



# Non-Technical Summary of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Fenland Core Strategy

Submission  
September 2013

# **Non-Technical Summary of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Fenland Core Strategy (Submission Version)**

**September 2013**

# Contents

Section	Page
1. Introduction	3
<b>Part 1 of the Sustainability Appraisal</b>	3
2. When was the Sustainability Appraisal carried out?	3
3. Who has done the Sustainability Appraisal?	4
4. The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (SEA)	4
5. How was the Appraisal carried out?	4
6. Summary of the Policies of the Fenland Core Strategy	7
7. Appraisal of the Policies	8
8. Need for a Core Strategy in Sustainability Terms	10
9. What would the situation be without the Core Strategy?	10
10. What would the situation be with the Core Strategy in place?	10
11. Sustainability Concerns about the Implementation of the Core Strategy	10
12. Mitigation and Monitoring	11
<b>Part 2 of the Sustainability Appraisal</b>	11
13. Selecting Locations for Growth	11
14. Assessing Constraints and Opportunities	13
15. Conclusions	15

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report is a non technical summary of the Sustainability Appraisal that Fenland District Council has undertaken as part of the preparation of its emerging Core Strategy.
- 1.2 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a process undertaken during the preparation of a plan or programme to assess whether it will contribute to environmental, social and economic objectives.
- 1.3 Local authorities are required by European Union Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive) to undertake an 'environmental assessment' of plans and programmes that are likely to have a significant effect upon the environment. This process is referred to commonly as 'strategic environmental assessment' (SEA).
- 1.4 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires sustainability appraisal of all emerging Development Plan Documents such as the emerging Fenland Core Strategy. Sustainability appraisal and SEA are similar processes that involve a comparable series of steps. SEA focuses on environmental effects whereas SA is concerned with the full range of environmental, social and economic matters.
- 1.5 The main SA report, and the previously published stages, use an approach that addresses the requirements of SEA and SA simultaneously, by giving full consideration to environmental issues whilst also addressing socio-economic concerns. In terms of satisfying the SEA Directive, the SA Scoping Report 2010 and the final main SA Report will together meet the requirement for an 'Environmental Report' setting out the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan (and the reasonable alternatives that have been considered).
- 1.6 Fenland's SA comprises two parts. Part 1 contains the methodology, findings and conclusions of the Core Strategy sustainability appraisal process. It should be read alongside the Fenland Core Strategy (Submission - September 2013) and the Fenland Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (November 2010). The main SA report updates the previously published appraisal reports of July 2012 and July 2011, which were both published alongside the earlier draft versions of the Core Strategy.
- 1.7 Part 2 is available in a separate document and appraises the locations for growth at the four market towns in detail.
- 1.8 This non-technical summary highlights the key elements of both Parts 1 and 2.

### **Part 1 of the Sustainability Appraisal**

## **2. When was the Sustainability Appraisal carried out?**

- 2.1 The Sustainability Appraisal process commenced at the same time as the preparation of the draft Core Strategy in 2010. The first stage was to prepare a scoping report setting out the issues that needed to be addressed and to establish a framework for assessing policy areas against sustainability objectives. This was subject to consultation with the three statutory environmental bodies (Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency) and other stakeholders in November 2010. The Scoping Report was amended to take into account the comments received, prior to publication.

2.3 A draft Sustainability Appraisal was published for consultation in July-September 2011, alongside consultation on the Core Strategy – Preferred Options 2011. A draft SA was also published alongside the Further Consultation Draft Core Strategy which was available for public consultation in July 2012. A further draft Sustainability Appraisal was published in February 2013, alongside the Proposed Submission Core Strategy. The September 2013 version has only minor changes to the February 2013 version, mainly in relation to an update to the introductory sections and amendments in relation to land at North East March.

### **3. Who has produced the Sustainability Appraisal?**

3.1 The Sustainability Appraisal process has been undertaken by officers in the Neighbourhood Strategy (Planning Policy) Team of Fenland District Council, as it was considered essential to integrate SA into plan preparation, thereby allowing it to inform the preparation of policy areas as they developed.

