

**RYEDALE
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**



**Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic
Environmental Assessment
Adoption Statement**

**Ryedale Plan - Local Plan Sites
Document**

Ryedale District Council

28 June 2019

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 This Statement sets out how the Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) has been prepared. Ryedale District Council has undertaken to inform the policies and allocations identified in the Ryedale Plan- Local Plan Sites Document.
- 1.2 The Ryedale Plan-Local Plan Sites Document SA/SEA has been prepared in accordance with the following regulations:
 - Regulation 36 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004
 - Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004
 - Paragraph 165 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The sustainability considerations identified as part of the 2009 SEA/SA scoping report have been embedded into the Ryedale Plan- Local Plan Strategy (adopted in 2013) and then developed further for the Ryedale Plan- Local Plan Sites Document by considering a finer grained, locally- specific SA/SEA. This was developed in conjunction with the consultations with the statutory environmental consultees (Natural England, Historic England, and Environment Agency) and with other stakeholders.
- 2.2 The Local Plan Sites Document is the second part of the Ryedale Plan and is concerned with the site specific policies and allocations, it builds on the spatial approach and policy principles established in the Local Plan Strategy. The Sustainability Appraisal process covers two distinct stages:
 - The appraisal of all site submissions and potential site combination options using a Site Selection Methodology, to assess the sustainability credentials of sites in a comparative manner; and
 - The appraisal of the subsequent policies and proposed land allocations to ensure that all appropriate mitigation measures are included in the site specific policies

It is focused on the following elements;

- Treatment of Commitments
- Proposed allocations for housing, in conjunction with Development Principles regarding how the sites come forward;
- Employment land allocations and commitments;
- Specific site policies

- Visually Important Undeveloped Areas
- 2.3 The assessment process is multi-faceted, and multi-layered to allow the consideration of the sustainability merits of the sites which have been submitted to the Council prior to 2004, up to the production of the Publication Version of the Local Plan Site Document. There are over 660 site submissions, which have been submitted over a considerable period of time, and it has been important to the Local Planning Authority that the assessment of those sites is undertaken in a transparent manner, which allows the Stakeholders to clearly understand the decisions made regarding the consideration of sites and formulation of policy.
 - 2.4 A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report was adopted by Council in 2009. In early 2014, targeted consultation was also undertaken to review and update the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. This helped to confirm that the sustainability appraisal objectives remain relevant and that their inclusion within the SSM framework remains appropriate. The scoping update consultation was also used to identify local sustainability issues for different settlements in the settlement hierarchy in order to support a more locally specific and 'finer grained' application of the Site Selection Methodology (SSM). This Scoping Report, was refreshed for factual updates in July 2015, and again updated in the Autumn of 2016 as a result of further consultation undertaken in November -December 2015.
 - 2.5 A critical component of the Sustainability Appraisal is the Site Selection Methodology, which comprises a series of settlement-specific tables.
 - 2.6 After extensive consultation, The Local Plan Sites Document was Published between 11 November and 22 December 2017. The Plan was submitted for Examination to the Secretary of State on the 31 March 2018. Hearing Sessions conducted over two weeks in late September early October 2018, and as a result of those hearing sessions, a series of Main Modification were identified by the Council. Those Main Modifications were subjected to sustainability appraisal. The Inspector's report, received 4 June 2019, concluded that with those Main Modifications, the LPSD is sound. Members have agreed to adopt the Local Plan Sites Document with the Main Modifications on the 27 June 2019.

3. Sustainability Appraisal Framework- Scoping and Legal Requirements

- 3.1 Sustainability Appraisal of planning policy is a legal requirement. It is an assessment by which Plans are iteratively tested against environmental, social and economic sustainability objectives. These objectives have been derived through local consultation and consultation with statutory consultees to ensure that social, economic and environmental issues are fully considered and integrated when policy choices are made. It ensures that the effects of a plan on sustainability issues are identified and to ensure that ways of mitigating adverse effects or maximising beneficial effects are considered. It also embodies the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) European Union Directive 2001/42/EC, which must be complied with. This Directive requires a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment of all plans and programmes which are likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

- 3.2 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment are required to be undertaken in conjunction with the preparation of Development Plan Documents to ensure that the environmental, social and economic issues are fully integrated into emerging policies and strategies prior to their formal adoption.

Local Plan Objectives

- 3.3 From the 2009 Scoping Report, a series of objectives were developed, and these were then incorporated into framing questions in the Site Selection Methodology.

