

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Rushmoor Local Plan

Non-Technical Summary

Rushmoor Borough Council

Project Number: 60515233

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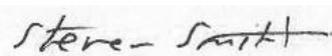
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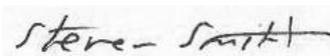
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1. Introduction

AECOM is commissioned to undertake Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of the emerging Rushmoor Local Plan. Once adopted, the plan will establish a spatial strategy for growth and change up to 2032, allocate strategic sites and establish the policies against which planning applications will be determined.

SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and maximising the positives. SA for Local Plans is a legal requirement, in-line with the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.

At the current time, the 'Draft Submission' version of the Local Plan is published in-line with Regulation 19 of the Local Planning Regulations, and the 'SA Report' is published alongside. The SA Report aims to inform representations, and subsequent plan-making work (see the discussion of 'next steps', below).

This is a Non-technical Summary (NTS) of the SA Report.

1.1 Structure of the SA Report / this NTS

SA reporting essentially involves answering the following questions in turn:

1. What has plan-making / SA involved up to this point?
 - i.e. in the run-up to preparing the Proposed Submission Plan.
2. What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?
 - i.e. in relation to the Proposed Submission Plan.
3. What are the next steps?

Each of these questions is answered in turn below. Firstly though there is a need to set the scene further by answering the question 'What's the scope of the SA?'

1.2 What is the plan seeking to achieve?

The Rushmoor Local Plan will guide the location, scale and type of future development in Rushmoor Borough up to 2032, as well as providing detailed development management policies to be used in determining planning applications.

Once adopted, the Local Plan will replace two existing planning documents, namely the Core Strategy (adopted 2011) and saved policies in the Rushmoor Local Plan Review, 2000.

The Local Plan will be used to:

- Guide the location, scale and type of future development in Rushmoor Borough up to 2032;
- Help deliver land use elements of other plans and strategies which affect the Borough;
- Inform decisions on planning applications.

1.2.1 Plan objectives

A 'vision' for the borough has been established, which informed development of the following strategic objectives for the draft plan:

- A. To address housing needs by planning for at least 7,850 new homes of an appropriate housing mix and tenure, including specialist housing needs, between 2014 and 2032.

- B. To deliver a sustainable urban extension at Wellesley, Aldershot, of about 3,850 new homes by 2032.
- C. To protect the land required to fulfil the borough's role in enabling strong economic performance across the Functional Economic Area and wider Enterprise M3 LEP area through the safeguarding of Strategic and Locally Important Employment Sites.
- D. To enhance the vitality and viability of Aldershot and Farnborough town centres as retail and leisure destinations to meet the needs of residents, and to support the vibrancy of North Camp District Centre.
- E. To support the continuation of business aviation flying and the biennial Airshow at Farnborough Airport.
- F. To ensure the appropriate protection of existing, and the provision of new, infrastructure, including green infrastructure and community facilities.
- G. To ensure high quality, well-designed, development is delivered in the borough.
- H. To improve quality of life for residents, addressing borough wide and neighbourhood deprivation issues including targeted improvement work in pockets of deprivation.
- I. To conserve and enhance the borough's built and natural environment, including heritage assets, areas of ecological value and the water environment.
- J. To reduce the borough's contribution to the causes of climate change and to minimise the impacts of climate change on the Borough through a combination of mitigation and adaptation measures.
- K. To encourage sustainable solutions to movement in and out, and around, the borough.

1.3 What's the plan not trying to achieve?

It is important to emphasise that the plan will be strategic in nature. Even the allocation of sites should be considered a strategic undertaking, i.e. a process that omits consideration of some detailed issues in the knowledge that these can be addressed further down the line (through the planning application process). The strategic nature of the plan is reflected in the scope of the SA.

1.4 What's the scope of the SA?

The scope of the SA is essentially reflected in a list of sustainability objectives. Taken together, these objectives (which are grouped under ten topic headings) indicate the parameters of SA, and provide a methodological 'framework' for appraisal.