### **4. The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (SEA)**

4.1 The SEA Directive requires a series of questions to be answered such as what is the plan trying to achieve, what is the policy context, and how can adverse effects be mitigated against and positive effects enhanced. The details of these and how the Council has complied with the Directive are available in the main SA report.

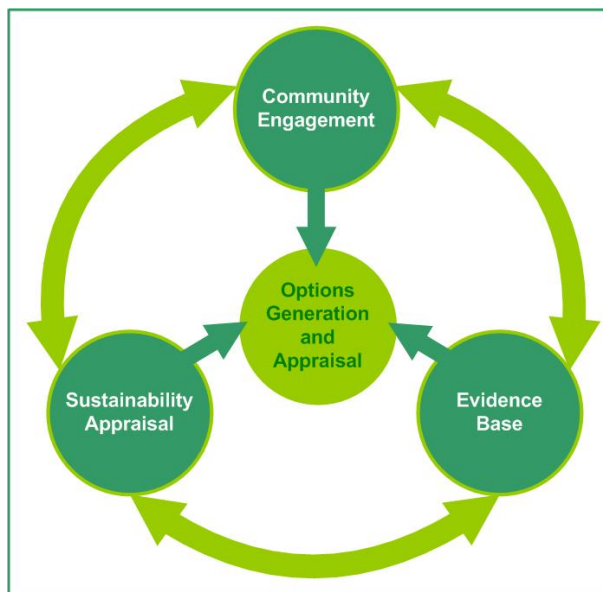
### **5. How was the Appraisal carried out?**

5.1 In line with the requirements of the SEA Directive, a range of tasks have been undertaken.

5.2 The Scoping Report of the SA included an Objectives Framework as the basis for formulating approaches and policies for the initial draft Core Strategy. The Objectives Framework is included in the main SA report and has been integral in assisting to refine the approaches and policies of the Core Strategy throughout the plan making process.

5.3 The SA Objectives Framework and decision making criteria (the scope of which has been consulted on and agreed) have been used to inform the generation and assessment of options for the Core Strategy. Figure 2 shows how the generation of options and appraisal has been informed by sustainability appraisal, community engagement, and the evidence base.

**Figure 2: Options Generation and Appraisal**



5.3 The SA Objectives Framework, as set out in Figure 3 (below), has been developed through consultation with stakeholders including statutory consultees such as Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency. Each sustainability objective is accompanied by a number of sub-objectives and decision making criteria, which assist in demonstrating whether the objective has been achieved. Each is scored on a number of criteria, as shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 3 – SA Objectives Framework**

Headline Objective	Sub-objective	
<b>1. Land and Water Resources</b>	1.1	Minimise the irreversible loss of undeveloped land
	1.2	Increase water efficiency and limit water consumption to levels supportable by natural processes and storage systems
	1.3	Avoid any deterioration of river water quality
<b>2. Biodiversity</b>	2.1	Avoid damage to designated sites and protected species
	2.2	Maintain and enhance the geographical range, amount and viability of habitats and species
<b>3. Landscape and Cultural Heritage</b>	3.1	Preserve and where appropriate, enhance buildings, monuments, sites, areas and landscapes that are designated or locally valued for their heritage interest; and protect/enhance their settings
	3.2	Create places, spaces and buildings that are well designed, contribute to a high quality public realm and maintain and enhance diversity and local distinctiveness of townscape character
	3.3	Retain the distinctive character of Fenland's landscape
<b>4. Climate Change and Flood risk</b>	4.1	Increase use of renewable energy sources whilst minimising waste and the use of other energy resources
	4.2	Limit or reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change
	4.3	Minimise vulnerability of people, places and property
<b>5. Pollution</b>	5.1	Reduce emissions of greenhouse gasses and other pollutants (including air, water, soil, noise, vibration and light)
	5.2	Reduce the risk of pollution to the environment from contaminated land
<b>6. Healthy, Inclusive and Accessible Communities</b>	6.1	Improve the quality, range and accessibility of services and facilities and ensure all groups thrive in safe environments and decent, affordable homes
	6.2	Create and enhance multifunctional open space that is accessible, links with a high quality green infrastructure network and