Social

Housing - Addressing the Needs

- Acute shortage of affordable housing
- Meeting the housing requirements of an aging population
- Loss of young people
- Pressure for second homes / holiday homes
- Access to services and facilities

Access to Health care / facilities

- Especially for those in the remoter rural areas without access to a private car
- Limited provision of open space and sporting provision in the villages

Open Space and Recreation Facilities

- Especially for those in the remote rural areas without access to a private car to use facilities in towns
- Limited provision of open space and sporting provision in the villages

Access to Education

- low pupil numbers in the remoter rural areas so some schools may face the prospect of closure;
- Sixth-form provision is provided at Malton, Norton, Pickering and Ampleforth
- Poor literacy and numeracy within the working population
- The educational attainment of the working population is poor
- The need to improve the skills of Ryedale's working population

Accessible Transport

- high levels of car ownership, especially in the villages
- limited public transport services

Economic

Ensuring a strong economy

- need to maintain the current high levels of employment

- pressure to redevelop industrial land for housing
- lack of adequate start-up sites
- lack of expansion sites for smaller firms already located in Ryedale.

Protecting the rural economy

- declining services and facilities in the villages
- reliance on agriculture and agricultural services for employment
- reliance on tourism for certain parts of the district

Environmental

Protecting the Landscape and Character of Ryedale

- Predominantly rural
- Wide range of landscapes, much of which is protected by national designations
- Attractive market towns and villages
- Historic buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens, and archaeological sites

Climate Change

- Large areas of the District are in s 2 and 3
- Low rates of renewable energy production

Pollution

- pollution (e.g. air, noise and water quality) levels are generally low, although there are localised pockets of pollution e.g.: air quality at Butcher Corner, Malton

Maximising energy, water efficiency and minimisation of waste

- need to continue to encourage recycling and composting

Good design of development

- need to maintain sympathetically designed buildings

Locally-Specific Sustainability Issues

3.4 In 2014 the Sustainability Appraisal Framework was updated, and key place-specific information was included to identify settlement, and indeed site-specific sustainability considerations. These were factored into the Site Selection Methodology Framework.

4. Site Selection Methodology (SSM)

- 4.1 In the undertaking the first part of the Sustainability Appraisal, it is the Site Selection Methodology tables which record the site assessment framework of sites. This is then applied comparatively, and overlain with other wider considerations, which are set out below in summary.
- 4.2 The SSM itself has been developed through consultation with stakeholders and specific consultation was undertaken on SSM principles in 2009 and 2010. A detailed draft of the methodology was agreed for consultation by Council in March 2011 and the final version of the SSM was agreed by members of the Policy and Resources Committee in February 2013. The SSM varies slightly depending on whether the Settlement is a Market Town or a Service Village (in terms of site size), and further settlement specific matters are considered for Malton and Norton, including the Air Quality Management Area, Strategic Transport Modelling. A link to the Selection Methodology is below:
- http://www.ryedaleplan.org.uk/attachments/category/13/Site_Selection_Methodology_v3.pdf
- 4.3 Sustainability Appraisal and site assessment is a process of continual refinement. It is important to note that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) may receive new information, which can change the relative position/consideration of these sites. It is also important to bear in mind that the Local Planning Authority can only consider the sites which have been submitted to it for consideration.
- 4.4 The Site Selection Methodology (SSM) has been prepared to inform choices over site allocations, and provide a clear, objective element of factual site assessment, as an operational component of the Sustainability Appraisal; the questions asked in the SSM are the site-specific questions of the Sustainability Objectives. It is important to note that in the population of the site selection methodology tables uses a colour-coding to provide some comparative ability, and indicate key sensitivities. However, the SSM does not ascribe any numeric value to that 'scoring'. To do so would artificially contrive the assessment sites and potentially distort their performance, and give a false assessment of the site's performance, individually and comparatively. For example, depending on the objective question a -- (deep red) in itself does not automatically rule the site out further, but may require further exploration to confirm the position in more detail.
- 4.5 The SSM does not ultimately give the answers to which sites *should* come forward, merely indicate which have performed best through the framework, first as a site, and then in comparison with other sites in the same settlement. The application of the SSM has shown that in the same settlement a number of sites can perform in a broadly comparable manner, again a reason not to apply a numeric/formulaic approach to site evaluation. There is a further assessment which needs to look at deliverability and developability matters (important to ensure allocations do come forward); socio-economic matters such as those around maximising the delivery of wider community benefits such as affordable housing, and other social infrastructure; or the settlement-specific choices such as those experienced at Kirkbymoorside where socio-economic situations could be a substantial component of the decision making process.

