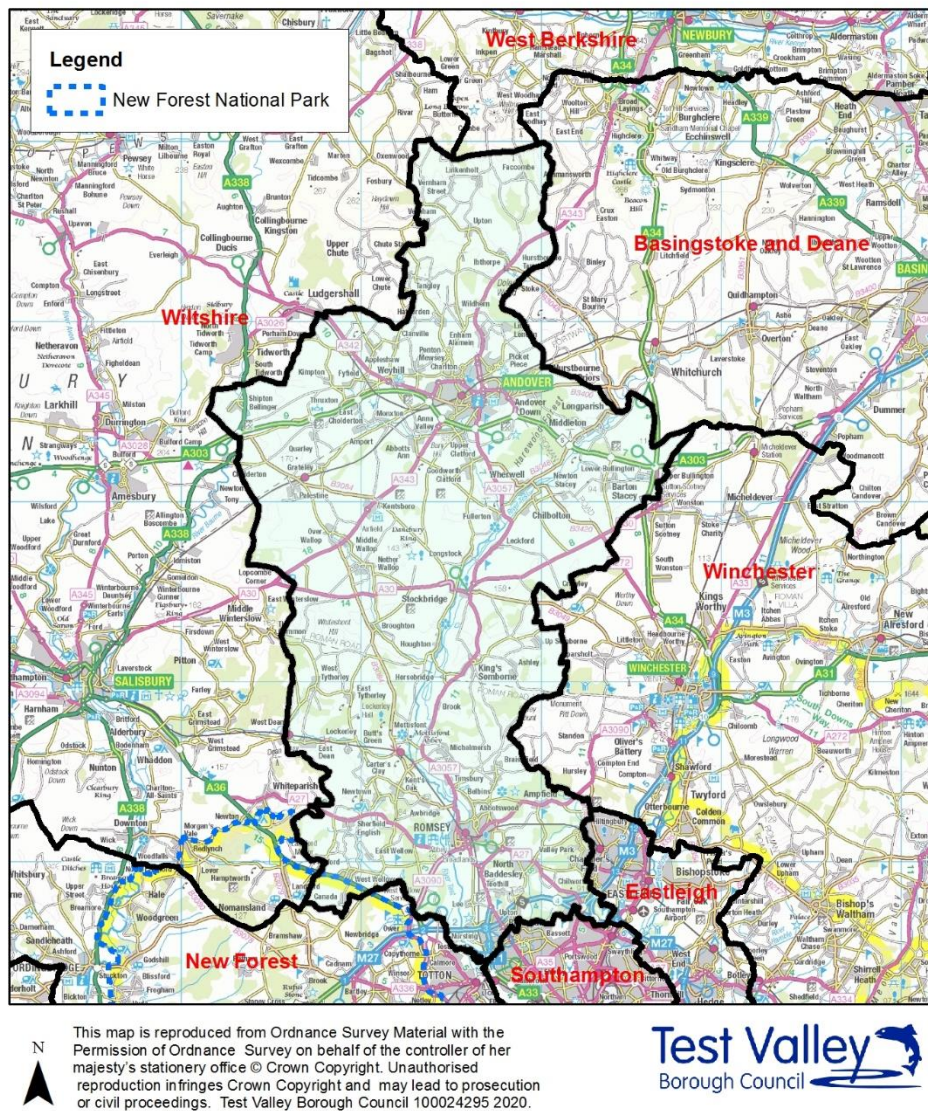
- 2.6 In undertaking the appraisal of options, the sustainability objectives (that were developed through the Scoping Report, referred to in section 3 of this summary) have been used as a framework to consider the likely effect of options. The identification of alternative options, and the consideration of likely effects, has been informed by national policy and guidance, evidence base studies⁷, and professional judgement. Consideration has also been given to the potential for mitigation measures to be provided to lessen potential negative effects. The Council has taken account of the outputs of this work, along with other considerations, as part of preparing the Local Plan 2040.

⁷ Available at: <https://testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/evidence-base>

3 Setting the Context and Objectives

- 3.1 The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report sets out the context as required as part of the sustainability appraisal process, with the summary for the Scoping Report providing an outline of this information.
- 3.2 The main report of the Sustainability Appraisal for the Local Plan 2040 includes a summary of this information, which includes some updates.
- 3.3 The Borough of Test Valley is located in west Hampshire, with the main towns within it being Andover and Romsey. Stockbridge is located approximately centrally in the Borough. There are a significant number of other settlements within Test Valley. The Borough is largely rural. Test Valley is in close proximity to a number of other towns and cities, as show in Figure 1.