Headline Objective	Sub-objective	
		improves opportunities for people to access and appreciate wildlife and wild places
	6.3	Redress inequalities related to age, gender, disability, race, faith, location and income
<b>7. Economic Activity</b>	7.1	Help people gain access to a range of employment and training opportunities
	7.2	Support investment in people, places, communications and other infrastructure to improve the efficiency, competitiveness, vitality and adaptability of the local economy

### Scoring the Objectives

- 5.4 A simple methodology based on a series of “significance” criteria, ranging from ‘significant positive effect’ to ‘significant negative effect’ has been used. This has guided the appraisal of the sustainability of the Core Strategy and any future development plan documents. The significance criteria have been identified with reference to the key messages and targets set out in other relevant plans and programmes, the baseline information collected, and the problems and opportunities identified for Fenland in a number of background evidence documents.
- 5.5 Options for each policy have been scored against the sustainability objectives and sub-objectives using the significance criteria as a guide. The scoring system is set out in Figure 4 below. In the main SA document these scores are accompanied by a commentary which provides a justification for the assessment and a more detailed description of the likely effects.

**Figure 4: Sustainability Appraisal Scoring System**

Score	Performance Category
<b>++</b>	Significant positive effects
<b>+</b>	Minor positive effects
<b>0</b>	Neutral (no effects)
<b>-</b>	Minor negative effects
<b>--</b>	Significant negative effects
<b>?</b>	Uncertain (insufficient information to answer the question at this stage)
<b>/</b>	Mixed effects (e.g. -/++ minor negative effects and significant positive effects)

## 6. Summary of the Policies of the Fenland Core Strategy

- 6.1 Identifying and evaluating the likely significant effects of the plan requires consideration of the policies which together make up the plan. Below is a summary of the policies included in the Submission version of the Core Strategy - September 2013 (see the Core Strategy for full details):

**Figure 5: Summary of the Policies of the Submission Core Strategy – September 2013**

	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>Overarching Strategy And Targets</b>	CS1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development	A general policy as required to be included by central government to complement the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
	CS2 – Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents	Policy requiring developers to take full account of health issues when preparing development proposals.
	CS3 - Spatial Strategy & Settlement Hierarchy	Policy determining which towns and villages fall into what category of the settlement hierarchy. Development and investment will be prioritised to those places higher up the hierarchy.
	CS4 – Housing	Policy which sets the housing growth targets (11,000 new homes). Policy directs the majority of growth to the four market towns, plus other criteria.
	CS5 – Meeting Housing Needs	Policy setting affordable housing policy. Policy also sets out criteria for meeting wider housing need, including Gypsy and Traveller related development.
	CS6 – Employment, Tourism, Community Facilities and Retail	Policy to promote employment growth, with a target for new jobs and release of employment land. Criteria are used to determine appropriate types of employment development. Policy also protects community facilities, promotes tourism and directs new retail growth to market town centres.
<b>Proposals for Places</b>	CS7 – Urban Extensions	Policy setting out a number of important criteria (mix of uses, schools, open spaces, landscaping etc) which every urban extension should meet.
	CS8 – Wisbech	Policies and Proposals specific for Wisbech.
	CS9 – March	Policies and Proposals specific for March.
	CS10 – Chatteris	Policies and Proposals specific for Chatteris.
	CS11 – Whittlesey	Policies and Proposals specific for Whittlesey.
	CS12 – Rural Areas Development Policy	Policy specifically for rural areas, covering matters such as appropriate development, re-use of rural buildings and replacement dwellings.
<b>Delivering Infrastructure</b>	CS13 – Supporting & Mitigating the Impact of a Growing District	Policy confirming the need for infrastructure to be provided alongside development, as well as an expectation for developers to contribute towards infrastructure provision.
	CS14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding	Policy sets out an expectation for development to contribute to minimising resource consumption. Criteria are also set out in relation to how renewable energy proposals will be considered. Policy confirms the approach the Council will take in relation to Flood Risk and Drainage matters.
	CS15 – Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network	Policy covering strategic as well as site specific transport matters.
<b>Environment Quality</b>	CS16 – Building Quality	An important policy to ensure all development proposals are of the highest quality, with criteria covering matters such as heritage, biodiversity, local character, waste collection, amenity issues and designing out crime.
	CS17 – Community Safety	Policy setting criteria to ensure new development helps facilitate safe communities.