Table 1: SA objectives

SA objective	SA topic
1) To maximise the opportunity for everyone to have a decent and affordable home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing
2) To facilitate the improved health and well-being of the population and reduce inequalities in health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and wellbeing
3) To reduce relative deprivation and social exclusion and to promote an equal society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and wellbeing
4) To increase the vitality and viability of Aldershot and Farnborough centres and North Camp district centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy and employment
5) To improve accessibility for all to services, employment and recreational opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and wellbeing • Economy and employment
6) To encourage the development of, and participation in cultural, creative and sporting activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and wellbeing

SA objective	SA topic
7) To improve energy efficiency, continue reducing waste, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, and ensure air quality continues to improve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change • Transport and traffic
8) To conserve and enhance biodiversity throughout Rushmoor and work to improve and protect the condition of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity
9) To reduce the need to travel, encourage alternatives to the car, and make best use of existing transport infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport and traffic
10) To secure the protection and management of listed buildings, conservation areas and other features of historic, landscape and archaeological importance including local distinctiveness and sense of place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic environment • Landscape
11) To protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of townscapes / landscapes, and promote high quality design of new development and landscaping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic environment • Landscape
12) To manage flood risk, including surface water flooding, and prevent inappropriate development in identified areas of flood risk, maintain and improve ground and surface water quality, and encourage sustainable water management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change • Natural resources
13) To improve enterprise performance, and promote and encourage a buoyant and diverse local economy which provides jobs to match the skills and needs of local residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy and employment
14) To raise the level of educational attainment and encourage the development of skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy and employment
15) To create and maintain safer and more secure communities and reduce the fear of crime.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and wellbeing
16) To reduce the proportion of the community adversely affected by noise disturbance from aircraft associated with Airport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and wellbeing
17) To promote appropriate safe use of land in and close to Farnborough Airport and alleviate concerns over the safety of airport operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and wellbeing
18) To manage and mitigate the impacts of climate change, including flood risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change
19) Improve and broaden access to, and understanding of, local heritage sites, areas and buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape • Historic environment
20) To maintain and improve soil quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural resources

2. Plan-making / SA up to this point

An important element of the required SA process involves appraising 'reasonable alternatives' in time to inform development of the draft plan, and then presenting information on reasonable alternatives within the report published alongside the draft plan.

As such, Part 1 of the SA Report explains how work was undertaken to develop and appraise alternative approaches to housing growth ('alternative spatial strategies'). Specifically, Part 1 of the report:

- Explains the process of establishing reasonable alternatives;
- Presents the appraisal of the reasonable alternatives; and then
- Gives the Council's response to the alternatives appraisal findings.

2.1 Developing reasonable alternatives

Plan-making has been underway since 2014, with a wide range of evidence produced to inform the development of the draft plan. Prior to this current consultation (Local Planning Regulation 19) a Local Plan Preferred Approach was published in June 2015 and this was accompanied by a SA Report. All of the options identified in the Preferred Approach consultation document were considered through the SA process. An SA Report was published alongside the Preferred Approach in June 2015, with summary appraisal findings presented within the main body of the report and detailed appraisal findings presented within Appendix 4. The Preferred Approach and SA Report are available to view and download on the Council's website here: <http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/newlocalplan>

Rather than recap the entire 'story' in detail, the intention here is to explain the work undertaken in 2016 and early 2017, which led to the development of the draft plan that is currently the focus of appraisal (see Chapter 3 below) and is currently published under Local Planning Regulation 19.

Whilst the draft plan objectives are numerous and cover a range of issues, it is clear that an overarching objective¹ relates to the identification of land to meet housing needs. Determining an approach to housing growth is the primary means by which the plan seeks to achieve wide ranging objectives. It is the matter at the heart of the plan.

Since the Preferred Approach consultation in 2015, the evidence base and further technical work has progressed. It was therefore recognised that further work was needed to refine understanding of spatial strategy alternatives (i.e. continue the process of refinement discussed above)² and ultimately arrive at reasonable alternatives for appraisal/ consultation. The task involved giving consideration to 'top-down' factors and 'bottom-up' factors, before finally 'pulling things together' and establishing reasonable alternative spatial strategies.