4.6 The SSM is split into three stages which are as follows:

Stage 1 – is an initial sift of sites which do not fit the strategic principles of the Local Plan Strategy (i.e. the Settlement Hierarchy) or which are subject to constraints that would prevent the site from coming forward in principle, these are concerned with insurmountable constraints concerning flood risk, heritage assets, biodiversity matters. It also includes a site size threshold. This is 0.3ha for sites in the Market Towns and 0.15ha for the Service Villages.

Stage 2 – is comprised of three types of assessment.

- (i) Key strategic considerations – accessibility, highways and flood risk, which were identified as factors which should be given specific weight in the site selection process.
- (ii) Considers sites against a range of thematic issues, which cover the range of environmental constraints and opportunities.
- (iii) Deliverability of sites in terms of physical, commercial, legal or other factors and also considers the likely ability of sites to contribute to the infrastructure required to support planned growth.

Stage 3 – Summarises the conclusions of the Stage 2 assessment following the Stage 1 'sift'. The collation of the information allows a comparison of the relative merit of sites to be made. This has then been tabulated into identifying a group for the sites. The groupings are:

Group1: Sites which fail Stage 1 of the SSM and that are not considered to be suitable for allocation;

Group 2: Sites where it is considered that there is no reasonable prospect/ very unlikely that concerns identified at Stage 2 of the SSM can be mitigated or sufficiently mitigated, or there are compelling reasons which indicate that a site is not considered to be deliverable/developable;

Group3: Sites where issues have been identified as part of the Stage 2 assessment. Mitigation could be used to reduce impact/achieve an acceptable form of development on sites within this group if they are required to meet development needs.

Group 4: The site generally performs well across each of the stages of the SSM.

This Sustainability Appraisal reports the site assessment process in that format.

4.7 As discussed earlier, the SSM is a tool to help inform the decision making process. It is not a 'scientific model' that automatically generates the 'best' development sites based on specific technical weightings. The application of the Site Selection Methodology has demonstrated that very few sites can be developed for new uses without any implications and even sites which are relatively unconstrained may be unsuitable for a single reason.

4.8 The SSM has been informed to date by a combination of technical evidence which has been provided by other organisations; site visits; information provided by the landowners and developers who have submitted sites; production of specialist technical reports for cumulative

and strategic matters (traffic, air quality); wider technical documents such as those on landscape character, and settlement form and character; responses from statutory consultees (including those with a specific technical input) and the local community and the application of planning judgement. The approach is designed to ensure that decisions on sites are made using as much information as possible and in a way which is transparent. The SSM has been applied using currently available information, and consultation on the assessment process has clearly indicated this. There has been on-going refinement of SSM tables and they have been populated with information provided to support the process in an on-going way. Conversely, absence of information about a site's developability/developability does hinder the site's consideration, particularly concerning matters of financial viability, and mitigation of constraints, or simply understanding how a site is proposed to come forward.

- 4.9 Late site submissions represent particular challenges. Whilst accepting the presence of such submissions, the Local Planning Authority cannot add such sites into technical work on an ad hoc basis, particularly when it examines cumulative impacts. Such sites have also not been subjected to a commensurate level of scrutiny to that of other site submissions, such as consultation with statutory consultees. Since the 2015 Sites Consultation, the Local Planning Authority has been clear that the onus is on the site submitter to provide a level of information about the site's development which demonstrates that their site submission performs better than a site which the Local Planning Authority has consulted upon as a preferred/option site. However, the Local Planning Authority must also be open and impartial and consider site submissions on their merits, and if such a scenario is presented where a better performing site is identified, then this should be taken forward, on a settlement-by- settlement basis.
- 4.10 In summary, planning judgement around site assessment is significantly informed by a Sustainability Appraisal. It will be the principal means by which sites are taken forward through the allocations process; informed by a robust, considered and transparent framework which ensures that the social, economic and environmental considerations of sustainability are central to the decision making process.
- 4.11 The SSM tables have been compiled on a settlement basis, and are a key operational element of the Sustainability Appraisal.