	CS18 – Historic Environment	Policy with criteria to preserve or enhance historic assets.
	CS19 – Natural Environment	Policy with criteria to protect the natural environment.

## 7. **Appraisal of the Policies**

- 7.1 The Core Strategy policies have been developed using the SA Objectives Framework.
- 7.2 The SEA Directive requires the appraisal to focus on ‘reasonable alternatives’. The Council is required to ensure that “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” (Article 5(1) of the Directive). The rationale for each option should also be clearly recorded; the environmental report must include “an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with” (Annex I (h) of the Directive). This is covered by commentary and conclusions for each policy in the main SA report.
- 7.3 A range of options have been developed and the process of sustainability appraisal has assisted in testing the options and choosing the most appropriate policies to include in the Core Strategy. Policies and alternatives have been generated that will help to deliver the overall vision of the Core Strategy and have taken into account all of the sustainability objectives.
- 7.4 Figure 5 brings together the effects of the Core Strategy Policies against the SA Objectives Framework to check that the Core Strategy meets these sustainability objectives.

### **Sustainability Strengths of the Submission Core Strategy**

- 7.5 As can be seen in Figure 5, every objective has at least one policy which is ‘positive’ in supporting the achievement of that objective.
- 7.6 The Core Strategy performs particularly well with respect of the following:
- Biodiversity (sub-objective 2.1)
  - Landscape and cultural heritage (sub-objective 3.3)
  - Improving access to services and facilities (sub-objective 6.1)
  - Healthy, Inclusive and Accessible Communities (sub-objective 6.2)
  - Economic Activity (sub-objectives 7.1)
- 7.6 The Core Strategy also performs well with respect to many other sustainability issues, although achievement of these in practice will have to be monitored using the indicators set out in the SA Objectives Framework.

**Figure 5 - Summary of the Effects of the Submission Core Strategy**

Policy ► SA Sub-Objective ▼	CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4 Part 1	CS4 Part 2	CS5	CS6	CS7	CS8	CS9	CS10	CS11	CS12	CS13	CS14	CS15	CS16	CS17	CS18	CS19
1.1	0	0	+	+	+	0	++	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1.2	0	0	0	/	/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0
1.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0
2.1	0	0	+	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	0	++
2.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	++
3.1	0	0	?	?	?	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	++	0	++	0
3.2	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	+	++	+	++	0
3.3	0	0	++	++	++	0	++	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	++	0	++	+
4.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0
4.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0
4.3	0	+	0	0	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0
5.1	0	0	+	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	++	0	0	0	0
5.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	0
6.1	0	++	++	++	++	++	+	++	+	+	+	+	0	++	0	++	+	++	0	0
6.2	0	+	0	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	0	0	++	++	0	+	++	0	0
6.3	0	+	0	0	0	++	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7.1	0	+	++	++	++	+	++	++	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	++	0	0	0	0
7.2	0	+	+	+	+	+	++	0	0	0	0	0	+	++	+	++	0	+	0	0

## **8. *Need for a Core Strategy in Sustainability Terms***

- 8.1 Two of the key questions that the SEA Directive asks are what would be the impact on sustainability issues both with and without the plan.

## **9. *What would the situation be without the Core Strategy?***

- 9.1 The baseline data in the SA Scoping Report 2010 identified numerous issues to address, and there is the possibility that without a Core Strategy the negative sustainability issues identified would remain and could get worse.
- 9.2 This uncertainty is compounded by the fact that the planning policy framework in Fenland is very old (nearly 20 years old) and is in need of a refresh to bring its policies in line with the latest sustainability thinking and national/international policy.
- 9.3 The situation, therefore, 'without the Core Strategy' is likely to be worse, potentially considerably worse, than the situation with a Core Strategy. This is particularly the case should the national economic situation improve, where the absence of an up-to-date Core Strategy is more likely to result in negative sustainability, than if the Core Strategy was up-to-date.