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



- 3.4 The underlying geology of Test Valley is predominantly chalk. The River Test is the key river system within the Borough, with parts of the Borough falling

into the catchments of the River Itchen (to the east) and the River Avon (to the west). The geology of the Borough in conjunction with the river systems has impacted on the landscape of the Borough.

- 3.5 Much of the Borough to the north of Andover falls within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). As noted above, a small area in the south west of the Borough lies within the New Forest National Park. The area has a rich built heritage, with just under 2,100 listed buildings and 36 conservation areas (some of which relate to more than one settlement). There is significant archaeology within the Borough from a range of periods. The Borough also includes a range of biodiversity assets, including sites of international, national and local importance, as well as species of importance. 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.
- 3.6 The population of the Borough is over 133,000 people, and it is estimated that there are over 57,000 homes within the Borough. It is forecasted these figures will continue to rise. The Borough is not generally identified as a deprived area; however, there are pockets of deprivation within Test Valley. The proportion of the population in Test Valley that are in employment is higher than the national position but lower than the regional position. Health within the Borough is generally good and tends to be above the national averages in a range of measures (including life expectancy).
- 3.7 There are a range of plans, policies and programmes relevant to the production of the Local Plan 2040. These range from international to local level documents, covering social, economic and environmental issues. From these it has been possible to identify a number of key messages and objectives that have informed the preparation of the sustainability appraisal and the Local Plan. These range from conserving water resources to supporting sustainable economic growth. Appendices to the Scoping Report and the main report of the Sustainability Appraisal outline the relevant plans, policies and programmes. This includes the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 3.8 The Scoping Report includes a review of the existing situation in the Borough in relation to the environment, economy, local community and a number of other matters. It also gives some consideration of how the Borough is likely to evolve in the future (without the implementation of the Local Plan 2040). It is recognised that the population is likely to continue to grow, with the age structure and household composition likely to continue to change. It is also anticipated that there would be changes to the natural environment without the implementation of the Plan, including as a result of new development and other factors (including a changing climate).
- 3.9 Through the review of the baseline and its likely evolution, a number of likely issues and problems have been identified, which informed the preparation of the sustainability objectives. Table 1 documents some of the sustainability issues for the Borough. The Local Plan 2040 may have a role in helping to

address the issues identified. These range from limits on the availability of water within the Borough, to the affordability of housing and the trend towards an ageing population.

Table 1: Summary of sustainability issues and problems

Air Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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.
Biodiversity and Geodiversity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some designated heritage assets within the Borough are noted to be at risk (primarily relating to archaeology). • 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.
Homes and Accommodation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implications of changes in population and demographics in terms of the type of accommodation needed. • Issues of affordability of housing, including the ratio of house prices to wages, this varies within the Borough. • Ensuring accommodation needs of different groups within the community are appropriately met.
Land and Soil
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing pressure on land resources from additional development, with limited opportunities to use previously developed land. • Additional greenfield development could include higher grade (best and most versatile) agricultural land.
Landscape, Townscape and Character
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Population and Demographics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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. • Trends towards an ageing population may affect the type of accommodation needed, as well as implications for the availability of services and their accessibility.
Travel and Transport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Higher proportion of people travelling to work by car in Test Valley.

- Additional traffic flows / congestion can have adverse impacts on a range of factors, including productivity and noise & air quality (the latter potentially affecting health and biodiversity).

Water Resources and Water Quality

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Parts of the Borough are at risk of a variety of types of flooding (which may increase as a result of a changing climate).

3.10 The final stage of this process was to produce a set of sustainability objectives (as part of the sustainability appraisal framework) that can be used to test proposals within the Local Plan. 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.

4 Assessing the Effects of Alternative Options

- 4.1 As noted above, one of the key stages of the sustainability appraisal process is to consider the likely effects of different options for achieving a plan's objectives. This is intended to help understand the potential implications of the options and therefore help inform the identification of the preferred option or approach.