Strategic Considerations

- Spatial Approach- as set out in the Local Plan Strategy
- Strategic Sites – No such sites proposed in the Local Plan Strategy
- Distribution of Residual Requirement and Existing Permissions for Housing, Employment and Retail Commitments and Developments

SSM Stage 1 Site Assessment Factors

- Size of site – application of site thresholds and yields
- Flood Risk and Surface Water Considerations
- Designated Heritage and Biodiversity Assets including undertaking HRA Scoping and Appropriate Assessment

SSM Stage 2: Site Assessment Factors

- Accessibility- measured in terms of access to key services

- Heritage Assets
- Settlement Form and Character - Wider Landscape Sensitivities
- Best and Most Versatile Land
- Economic Development - Conversion of Employment Land to Residential;
- Employment Sites – Specific Site Considerations
- Health and Safety (Consultation with HSE)

SSM Stage 2: Site Assessment Factors - Cumulative Considerations

- Highways – traffic movements and junction capacity
- Air Quality
- Habitat Regulations Assessment

SSM Stage 2: Site Assessment Factors - Development Principles

Some components of the SSM, and therefore the SA process, have sought to obtain further information, where is it reasonable and necessary to do so. Some matters are only really capable of being considered once a layout of a site is available to be considered. This is not something that all site submitters are able to provide, and in terms of allocation would not be expected. Nevertheless the Local Plan Sites Document, will set out Development Principles which will ensure that matters which are identified in the site assessment process which will need mitigation.

- Energy Efficiency, Reducing Carbon Emissions and Building Sustainability
- Residential Amenity
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity

5. Appraisal of Subsequent Policies and proposed site allocations

5.1 Each of the proposed Policies with the site allocations were assessed against the framework below:

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives (See Scoping Report)

| | Objective |
|-----|--|
| A1 | To ensure that all groups of the population have access to health, education, leisure and recreation services that are required |
| A2 | To provide the opportunity for all people to meet their housing needs |
| A3 | To improve overall levels of health and reduce the disparities between different groups and different areas. |
| A4 | To maintain and promote the distinctiveness of identifiable communities |
| A5 | To reduce crime and the fear of crime |
| A6 | To develop a more balanced population |
| B1 | To maintain and enhance employment opportunities |
| B2 | To maintain and enhance the vitality of the countryside, villages and town centres |
| B3 | To retain and enhance the factors which are conducive to wealth creation, including personal creativity and attractiveness to investors |
| B4 | To diversify the local economy |
| C1 | To protect and enhance biodiversity and geo-diversity. |
| C2 | To maintain and enhance the quality and character of the landscape, including the special qualities of remoteness and tranquillity |
| C3 | Reduce long distance commuting and congestion by reducing the need to travel. |
| C4 | To ensure future development is resilient to climate change such as development is not vulnerable to flooding, or will increase the risk of flooding elsewhere |
| C5 | To conserve and where appropriate enhance the historical and cultural environment. |
| C6 | To reduce the emission of greenhouse gases |
| C7 | To encourage the use of renewable resources and the development of renewable energy sources within Ryedale |
| C8 | To make the most efficient use of land |
| C9 | To maintain a high quality environment in terms of air, soil and water quality |
| C10 | Ensure that fossil fuel and water consumption is as low as possible, protect productive soils and maintain the stock of minerals |
| C11 | To reduce the amount of waste produced and maximise the rates of re-use and recycling as locally as possible |

Method Used to Appraise the Policies

- 5.2 The following scoring system was set out in the revised SA/SEA Scoping Report (October 2009) which differs slightly from the scoring system established in the previous SA/SEA (2007) by the “insufficient data” category being replaced by the “Uncertain Impact” category and the addition of a “no direct link” category. This methodology has been taken forward into the Scoping Report (2014 and update).

Sustainability Appraisal Scoring System

| Symbol | Score | Definition |
|--------|--------------------------|---|
| ++ | Strongly Positive impact | Positively influencing change in accordance with the objective. |
| + | Positive impact | Policy is consistent with meeting the objective |
| = | Neutral impact | The policy will have a neither a positive nor a negative impact upon this objective |
| - | Negative impact | The policy may hinder achievement of this objective. |
| -- | Strongly negative impact | The policy would hinder achievement of this objective. |
| U | Uncertain Impact | The policy may hinder achievement of this objective, but may have no negative impact. This will depend upon implementation. |
| O | No direct link | There is no direct link between the nature of the policy and the nature of the objective. |

- 5.3 In addition the nature of the effects are considered in terms of:

- Direct or indirect
- Long term, short term, temporary or permanent
- Local or wider in geographical context

Each policy was considered in terms of Conclusions, Commentary and Mitigation and how these were considered within the social sustainability objectives, the economic sustainability objectives and the environmental sustainability objectives.

