



Sustainability Appraisal

Non-Technical Summary

Fenland Draft Local Plan

August 2022

Contents

Introduction	1
The Fenland Local Plan.....	1
Sustainability Appraisal Stages	1
Summary of findings	5
Figure 1: Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	3
Figure 2: Significant Effects of Reasonable Alternative Policies	6
Figure 3: Summary of Sites	9

Abbreviations used in this report

BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology
CAMS	Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy
CHP	Combined Heat and Power
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
CPRE	Campaign to Protect Rural England
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government
DECC	Department of Energy and Climate Change
DPD	Development Plan Document
EA	Environment Agency
ECAP	Environment Capital Action Plan
FDC	Fenland District Council
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GI	Green Infrastructure
GTANA	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment
GVA	Gross Value Added
HMA	housing Market Area
IMD	Indices of Multiple Deprivation
kWh	kilowatt hour
kWp	kilowatt peak
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
LDS	Local Development Scheme
LED	Light Emitting Diode
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LSOA	Lower Super Output Area
MWDF	Minerals and Waste Development Framework
MWh	Megawatt hour
NE	Natural England
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NVZ	Nitrate Vulnerable Zone
OAN	Objectively Assessed Need
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PCPA	Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
RIGS	Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Site
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SFRA	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
SINC	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSSI	Sites of Special Scientific Interest
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems
WFD	Water Framework Directive

Non - Technical Summary

Introduction

This report forms the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) undertaken for the [Draft version of the Fenland Local Plan](#) (August 2022)¹.

The report has been produced alongside the Council's emerging Local Plan and is being published for consultation at the same time as the Draft version. This is to provide the public and statutory bodies with an opportunity to express their opinions on the SA report, which can also be used as a reference point in commenting on the Draft Local Plan.

The deadline for comments on the Local Plan and this SA report is **19 October 2022**. Full details about the consultation process are available on the council's website at <https://www.fenland.gov.uk/newlocalplan> .

The Fenland Local Plan

The Draft Local Plan contains the emerging proposals for planning policies for the growth and regeneration of the Fenland areas Market Towns and surrounding villages over the next 20 years.

The council is undertaking the SA of the Local Plan in accordance with the Sustainability Framework established in [the SA Scoping Report \(October 2019\)](#). A further iteration of this SA will accompany the Submission of the Local Plan next year. Once adopted, the Local Plan will become part of the statutory Development Plan for Fenland.

Sustainability Appraisal Stages

The Local Plan has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) under the requirements of section 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which also incorporates the requirements of Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) in accordance with European Union Directive 2001/42/EC.

SA is a systematic process undertaken alongside the preparation of the Local Plan. It aims to assess the extent to which the policies will help achieve sustainable development and the extent to which it will enable relevant social, economic and environmental objectives to be achieved.

The NPPG - [Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal](#)², provides clarity on the need for SA and SEA in relation to plan development. The guidance specifies five stages (A to E) of work which have to be undertaken during the sustainability appraisal of any Local Plan; the appraisal of the Plan at each stage in the process is set out in section 7 of this report.

Stage A - Context and scope

The context and scope of the SA report has been undertaken in advance of progressing the Local Plan. A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the Local Plan was published and consulted on in October 2019, which provided the necessary tools for undertaking the SA. The Scoping Report identified the Sustainability Appraisal objectives and framework listed in Figure 1. This SA framework has been used as the basis for the Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan.

Stage B - Developing and refining options and assessing effects

¹ www.fenland.gov.uk/draftlocalplan

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal#Sustainability-appraisal-process>

Sustainability considerations have been taken into account throughout the preparation of the Local Plan. Sustainability issues specific to the Fenland area were identified and consulted on at the SA Scoping Report stage and the alternative policy options have been assessed and will be consulted on through this SA report which accompanies the Draft Local Plan (August 2022).

Stage C - Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal report

This is the current stage in the process. This SA report has been produced alongside the Draft Local Plan. All policies and any reasonable alternatives have been appraised against the SA framework. The likely significant effects in terms of environment, economy and society have been identified and where appropriate any measures to prevent or reduce any significant adverse effects have been identified.

Stage D - Consulting on the Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal

The results of stages A to C will help to create the final Sustainability Appraisal, which will be published alongside the Submission version of the Local Plan, expected in 2023.