Local Plan 2040 Objectives

- 4.2 The first part of testing the sustainability is to consider the compatibility of the Local Plan objectives with the sustainability objectives, both of which have been set out above. This was undertaken looking at the compatibility of each Local Plan objective in turn, as well as considering them collectively.
- 4.3 The assessment of the Local Plan objectives identified that in general (when both considered individually and collectively) they are broadly compatible with the sustainability objectives and are likely to contribute to delivering sustainable development. In some cases, the implications may depend on the implementation of the objective.
- 4.4 When considering the Local Plan objectives individually, in a small number of cases areas of potential conflict were identified, for example those objectives that may result in additional development in relation to sustainability objectives seeking to conserve the environment, and vice versa. To some degree, this is inevitable considering the need to balance social, economic and environmental objectives. When considered collectively, no potential conflicts were identified. Taking this into account, no changes to the objectives were recommended.

Identifying and Appraising Options

- 4.5 The next stage of the process involved appraising options that the Council has identified based on alternative ways of supporting the delivery of the Local Plan objectives. In some cases, no alternative approaches may have been identified by the Council, primarily as a result of a lack of distinct options being available and taking account of national planning policy and the Local Plan objectives. Identified options have been assessed against the sustainability objectives (as listed in section 3 of this document).
- 4.6 As noted above, the Local Plan 2040 is being prepared in stages, therefore the following matters have been considered through the Sustainability Appraisal at this stage:
- Establishing the Spatial Strategy and identification of a Settlement Hierarchy;
 - The approach to certain strategic policies; and
 - The scale of Housing Need.

Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy

- 4.7 A spatial strategy provides the overall direction of growth for development, following on from the Local Plan objectives. At a high level, it sets out the location, type and shape of growth that is to be delivered. This reflects a requirement of national planning policy that local plans should establish an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places (paragraph 20, NPPF).
- 4.8 A number of approaches were identified for distributing development. There was the potential to look at combinations of these options. The approaches that were identified as being reasonable for further consideration comprised; concentrating development at key sustainable transport hubs; concentrating development at key economic centres; focusing development at Andover and Romsey; distributing development to support the largest settlements (including more urban and rural locations); and dispersing growth to all parishes. All of these options were assessed against the sustainability objectives, with the outcomes presented in Appendix 2 to the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 4.9 Through the appraisal, it was identified that in many cases the implications of the options depended on the way they would be implemented. The options relating to dispersing growth to all parishes and concentrating development at key sustainability transport hubs were not preferred when accounting for the outcomes of the assessments, including in relation to their access to existing facilities, services and infrastructure provisions. The remaining three options performed in a similar way, with opportunities to bring them forward in a hybrid approach.
- 4.10 The hybrid approach, which forms the basis for the proposed spatial strategy, was also assessed against the sustainability objectives. This was anticipated to have strong positive effects in relation to the local economy, including supporting the town centres and the rural economy; as well as positive effects for maintaining and improving access to services, facilities, and infrastructure and sustainable travel modes; and in relation to the health and wellbeing of the population. A mixed performance was indicated in relation to air quality and climate change objectives, with the implications on a number of objectives depending on the implementation of the approach.
- 4.11 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. No reasonable alternatives have been identified for the approach to establishing the settlement 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.

- 4.12 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. However, this is likely to evolve in future stages of the preparation of the Local Plan 2040, whereby the different tiers in the hierarchy may be linked with specific levels of growth being distributed to them. This would need to be considered through the Sustainability Appraisal alongside future stages of the preparation of the Local Plan.
- 4.13 More detail can be found in chapters 7 and 8 of the main report of the Sustainability Appraisal.

Strategic Policies

- 4.14 A series of strategic policies have been prepared at this stage of the Local Plan, reflecting priorities associated within the Local Plan objectives and delivering the Council's corporate objectives. It should be noted that at later stages in the preparation of the Local Plan, additional strategic policies may be identified, in addition to more detailed policies to aid in the determination of planning application.
- 4.15 The strategic policy topics considered at this stage comprise:
- 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; and
 - Delivering Infrastructure.
- 4.16 In relation to a number of these topics, there were no sufficiently distinct options identified to test as part of the sustainability appraisal process, for example when accounting for national planning policy and guidance, as well as the Local Plan objectives. In each of these cases, the proposed policy approach was tested against the sustainability objectives, with the outputs presented in Appendix 3 to the main report of the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 4.17 The only topic where alternative approaches were identified, related to delivering development and regeneration in Andover and Romsey town centres. The options related to the range of uses that would be acceptable in the core areas of these town centres, for example whether to focus on retail uses at the ground floor level, to identify a wider range of town centre uses to encourage activity, or to give much greater flexibility on the types of uses.
- 4.18 Through the appraisal process, all three options performed in a similar way in relation to the sustainability objectives, with the main differences tending to relate to the objectives on the local economy and maintaining and improving health and wellbeing. This mainly arose from the first option (with a focus on retail) having less flexibility than the other two options.