6. Settlement -Specific and VIUA Background Papers

- a. To explain the site assessment process which incorporates the Sustainability Appraisal process on a settlement-by-settlement basis, Background Papers have been prepared to set out the site assessment considerations in their entirety for each settlement (Market Towns and Service Villages). As such these Background Papers are a key element of defining, and explaining the site assessment process.
 - b. The formulation of the Background Papers is standardised to demonstrate consistently how the site assessment framework has been considered, but also to set out in sufficient detail the site selection considerations from the site-specific to the settlement wide considerations, and any cumulative considerations. It also looks at the more strategic layers of site consideration, which are around the operation of the Local Plan Strategy, and become overlain over the site-specific assessment process.
- 5.3 The background papers are the 'write up' of the Site Selection Methodology Tables, providing the key information about the findings of the SSM process. They are to assist the reader in telling the story of site assessment, and to demonstrate in a transparent manner how the SSM process is then taken forward into the grouping tables, and into the chosen allocations. There are 13 papers, covering the Malton and Norton, Pickering, Kirkbymoorside and the 10 Service Villages: Amotherby and Swinton, Ampleforth, Beadlam and Norton, Hovingham, Rillington, Sherburn, Sheriff Hutton, Slingsby, Staxton and Willerby and Thornton le Dale.
- 5.4 A Background Paper has also been prepared to cover the assessment process for re-evaluation existing VIUAs and identification of new VIUAs.

8. Monitoring

- 6.1 The monitoring measures linked to the Sustainability Assessment process will concentrate on reviewing the effects that plans and policies have on the sustainability objectives. Any significant changes which take place, in relation to groups of indicators on an annual basis, will be monitored through the annual monitoring exercise. This will help assess the effects of plans and policies.
- 6.2 In relation to monitoring changes to the baseline data for the District, this will continue to be collected and improved in conjunction with other external organisations. The Monitoring Report will enable the review of the range and quality of the baseline data collected, and to ensure that the data collected is still relevant to the Sustainability Appraisal process.
- 6.3 The SEA Directive requires significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan to be monitored to allow for unforeseen effects to be identified at an early stage and mitigation measures to be implemented. The key indicators for monitoring the impact of the Ryedale Plan are those baseline indicators included in the Scoping Report for the Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan Strategy, since the Local Plan Sites Document is to be in conformity with the Local Plan Strategy. This data will be updated as part of the Monitoring

Report in order to identify any adverse effects that are occurring as a result of the implementation of the policies in the Local Plan Strategy, particularly those where potential adverse effects have been identified and to identify any action that needs to be taken to mitigate these effects.

Appendix 1 – Summary of Requirements of SEA Directive

Where an environmental assessment is required 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. The information to be given is:

| SEA Requirements | Reported in... |
|--|---|
| a. An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes; | Scoping Report / Sustainability Reports |
| b. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme; | Scoping Report (summarised in Sustainability Reports) |
| c. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected; | Scoping Report SA and HRA (summarised in Sustainability Reports) |
| d. 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 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC; | Scoping Report (summarised in Sustainability Reports) The SSM, Sustainability Reports and Background Papers and the HRA Scoping and Appropriate Assessment |
| e. The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State 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; | Scoping Report / The SSM, Sustainability Reports and Background Papers |
| f. The likely significant effects (1) 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 the above factors; | The SSM, Sustainability Reports and Background Papers |
| g. 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. | The SSM, Sustainability Reports and Background Papers |

| | |
|---|---|
| h. 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; | The SSM, Sustainability Reports and Background Papers |
| j. A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10. | Identified in the Publication Sustainability Report Finalised in Submission Sustainability Report |
| k. A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings. | To be prepared for Publication |
| The report shall include the 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 in that process to avoid duplication of the assessment. | |

Consultation Requirements

- Authorities with specific environmental responsibilities; shall be consulted when deciding on the scope and level of detail of information which must be included in the environmental report (Article 5.4);
- Authorities with environmental responsibility and the public shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and accompanying environmental report before adoption of the plan or programme or its submission to the legislative procedure. (Article 6.2)
- Other Member states, where implementation of the Plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment in another Member State (Article 7)

Provision of information on decision

When a plan or programme is adopted the Authorities with environmental responsibilities and the public are informed and the following items [shall be] made available to those so informed;

- a) The plan or programme as adopted;
- b) A statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme... including reasons for choosing the plan or programme...or programme as adopted, in light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with...and
- c) The measures decided concerning monitoring (Article 9 (1)).

Monitoring the significant environmental effects of the plans implementation (Article 10)