2.1.1 'Top-down' considerations

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to have a clear understanding of housing needs in its area. It stipulates that this should be established through the preparation a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to assess full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries.

The Council undertook an analysis in 2013, which identified that whilst Rushmoor has cross-boundary migration and commuting links with a number of neighbouring local authorities, the strongest links are with Hart and Surrey Heath Councils. This was corroborated by work undertaken on the same issue by those two councils. The conclusion was that the three authorities form a Housing Market Area (HMA) and on this basis, the three councils commissioned the preparation of a new joint SHMA.

¹ In line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), a decision on what 'reasonably' should be the focus of alternatives appraisal should be made in-light of the plan objectives. In the case of the Rushmoor Local Plan, it is suggested that plan objective A, which relate to meeting objectively assessed housing needs, is somewhat overarching.

² National Planning Practice Guidance is clear that understanding of alternatives should be 'refined' over time through the SA process.

The joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment was published in January 2017 and identified that there is a housing need of 1,200 homes per annum across the HMA between 2014 and 2032. Of these, 436 homes per annum are identified as being required within Rushmoor, which equates to a total need of 7,850 dwellings to be provided in the Borough over the Plan period (2014 to 2032). This is a slight reduction (34 dwellings per annum) in the total need identified in the previous joint SHMA published in 2014.

The housing need figure set out in the SHMA is the starting point against which an assessment of physical and environmental constraints must be made to determine whether the housing needs can be met or, if not, what the capacity of the Borough might be.

2.1.2 'Bottom-up considerations

The main piece of evidence which is used to help determine whether housing needs can be met is the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). Using a base date of 31st March 2016, the SHELAA identifies potential capacity for the delivery of 7,800 dwellings up to 2032 from sites with planning permission where development has not yet started and other sites identified as having potential for housing development. In addition, 472 homes have been built since 2014 and the SHELAA identifies a windfall allowance (450 homes) for sites not covered by site specific identification in the SHELAA because they were too small. In total, these sources identify potential capacity in the Borough of around 8,700 new dwellings between 2014 and 2032.

2.1.3 Establishing the reasonable alternatives

The emerging findings of the SHMA, SHELAA and wider assessments were discussed at a meeting between Council Officers and AECOM in early November 2016. This, along with the wider evidence and consultation responses received on the Preferred Approach, informed the identification of three spatial strategy options ('reasonable alternatives') to be explored through the SA process for the Rushmoor Local Plan.

Option 1 - Roll forward the Preferred Approach

This option sets the expected yields on sites as previously set out in the Preferred Approach. This option would deliver a total of 7,609 homes over the plan period, which would result in a shortfall of 239 homes against OAHN.

Option 2 - Revised Preferred Option

This option identifies an increased scale of development on the following sites:

- The Galleries from 206 to 500 homes (SHELAA 554);
- Meudon House/115-117 Pinehurst from 100 to 300 homes (SHELAA 518); the Civic Quarter from 250 to 700 homes (SHELAA 15); and
- Union Street East from 80 to 130 homes (SHELAA 591)

It also identifies capacity for housing on Blandford House and Malta Barracks (SHELAA 572), which is outside the Defined Urban Area.

This option would deliver a range between 8,762 - 8,792 homes over the plan period, resulting in 914 to 944 new homes above the OAHN.

Option 3 - Option 2 + deallocated employment sites and undeveloped land within existing employment designations

This option also identifies an increased scale of development on the following sites:

- The Galleries from 206 to 500 homes (SHELAA 554);
- Meudon House/115-117 Pinehurst from 100 to 300 homes (SHELAA 518);

- the Civic Quarter from 250 to 700 homes (SHELAA 15); and
- Union Street East from 80 to 130 homes (SHELAA 591)

It also identifies capacity for housing on Blandford House and Malta Barracks (SHELAA 572), which is outside the Defined Urban Area.