- 4.19 Taking account of the outcomes of the process, the first option was not preferred as it had the potential to undermine the attainment of the objectives in relation to town centres. While the outcomes of the second and third options were broadly comparable, the Council sought to proceed with the second option as this would provide greater clarity on the type of uses that would be acceptable in these locations and provide a means of seeking to concentrate activity within the core of the town centres.
- 4.20 In assessing the other policy areas, the outcomes varied in relation to the sustainability objectives. A number of these policy areas in effect provide a means of mitigating impacts of potential development within the Borough that will form part of the Local Plan.
- 4.21 In many cases, the policy areas were considered to perform positively in relation to the sustainability objectives, with mixed effects or dependence on implementation also identified.

Housing Need

- 4.22 National planning policy highlights that 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 assessed through a standard method of identifying local housing needs⁸).
- 4.23 The supporting national guidance also identifies scenarios when it may be appropriate to plan for a higher housing figure. This includes accounting for any growth strategies for the area; to support the delivery of any strategic infrastructure improvements; or through agreeing to take on unmet housing need from a neighbouring authority. None of these circumstances were relevant to Test Valley, therefore they were not justified as reasonable alternative approaches at this stage. This will be kept under review as part of the preparation of the Local Plan.
- 4.24 An option of increasing the identified housing need to help meet local affordable housing need was not justified as a reasonable alternative, particularly when accounting for the outcomes of local evidence through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). Additionally, an option of identifying a lower level of housing need than established through the standard method was not considered to be a reasonable alternative as none of the circumstances set out in national policy that would justify a lower level of housing would be relevant to the Borough at this time.
- 4.25 The implication is that the only reasonable approach identified was applying the standard method for identifying local housing needs. At present, this method indicates a housing need for Test Valley of 541 homes per annum, which gives a total of 10,820 homes over the plan period of 2020 to 2040.

⁸ This is calculated based on an assessment of demographic changes (based on numbers of households) and an affordability adjustment (based on house prices relative to earnings), as set out here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments#housing-need>

This was subject to assessment against the sustainability objectives, as presented in Appendix 4 to the main report of the Sustainability Appraisal.

- 4.26 This approach was anticipated to have positive effects in meeting the housing needs of the population and in relation to the local economy. Negative effects were identified in relation to a number of sustainability objectives linked to the environment, including soil resources (reflecting that additional greenfield development would be needed to deliver this level of housing). There may be scope to mitigate some of the potential negative effects identified, including through identifying where the housing comes forward to meet this need and putting in place policies that influence the way housing comes forward. This could include securing the provision of appropriate infrastructure, as would be secured through one of the above mentioned proposed strategic policies.
- 4.27 In addition to reviewing whether there were reasonable alternative approaches to the scale of housing need, there has also been consideration of the identification of Housing Market Areas⁹ within the Borough. This was done as a technical exercise based on the most recent evidence and the approach set out in national planning guidance. Therefore, no reasonable alternative options were identified for this. The key evidence was provided through the Housing Market Areas Study, which indicated there are two Housing Market Areas within the Borough and identified their geographic extent.
- 4.28 In light of this, there was also consideration of the split of the scale of housing need between the two Housing Market Areas. The only reasonable approach identified was to split the scale of housing need between the Housing Market Areas on a demographic basis (i.e. the existing population split), reflecting that the standard method for identifying local housing needs is based on demographic data.
- 4.29 More detail can be found in chapter 10 of the main report of the Sustainability Appraisal.

⁹ These are geographical areas defined based on demands and preferences for all types of housing, reflecting key links between places where people live and work.