## **10. *What would the situation be with the Core Strategy in place?***

- 10.1 The Core Strategy objectives are the same as the SA objectives and therefore fully reflect sustainability principles.

## **11. *Sustainability Concerns about the Implementation of the Core Strategy***

- 11.1 In view of the amount of development to be delivered in Fenland (11,000 homes and 7,200 jobs), the spatial strategy and policies in the Core Strategy go a considerable way to ensure that the sustainability objectives can be met. In addition, there are a range of studies that help determine and mitigate the likelihood of adverse effects occurring, most notably:
- The Habitats Regulations Assessment (Screening) of the Submission Core Strategy, which has come to the conclusion that the integrity of internationally designated sites of nature conservation will not be adversely affected.
  - The Detailed (Stage 2a) Water Cycle Study (which also feeds into the Habitats Regulations Assessment), determines the ability of water resource infrastructure, waste water treatment infrastructure and water networks to deal with the development proposed, and what further investment will be required in order to protect the environment.
- 11.2 It should be borne in mind that some of the key issues identified at the scoping stage of the SA and through evidence gathering may not be able to be influenced directly by the Core Strategy. However, part of the role of the Fenland Local Plan is to encourage joint working and enable growth that starts to tackle and address issues such as community deprivation, the shortfall in infrastructure and low skills; and in turn attract investment, businesses and new residents to the district. Thus, as a result, additional growth can build a stronger, better and more sustainable Fenland.

- 11.3 It is also important to note that standards more generally are being driven upwards, both through national policy (e.g. the Code for Sustainable Homes; renewable energy targets; landfill targets; etc.), and also because planning authorities across the country are being given opportunities to ensure a higher quality of development is delivered than has been the case in the past.

## **12. Mitigation and Monitoring**

- 12.1 The SEA Directive requires monitoring of the significant environmental effects of implementing the plan. SA monitoring covers the significant social and economic effects as well as the environmental effects. An implementation and monitoring framework has been developed as part of the Submission Core Strategy to set out mechanisms for delivering the policy including who is responsible, how the policy will be achieved, and how the success or failure of the policy will be monitored. Indicators to assess the success of the sustainability objectives are contained in Appendix C of the main SA document.
- 12.2 No adverse effects are predicted relating to the preferred policies. There are a number of significant positive effects identified and a few uncertain effects. The monitoring element of the Core Strategy will assist in identifying any significant negative effects that have not been planned for and will also help to enhance the positive effects of the Core Strategy that have been identified through the SA process.
- 12.3 All of the policies set out in the Core Strategy will be implemented through the submission and determination of planning applications, pre-applications and appeals. Supplementary Planning Documents may be produced to provide more detailed implementation of the policies. There are a wide range of statutory and non statutory groups and organisations that will help to deliver the strategy and full details are shown in the main SA report.

## **Part 2 of the Sustainability Appraisal**

Part 2 of the main SA report appraises in detail the reasonable alternative locations for growth at the four market towns.

The first section considers broad segmented areas in each town where development might be possible. The second section takes the areas identified as the best options and examines in detail the merits of particular sites. From this a preferred list of either a “strategic allocation” or “broad location” for growth has been compiled which are incorporated into the policies for each of the market towns in the Core Strategy (Policies CS8 – CS11).

## **13. Selecting Locations for Growth**

- 13.1 The following step by step process was undertaken to select locations for growth at the four market towns:

Step 1: (ongoing since 2004)	Help establish Options via a ‘call for sites’ exercise. This exercise, in essence, continues throughout the process, as landowners continue to submit what they see as candidate sites.
------------------------------------	---

