

# Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment)

June 2019

Post-Adoption Statement



Barrow Borough Local Plan

Working together to support sustainable development within the Borough of Barrow-in-Furness



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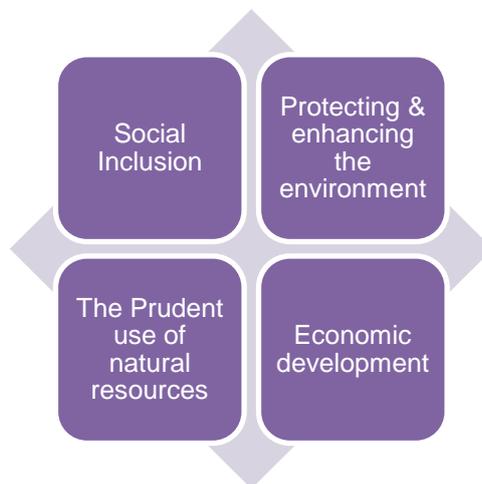
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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This post-adoption statement is the final output of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process. It describes the way in which the Council has taken environmental and sustainability considerations and the views of consultees into account when preparing the Local Plan.
- 1.2 This post-adoption statement satisfies the requirements for post adoption procedure and demonstrates compliance with the requirements of Regulation 16 (4) in the SEA regulations. This statement therefore sets out:
- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme (Section 4.0)
  - How the environmental report has been taken into account (Section 5.0)
  - How opinions expressed in response to the consultation on the SA Reports have been taken into account (Section 6.0)
  - The reasons for choosing the plan or programme, as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with (Section 7.0)
  - The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme (Section 8.0).

## 2.0 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 2.1 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) are tools which are used to appraise planning policy documents. They promote sustainable development, taking into account social, environmental and economic factors.
- 2.2 The Council has produced a combined SA and SEA as the two assessments share a number of similarities. For ease the combined documents are referred to as SA throughout this report.
- 2.3 The SA considers the inter-relationship between the following aspects:



### **3.0 The Local Plan**

- 3.1 Future development in Barrow Borough needs to be guided by decisions that improve the quality of life for everyone in the Borough and which protect and enhance the natural and built environment. The Barrow Borough Local Plan is the statutory document that will shape the future of the Borough, containing the plans and policies that will guide development to 2031.
- 3.2 The Local Plan impacts upon a wide range of people and organisations. Public consultation on the document began in 2012, when the Council asked local people and stakeholders what they thought should be included in the Local Plan, in terms of what the Borough needs, where it should go and how it should be done.
- 3.3 Following the initial consultation the Council produced several drafts of the document: the Issues and Options Draft (2014), the Preferred Options Draft (2015), the Publication Draft (2016), the Pre-submission Draft (2017) and the Submission Draft (2018). The Council's Consultation Statement, produced in January 2018, provides further information on how the Council engaged with the public and interested parties at each stage of Local Plan production.

### **4.0 How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan**

- 4.1 The Local Plan provides an opportunity to show that the Council is committed to promoting sustainable development and also to show what it considers to be sustainable, helping developers determine the sustainability of their proposals whilst they are developing them.
- 4.2 Policy DS1 is the overarching sustainability policy in the Local Plan, focusing on enhancing the quality of life for residents, taking an integrated approach to protect, conserve and enhance the built, natural and historic environment whilst ensuring access to essential services and facilities and a wider choice of housing. This will enable the Local Plan's Vision and Objectives to be met and to secure development that simultaneously achieves economic, social and environmental gains for the Borough. Environmental considerations permeate the Plan, with whole chapters covering climate change, heritage, the natural environment and green infrastructure, with many other policies covering environmental issues such as sustainable travel choices, countryside protection and food growing.
- 4.3 The Local Plan has been informed by an extensive evidence base that supports sustainable development. This includes the Habitat Regulations Assessment, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Suitable Areas for Wind Energy Document, North West Shoreline Management Plan, Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan and Safeguarding our Soils (DEFRA). There has been continuous engagement with statutory consultees, key stakeholders and the public throughout the plan preparation process, and this has shaped the policies in the Local Plan. The Council has also complied with the 'duty to co-operate' and co-operated with neighbouring planning authorities and other prescribed bodies, including the Environment Agency and

Natural England, during the preparation of the Local Plan. More information can be found in the Duty to Co-operate Statement (Dec 2017).

## **5.0 How the Environmental Report has been taken into account**

- 5.1 Each of the policies and sites in the Local Plan have been assessed against the sustainability objectives set out in the SA. Appendix D of the Final Draft Sustainability Report (Updated) March 2017 sets out the significance of any effects on the sustainability objectives and identifies potential avoidance and mitigation measures. Where appropriate, enhancement measures are also identified. The assessment has resulted in a number of changes to the Local Plan policies, as set out in Appendix D. In many cases, mitigation or avoidance can be accomplished through implementation of the new Local Plan policies, as shown in the assessments in Appendix D.
- 5.2 Sustainability assessment has taken place throughout the Local Plan preparation process, as shown in Figure 2 of the Final Draft Sustainability Report (Updated) March 2017, Non-Technical Summary. The SA has been prepared in-house by the Council's Policy and Regeneration Team, helping to ensure that environmental issues have been fully considered throughout the Plan preparation process.