Stage E - Monitoring Implementation of the Plan

This stage will follow the adoption of the Local Plan. Section 8 includes a set of monitoring indicators which will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the policies in the Local Plan, through the Authorities Monitoring Report (AMR). These indicators may be refined through subsequent consultation periods. The final version of the SA report will include the indicators to monitor the Local Plan.









Characterisation of Fenland


In order to identify the key sustainability issues facing the Fenland area, it was necessary to characterise the social, economic and environmental aspects of the authority area. The full characterisation process has been collected through the Scoping Report. A full list of the key issues and objectives which were identified as part of the SA Scoping process can be found in section 5 of the main SA Report.

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

This table outlines the objectives used for the undertaking of this Sustainability Appraisal. The last page of this document is a fold out page which is intended to provide quick reference to the SA objectives and scoring key and should be used while reading a printed version of the SA report.

Figure 1: Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

 <p>1. Healthy Communities</p>	<p>1.1 Provide for an ageing population; and redress inequalities related to health, well-being, age, gender, disability, race, faith, location and income</p> <p>1.2 Improve the quality, range and accessibility of services and facilities (e.g. health, transport, education, training, leisure opportunities and community activities); and ensure all groups thrive in safe environments</p> <p>1.3 Create and enhance multifunctional open space that is accessible, links with a high quality green infrastructure network and improves opportunities for people to access and appreciate wildlife and wild places</p> <p>1.4 Encourage healthy choices and opportunities for the consumption of locally produced food by maintaining and enhancing the provision of allotments, community orchards and farmers' shops and markets</p>
 <p>2. Jobs, Education and Housing</p>	<p>2.1 Help people gain access to a range of employment, education and training opportunities</p> <p>2.2 Support investment in people, places, communications and other infrastructure to improve the efficiency, competitiveness, vitality and adaptability of the local economy</p> <p>2.3 Help provide decent and affordable homes that meet the various needs of all in appropriate locations</p>
 <p>3. Transport</p>	<p>3.1 Reduce the reliance on private motor vehicles and encourage more sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport and contribute to the safety of all highway users.</p> <p>3.2 Seek to ensure that all new developments can be accessed by a variety of transport modes and provide permeability</p>
 <p>4. Heritage, Place Making and Landscape</p>	<p>4.1 Conserve and where appropriate, enhance heritage assets, their setting and the wider historic environment</p> <p>4.2 Create places, spaces and buildings that are attractive and well designed, contribute to a high quality public realm and maintain and enhance diversity and local distinctiveness of townscape character</p> <p>4.3 Retain the distinctive character of Fenland's landscape</p>
 <p>5. Resilience to Climate Change and Flood Risk</p>	<p>5.1 Limit or reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change</p> <p>5.2 Minimise and wherever possible remove the vulnerability of people, places and property to the risk of flooding from all sources</p>
 <p>6. Land Use and Wildlife</p>	<p>6.1 Minimise the irreversible loss of undeveloped land, particularly high grade agricultural land</p> <p>6.2 Utilise brownfield sites for re-development in appropriate circumstances</p> <p>6.3 Minimise and avoid where possible impacts to biodiversity and geodiversity, both within and beyond designated sites of international, national or local significance, and on protected species</p> <p>6.4 Achieve net gains in biodiversity and create and enhance an ecological network that is resilient to the effects of climate change</p>
 <p>7. Water Resources</p>	<p>7.1 Minimise water consumption and encourage re-use</p> <p>7.2 Avoid deterioration and seek opportunities to enhance water quality in rivers and other water bodies</p>
	<p>8.1 Reduce emissions of greenhouse gasses and other pollutants (including air, water, soil, noise, odour, vibration and light)</p> <p>8.2. Reduce the risk of pollution to the environment from contaminated</p>

8. Pollution and Waste	land
	8.3 Support and enhance opportunities for the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste
 <p>9. Sustainable Resources</p>	<p>9.1 Reduce energy consumption and increase the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources</p> <p>9.2 Support the use of locally sourced building materials and encourage those that are of a sustainable form and allow for re-use</p>

Summary of findings

The findings of the SA for the Draft Local Plan are summarised in Figure 2 overleaf. It should be noted that this SA report itself has not been used to select the proposed policies, rather, it satisfies the requirements of Government guidance on SA and the SEA Directive to identify the likely significant sustainability effects of implementing the Plan and has assisted in the selection of the preferred policies.