Step 2: (2010-11)	Fenland's Neighbourhood Planning Vision project (FNPV project), appraised in a broad way (i.e. 'north', 'east', 'south' and/or 'west') where significant growth could take place in each location, and made recommendations for broad locations for growth.
Step 3: (July 2011)	Consultation on a draft Core Strategy, which included 'broad locations for growth' at each of the four market towns (informed by the FNPV work, though not necessarily strictly following its recommendations). Background papers available to view and comment upon included the FNPV work. The 2011 version of the SA explicitly referred the reader to the FNPV work.
Step 4: (to July 2012)	Step 2 updated, following conclusion of Step 3 and gathering of more information.
Step 5: (to July 2012)	Step 4 refined by determining through appraisal whether proposed locations for growth should be 'strategic allocations' or 'broad locations for growth'. Steps 4 and 5 were reported in the July 2012 version of the SA report.
Step 6 (to February 2013)	The July 2012 report was updated. In particular, greater detail on all reasonable alternative growth locations now included in this document, including those locations not being proposed to be taken forward in the Core Strategy.

- 13.2 For the broad appraisal of the reasonable alternatives for growth at the four market towns, the same methodology and approach was used as shown in Figure 4.
- 13.3 Four broad segments as an area of search were used for each of the towns to identify opportunities for future development through urban extensions. The segments were the same as those identified in the FNPV study.
- 13.4 From a sustainability appraisal perspective the following conclusions were reached:

**Wisbech** - Development sites should first be sought in the east and south, plus the Nene Waterfront area in the north segment. If such locations do not have sufficient capacity or capability of meeting Wisbech's identified growth needs, then west should be the next favoured due to its beneficial location nearest the town centre and associated services (subject to overcoming flood risk concerns). The north comes out as the least favoured segment.

**March** - Growth should be identified in the southern segment first, if possible. Next, opportunities could be explored in all three other segments.

**Chatteris** - Growth should be identified in the south and east segments first, if possible. Next, but only if needed and if possible, the north and west should be investigated should pockets of low flood risk be deemed suitable for development.

**Whittlesey** - Growth should be identified in the east segment first, if possible. Next, but only if needed and if possible, the south and west should be investigated.

## **14. Assessing Constraints and Opportunities**

14.1 Whilst the “segment” approach established the principle that growth may come forward in at least part of a particular segment, a wide range of issues were used to confirm more precisely where it is most appropriate for that growth to be located including:

- Whether isolated or adjacent to existing settlements
- Impact on landscape character and open countryside
- Impact on heritage assets
- Impact on designated nature sites and other known biodiversity
- Proximity to key services including town centres, local schools, local convenience shopping, and employment areas
- Impact on the morphology of the town
- Whether a Greenfield or Brownfield (previously developed land) site
- Whether agricultural land and the grade affected
- Flood risk
- Land contamination
- Impact on waste and minerals issues including safeguarded areas
- Potential to provide road access(es) and opportunities to link to the existing footway and cycleway network
- Potential to improve lives of existing residents and create healthy and sustainable communities
- Potential to provide or utilise existing open space
- Likely infrastructure required to facilitate development
- Developer interest

14.2 The Council determined from the outset not to have detailed allocations down to, say, 5 or 10 dwellings as per many traditional ‘site allocations development plans’. This was for four prime reasons:

- The Council wanted a more flexible, criteria based plan which enabled development to come forward without rigid black and white boundaries of all development sites set out on a map. In the past, such rigid boundaries (‘Development Area Boundaries’ or DABs as they have been known in Fenland for the past 20 years) have proven unhelpful, especially in village locations where otherwise appropriate development on the edge of the village has been constrained by a rigid boundary.
- The time and resources to prepare such a detailed plan, covering a large rural district and lots of settlements, would be a considerable burden on the Council and would cause lengthy delays to plan preparation, contrary to government aspirations.
- The NPPF makes no requirement for such detailed site planning. Indeed, the opposite, with its emphasis that Local Plans should be ‘strategic’ in nature.
- The Localism Act enables Neighbourhood Plans to come forward. Such Neighbourhood Plans would be a suitable vehicle for identifying (on a map) and bringing forward small to medium scale development sites, should the local community want to.

14.3 As such, the Council has the following criteria for a location to be allocated (whether specifically as a strategic allocation or as a broad location):

- For predominantly housing only locations, a site capable of delivering a minimum of 250 homes.