## **6.0 How opinions expressed in response to the consultation on the SA Reports have been taken into account**

- 6.1 Consultation took place on the following drafts of the SA Report:
- SA Scoping Report, January 2014
  - Draft Interim SA Report, March 2016
  - Final Draft SA Report, July 2016.
- 6.2 Consultation took place with the three statutory consultees: Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency.
- 6.3 The SA Scoping Report was produced in January 2014. The Report was then published in February 2014, taking into account the comments from the statutory consultees. The SA Scoping Report informed the Local Plan Issues and Options Draft in September 2014 and the Preferred Options Draft in June 2015. The Council's responses to the Scoping Report consultation, including how the comments have been taken into account, can be found in the Draft Interim SA Report (Feb 2016), Appendix C.
- 6.4 The Draft Interim SA Report was produced in March 2016 and informed the Local Plan Publication Draft. The Council's responses to the consultation, including how the comments have been taken into account, can be found in the Final Draft SA Report (July 2016), Appendix C.
- 6.5 The Final Draft SA Report was produced in July 2016 and informed the Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft. The Council's responses to the consultation, including how the

comments have been taken into account, can be found in the Final Draft Sustainability Report (Updated) (March 2017), Appendix C.

## **7.0 The reasons for choosing the plan or programme, as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with**

7.1 A number of development options were considered in Appendix D of the Draft Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report (February 2016). These are summarised as follows:

- **Option 1 – Focus all housing development on sites within existing urban areas and cordon village boundaries. Restrict development elsewhere (“business as usual” approach)**

This option was not considered reasonable as there are insufficient suitable sites available within these areas to meet the housing requirement identified in the Local Plan.

- **Option 2 – All housing development directed to sites within existing urban areas, no development permitted in rural villages**

This option prevents growth as it only allows development within the existing urban boundaries of Barrow and Dalton, restricting development in the cordon villages and on sites adjoining urban areas.

This option was not considered reasonable as there are insufficient sites available within these boundaries to meet the housing requirement. It is more restricting than the approach in Option 1 which has failed to deliver sufficient housing in to meet past targets.

- **Option 3 – Sparse distribution of housing development, some to sites within existing urban areas, some to sites within cordon villages and some to sites within other smaller rural settlements**

This option was not considered to be reasonable as there are insufficient suitable sites available within these areas to meet the housing requirement identified.

- **Option 4 – Concentrate all new housing development within one or more large scale urban extensions to Barrow**

This option would allow growth and could provide enough housing to meet the requirement. It would provide a number of benefits, including supporting the construction industry, improving housing choice and potentially attracting new residents to the Borough which can have an indirect positive effect on the local economy.

This option would have likely adverse environmental and social effects. These are considered in Appendix E of the Draft Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report.

Some of these affects are unavoidable, with limited scope for mitigation. Alternative options should therefore be considered.

- **Option 5 – Focus development on sites within and adjoining existing urban areas and cordon villages but also allow growth in one or more urban extensions to Barrow**

This option allows the development of sites adjoining urban areas and cordon villages, including one or more urban extensions to Barrow. The effect of specific sites is identified in the site assessments section of the SA.

This option reduces the pressure on important open spaces within urban areas and villages. It will support the construction industry, improve housing choice and will help attract new residents to the borough which can have an indirect positive effect on the local economy.

The exact impact it would have on the natural and built environment and residential amenity would depend upon which extension/sites are allocated.

Three of the cordon villages identified in the previous Saved Local Plan are no longer considered to be sustainable locations for housing (Biggar, Marton, Roa Island). If this option is progressed, the cordons should be removed from those villages and development restricted.

This option would have likely adverse environmental and social effects, however these are avoidable. Further consideration is given to this in the policy assessments in the SA.

- 7.2 Option 5 was taken forward as the chosen option. See pages 6-15 of Appendix D of the Draft Interim SA Report (February 2016) for further details of the options.
- 7.3 The Local Plan Issues and Options Draft presented a number of policy options. The Local Plan Preferred Options Draft justified the policy options taken forward, and this is set out in the “Justification” sections set out under each policy in this Draft. The policies have been refined throughout the Local Plan preparation process, taking account of a number of considerations, including consultation responses, new or updated plans and strategies, updated national policy and the findings of the SA assessments.

## **8.0 The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Plan**

- 8.1 It is important that the effects of adopting the Local Plan are monitored regularly and are compared against those effects predicted in the SA.
- 8.2 Monitoring must consider all significant environmental effects – social, environmental and economic. If adverse effects are identified then appropriate remedial action

needs to be considered. Remedial action could include policy changes where appropriate; this would likely take place through a full or partial Local Plan Review.

- 8.3 Significant effects of the policies and sites are identified in Appendix D of the Final Draft SA Report (Updated) March 2017. This also identifies measures to mitigate or avoid the significant effects, which in many cases would be through implementation of the policies of the Local Plan. In some cases, additional measures have been identified.
- 8.4 Appendix G of the Final Draft SA Report (Updated) March 2017 identifies the guiding questions that have been used when assessing the effects of a policy or site upon the sustainability objectives. These guiding questions were included in the Scoping Report but have been refined in light of consultation responses. The key sustainability issues referred to here link back to the scoping stage of the SA and were identified through the document and baseline review. These are the key issues facing the Borough which the Local Plan aims to address.
- 8.5 Appendix G also sets out the list of indicators which could be used to monitor the effects of the Plan upon the sustainability objectives, including significant effects. For example, sites which are in areas where there are surface water flooding issues could have a significant adverse effect on sustainability objective NR2, as development could increase the risk of flooding. Mitigation could take place in the form of sustainable drainage, and the drainage requirements are set out in Policy C3a of the Local Plan. An indicator in Appendix G that could be used to monitor whether more properties are at increase of flooding is “Number of properties at risk of flooding (all sources)”.
- 8.6 The indicators for monitoring the policies are set out in Chapter 13 of the Local Plan. The main mechanism for assessing the performance of the Local Plan is the Council’s Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

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