Figure 2 summarises the significant positive (++) and negative effects (- -) of all reasonable alternative policies, showing the relevant SA objectives along the X axis and the Local Plan policies along Y axis.

The full assessment of all alternative options is set out in Appendix A for policies and Appendix B for sites.










In summary, the outcomes of the SA show that the preferred policies contained in the Draft Local Plan will bring many significant positive benefits, particularly relating to:










- Improve access to services and facilities (1.2)
- Enhance access to open space and wildlife (1.3)
- Provide affordable homes that meet the needs of all (2.3)
- Ensure that developments can be accessed by a variety of transport modes (3.2)
- Create attractive and well designed places that maintain and enhance local distinctiveness (4.2)
- Minimise impacts to biodiversity and designated sites (6.3)
- Achieve net gains in biodiversity (6.4)

The results of the SA also show that many of the effects of the preferred policies are unclear at this stage. This is because of the strategic nature of the Local Plan objectives and policies, and therefore the uncertainties surrounding their implementation and outcomes in practice. Implementation of some of the policies may be reliant on more detail in future policy documents such as Supplementary Planning Documents or on decisions made through the Development Management process. For the broader objectives and policies, the appraisal process has had to concentrate on whether, in principle, the proposed policy is compatible with the SA objectives to avoid trying to consider every eventuality.

In overall terms the Local Plan will not result in any significant negative effects, and any potential negative effects can be mitigated.

Figure 3: Summary of Sites

SA Framework																										
	Reduce health equalities		Improve access to services and facilities	Enhance access to open space and wildlife	Improve health and access to locally produced food	Support access to range of employment opportunities	Support investment to the local economy	Provide affordable homes that meet the needs of all.	Reduce the use of cars and encourage sustainable transport	Ensure that developments can be accessed by a variety of transport modes	Conserve and where appropriate, enhance the wider historic environment	Create attractive and well designed places that maintain and enhance local distinctiveness	Retain the distinctive character of Fenland's landscape	Limit or reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change	Minimise the risk of flooding from all sources	Minimise the loss of high grade agricultural land	Utilise brownfield sites for re-development	Minimise impacts to biodiversity and designated sites	Achieve net gains in biodiversity	Minimise water consumption and encourage re-use	Avoid deterioration to water quality	Reduce emissions of greenhouse gasses and other pollutants	Reduce the risk of pollution to the environment from contaminated land	Support the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste	Reduce energy consumption and increase the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources	Support the use of locally sourced building materials and encourage those that are of a sustainable form and allow for re-use
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	5.1	5.2	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	7.1	7.2	8.1	8.2	8.3	9.1	9.2	
	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--
LP35.01		++			++		++	++			++			--							++			++		
LP36.01		++			++		++	++													++			++		
LP36.02						--	++															++				
LP36.03		++		-	++	++	++	++	++		--			--		++		--			++	++		++		
LP36.04		++			++	++	++	++	++			++	++	--		++		--			++	++		++		
LP36.05		++			++	++	++	++	++			++	++			++					++	++		++		
LP36.06						++	++	++	++					--								++		++		
LP36.07		++			++		--	++	++					--		--					++		--	++		
LP36.08				--	++		++	++	++					--		--						++			++	
LP36.09	++			--	++	++	++	++	++					--		--		--					--			
LP36.10		++			++	++	++	++	++			++	++			--					++	++		++		
LP36.11					++		++	++	++				--		--		++						--			
LP36.12		++			++	++	++	++	++		--					++	++				++	++		++		
LP36.13							++	++	++			++	++	++	++	++										
LP36.14		++			++		++	++	++			++	++			++	++				++	++		++		
LP36.15		++			++		++	++	++						++						++	++		++		
LP37.01				--	++		--	++	++									--		--	++	++		++		
LP37.02		++		--	++		++	++	++		--	++	++		--		++		--		++	++	--	++		
LP37.03					++		--	++	++			++	++			++			--		++	++		++		
LP37.04					++		--	++	++			++	++			++					++	++		++		
LP37.05		++			++		--	++	++			++	++			++					++	++		++		
LP37.06					++			++	++					--		++						++	++		++	
LP37.07					++			++	++					--		++						++	++		++	
LP37.08					++			++	++					--		++						++	++		++	
LP37.09					++			++	++					--		++						++	++		++	
LP38.01		++			++		--	++	++		--	++	++			++					++	++	--	++		
LP39.01		++			++		--	++	++												++	++		++		
LP39.02					++		--	++	++												++	++		++		
LP39.03/LP39.04							--	++	++													++	++		++	
LP39.05		++					--	++	++												++	++		++		
LP39.06					++		--	++	++													++	++		++	
LP39.07							--	++	++													++	++		++	
LP39.08							--	++	++													++	++		++	
LP39.09					++		--	++	++						++							++	++		++	