- For mixed use locations, a site capable of delivering a minimum of 150 homes plus some other substantial land use such as employment.
- For non-residential locations, a site capable of substantial new development, such as a large employment zone of major significance for at least the town in which it is located.

14.4 For each potential location a traffic light system was used for the majority of issues as set out below:

No known constraints	Green
Minor constraints - should be relatively easy to address, and/or utilise	Light Green
Medium constraints – should be possible to address	Yellow
Major constraints – detailed assessment required – proceed with caution	Orange
Significant constraints – unable to overcome	Red

14.5 As shown above, five rather than the usual three colours (red, amber and green) were used in this analysis. This is considered to give a more flexible and accurate picture of whether a particular issue/constraint is one which can be overcome, needs further detailed consideration and/or has potential to enhance the development. It allows for a more objective overall assessment to be made on an area based on all known factors to ensure that a comprehensive picture of the relevant issues emerges.

14.6 The above generic system was not appropriate for all issues being considered. Therefore, some additional bespoke systems were created, as follows.

14.7 For the proximity to key services the following assessment was used. Distances were measured from the nearest point of the area to the particular service; and for the town centre the distance to its closest edge.

Up to 300m	Green
Up to 600m	Light Green
Up to 900m	Yellow
Up to 1200m	Orange
More than 1200m	Red

14.8 For the grade of agricultural land the following assessment was used:

Non-agricultural	Green
Grade 4	Light Green
Grade 3	Yellow
Grade 2	Orange
Grade 1	Red

14.9 For the distance from designated nature sites the following assessment was used (though this element of the appraisal should be read alongside the Habitats Regulations Assessment work, available in a separate evidence report):

More than 15km away	Green
Between 10 – 15km away	Light Green
Between 5 - 10km away	Yellow
Between 1- 5km away	Orange
Within 1km	Red

- 14.10 It should be noted that a number scoring system (i.e. one where each site scores points for each issue, and the one with most points 'wins' and is allocated) was avoided as it was considered that this can give disproportional weight to a particular issue.
- 14.11 In total, 22 sites were assessed. The same issue for each site was considered e.g. flood risk with an overall conclusion about the suitability of each site provided. The list below indicates all those areas that were considered. The ones marked with an asterix (\*) are those that have been included either as a strategic allocation or a broad location in the Core Strategy. The detailed reasoning behind the inclusion of a particular site is provided in the main SA report.

East Wisbech\*  
South Wisbech\*  
West Wisbech\*  
North West Wisbech  
Nene Waterfront and Port\*

March – North East  
March – East  
March – South East\*  
March – South West\*  
March – West\*  
March – West of A141 Bypass  
March – North West  
March Trading Estate\*

Chatteris East\*  
Chatteris South\*  
Chatteris South West  
Chatteris North West  
Chatteris North\*

East Whittlesey\*  
South Whittlesey  
North West Whittlesey  
North Whittlesey

## **15. Conclusions**

- 15.1 The SA Scoping Report 2010 and the final main SA Report together meet the requirement for an 'Environmental Report' as required by the SEA Directive.
- 15.2 The Core Strategy Submission September 2013 has been developed after an intensive period of work undertaken by Fenland District Council. The project was underpinned by the sustainability objectives set out in the SA Objectives Framework as shown in Figure 3.
- 15.3 The Core Strategy has been shaped by the SA Objectives Framework and these objectives have been used to both develop and appraise options and policies.
- 15.4 The SA accompanying the Core Strategy Submission is based on good evidence, and is generally compliant with national policy. None of the alternative options considered performed significantly better across the range of sustainability objectives.



- 15.5 The SA has been integral in developing alternative options for urban extensions for each of the four market towns and for identifying which specific sites should be taken forward in the Core Strategy as new areas for development.

You can get this document in another language, in large print, in Moon, in Braille, on audio cassette and in electronic format.  
Please ask us if you would like this document in any of these formats.



Fenland District Council

Fenland Hall, County Road, March, Cambridgeshire. PE15 8NQ  
Tel: 01354 654321 Email: [info@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:info@fenland.gov.uk) Web: [www.fenland.gov.uk](http://www.fenland.gov.uk)