5 Identifying the Effects of the Local Plan 2040

- 5.1 A key part of the sustainability appraisal process is identifying the significant effects¹⁰ of the plan under consideration (i.e. the Local Plan 2040). It is also necessary to consider ways to prevent or reduce any significant negative effects through mitigation measures.
- 5.2 This assessment can only relate to the content of the Local Plan 2040 as it stands at present. This only includes some of the policies that will make up the full Local Plan 2040, which is being produced in stages.
- 5.3 It also needs to be taken into account, that the actual effects that arise will depend on the applications received and considered against the Local Plan 2040 (when it is adopted) as well as the potential interactions with other plans, policies and programmes.
- 5.4 More detail is provided in chapter 11 of the main report of the Sustainability Appraisal.

Summary of the Effects of the Local Plan 2040

- 5.5 Based on the current proposals within the Local Plan, it is anticipated that there would be an increase in the housing stock of about 19% over the plan period, along with an increase in the population of the Borough. At this stage, the distribution of the housing and population changes is not known; however, the spatial indicates that this is likely to be focused on the larger settlements in the Borough.
- 5.6 It is anticipated that there would be indirect positive effect on the health and wellbeing of the population of the Borough, likely to be in the medium to longer term. However, there is some uncertainty as to how other factors might influence this, particularly in the longer term.
- 5.7 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. 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.
- 5.8 A growth in population of the Borough is likely to be accompanied by an increase in traffic levels within Test Valley and beyond the Borough. Development proposals outside Test Valley may also contribute to traffic levels within the Borough. The Local Plan and other relevant plans, policies and programmes include policies to facilitate and promote the use of active

¹⁰ This includes short, medium and long term effects; permanent and temporary effects; indirect effects (also called secondary effects); those which may result in combination with other factors (known as cumulative effects), and those where the effect is increased in combination with other factors (known as synergistic effects).

and sustainable modes of travel, which may help to mitigate the implications of this. There are potential knock on effects on matters such as air quality (with transport being a key source of air pollution within the Borough), climate change, and health.

- 5.9 The demand for resources, including energy and water is likely to increase, both through construction activities and long term use or operation of development that comes forward through the Local Plan. This could result in indirect effects, for example on the water environment, soil resources (including through the development of greenfield (undeveloped) land), and climate change. Some of the policy proposals in the Local Plan (for example, in relation to climate change) may help to reduce the degree of such effects, along with the implications of other plans, policies and programmes.
- 5.10 Landscape, settlement character and potentially the historic environment are likely to be influenced by the proposals within the Local Plan. However, at this stage, the scale of all types of development that may be needed have not yet been identified (to be considered at future stages of the preparation of the Local Plan). This creates some uncertainty but such impacts are likely to be permanent in nature. A strategic policy is proposed to help provide a form of mitigation to ensure these matters are considered when designing proposals.
- 5.11 Additionally, there is uncertainty over the specific effects on biodiversity and local ecology. The scale of housing proposed over the plan period has 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). Such matters will be further examined at the next stage of preparing the Local Plan.
- 5.12 In a number of cases, the implications of the Local Plan for the environment are anticipated to result in a greater potential risk of indirect effects having an adverse impact, rather than direct effects. It should also be noted that effects will extend beyond the Borough, for example associated with additional travel, and implications across water catchments.
- 5.13 At the next stage of preparing the Local Plan (Regulation 18, Stage 2) additional policies and proposals will be considered, which will include more detailed (non-strategic) policies. Some of these policies are likely to act as mitigation for the implications of development within the Borough. A further Sustainability Appraisal will be prepared to accompany the preparation of this stage of the Local Plan, which will also review the consideration of likely significant effects that may arise.

Summary of Initial Identification of Mitigation Measures

- 5.14 Mitigation measures have started to be incorporated into the Local Plan 2040, however this is likely to continue to be undertaken in future stages as more policy content is added.

- 5.15 Mitigation is likely to include avoiding vulnerable or sensitive locations for development – this will need to be taken on board when considering site allocations in order to meet identified needs. Additionally, mitigation measures will include providing a policy framework to ensure development (through planning applications) is brought forward in a way that minimises the risk of adverse effects, and takes the opportunity to maximise positive effects as far as possible.
- 5.16 Some of the mitigation measures that have been identified through the sustainability appraisal process so far, for consideration at the next stage of preparing the Local Plan 2040, include:
- 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.
- 5.17 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. This will be further assessed through subsequent Sustainability Appraisal reports that will be prepared to support future stages of the preparation of the Local Plan 2040.