SA Framework																											
	Reduce health equalities		Improve access to services and facilities	Enhance access to open space and wildlife	Improve health and access to locally produced food	Support access to range of employment opportunities	Support investment to the local economy	Provide affordable homes that meet the needs of all.	Reduce the use of cars and encourage sustainable transport	Ensure that developments can be accessed by a variety of transport modes	Conserve and where appropriate, enhance the wider historic environment	Create attractive and well designed places that maintain and enhance local distinctiveness	Retain the distinctive character of Fenland's landscape	Limit or reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change	Minimise the risk of flooding from all sources	Minimise the loss of high grade agricultural land	Utilise brownfield sites for re-development	Minimise impacts to biodiversity and designated sites	Achieve net gains in biodiversity	Minimise water consumption and encourage re-use	Avoid deterioration to water quality	Reduce emissions of greenhouse gasses and other pollutants	Reduce the risk of pollution to the environment from contaminated land	Support the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste	Reduce energy consumption and increase the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources	Support the use of locally sourced building materials and encourage those that are of a sustainable form and allow for re-use	
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	5.1	5.2	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	7.1	7.2	8.1	8.2	8.3	9.1	9.2		
	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	++	--	
LP43.05					++		++								++	--								++	--		
LP43.06		++			++		++	++		--					++						++	++		++			
LP43.07							++		++						++								--				
LP44.01/LP44.02					++								--	--								++		--	--		
LP44.03				--	++										++	++		--	--				--				
LP44.04							++		++				++	++	++	++						++					
LP44.05					++										++	++								--	--		
LP45					++						--	--	--	--	--	--						++					
LP45			--		++			--			--	--	--	--	--	--					--	++		--	--		
LP45			--		++			--	++		--	--	--	--	--	--					--	++		--	--		
LP46.01					++		++				--	--											--				
LP46.02		++			++		++	++	++												++	++		++			
LP46.03					++		++	++	++													++		++			
LP46.04					++		++	++	++			++	++											++			
LP46.05		++			++		++	++	++				--	--							++		--	++			
LP46.06					++		++	++	++			++	++	++	++							++		++			
LP46.07		++			++		++	++	++			++	++	++	++	++					++			++			
LP46.08					++		++	++	++			++	++	++	++									++			
LP46.09					++		++	++	++													++		++			
LP46.10		++			++		++	++	++												++	++		++			
LP46.11		++			++		++	++	++		--										++			--	--		
LP46.12		++			++		++	++	++		--	++	++	++	++	++					++	++		++			
LP46.13		++			++		++	++	++		--				++						++	++		++			
LP47.01		++			++		++	++	++				--	--							++		--	++			
LP47.02					++						--	--	--	--	--	--						++					
LP47.03					++							--	--	--	--	--											
LP47.04					++							--	--	--	--	--											
LP47.05		++			++		++	++	++			++	++	++	++	++					++		--	++			
LP47.06					++						--	--	--	--	--	--							--	++			
LP47.07					++						--	--	++	++								++		++			
LP47.08		++			++		++	++	++						++	++					++			++			
LP48.01/LP48.05																						++		++			
LP48.02		++				++		++	++		--										++	++		++			
LP48.03				++	++	++		++	++		--	--	--	--	--	--					++	++		++			
LP48.04		++						++	++		--	--	--	--	--	--					++	++		++			
LP48.06		++						++	++		--	--	--	--	--	--					++	++		++			
LP48.07					++	++		++	++												++	++		++			