In addition, this option includes the delivery of homes on deallocated employment sites (in the emerging Local Plan), which are currently occupied by non-residential uses (Rushmoor Borough Council offices and Esterline). It also includes the delivery of homes on undeveloped land within sites protected for employment uses (Civic Enclave and Farnborough Business Park).

This option would deliver a range between 9,362 - 9,392 homes over the plan period. This would deliver 1,514 to 1,544 above the OAHN.

The majority of development proposed under each of the options is comprised of committed development, which includes completions (472) and sites with existing planning permission (5,059), including development at Wellesley (Aldershot Urban Extension). Therefore, the variation between options reflects the availability of sites for potential allocation in the Local Plan, the density of development to be delivered on them and potential development of deallocated employment sites and undeveloped land within existing employment designations. A more detailed breakdown of the three options is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: The reasonable spatial strategy alternatives

		Spatial Strategy Preferred Approach Plan Period 2011-2032	Reasonable Spatial Strategy Alternatives Plan Period 2014-2032		
			Option 1 Roll forward Preferred Approach	Option 2 Revised Preferred Option	Option 3 Option 2 + deallocated employment sites and undeveloped land within existing employment designations
Completions		620	472	472	472
Sites with Planning Permission		4,593	5,059	5,059	5,059
Other Potential Sites identified in SHELAA (not including sites identified below)*		1,711	812	812	637
Windfall		540	450	450	450
Aldershot	The Galleries (SHELAA 554)	206	206	500	500
	Union Street East (SHELAA 591)	0	80	130	130
	Aldershot Railway Station and surrounds (SHELAA 580)	0	30	30	30
Farnborough (within Defined Urban Area)	Meudon House/115-117 Pinehurst (SHELAA 518)	100	100	300	300
	The Crescent (SHELAA 516)	140	150	159	159
	Civic Quarter (SHELAA 15)	250	250	700	700
	Deallocated employment sites** and undeveloped employment land within existing employment designations***	0	0	0	775
Farnborough (outside Defined Urban Area)	Blandford House and Malta Barracks (SHELAA 572)	0	0	150 - 180 ³	150 - 180 ⁴
Total potential supply		8,160	7,609	8,762 - 8,792	9,362 - 9,392
Rushmoor OAHN		9,822	7,848	7,848	7,848
+/-		-1,662	-239	+914 to 944	+1,514 to 1,544

³ Site capacity is shown as a range pending further capacity analysis. The lower figure reflects the Council's capacity estimate and policy approach and the higher figure the developer's capacity estimate.

⁴ Ibid.

* Note that Esterline forms part of the 812 capacity in Options 1 and 2 as there is understood to be capacity yet Option 3 considers that it could be a site allocation. As such, it moves out of the 812 capacity in that option.

** Deallocated employment sites consist of Rushmoor Borough Council offices (150 units) and Esterline (175 units).

*** Undeveloped land within existing employment designations relates to Farnborough Business Park (Plot C - 300 units) and the Civil Enclave (150 units)

2.2 Summary alternatives appraisal findings

Summary appraisal findings are presented within Table 2. Within each row (i.e. for each of the topics that comprise the SA framework) the columns to the right hand side seek to both categorise the performance of each option in terms of 'significant effects' (using **red** / **green**) and also rank the alternatives in relative order of performance. Also, '=' is used to denote instances where the alternatives perform on a par (i.e. it is not possible to differentiate between them). A star is used to highlight the option or options that are preferred from an SA perspective.

Table 2: Summary spatial strategy alternatives appraisal findings

SA Topic	Categorisation and rank		
	Option 1 Rolled forward Preferred Approach	Option 2 Revised Preferred Option	Option 3 As Option 2 + deallocated employment sites and undeveloped land within existing employment designations
Biodiversity	★1	2	3
Climate change	=	=	=
Community and wellbeing	3	★1	★1
Economy and employment	2	★1	3
Historic environment	=	=	=
Housing	3	2	★1
Landscape	=	=	=
Transport and traffic	★1	2	3
Natural resources	=	=	=

Summary findings and conclusions:

The majority of development proposed under each of the options is comprised of committed development, which includes completions (472) and sites with existing planning permission (5,059). The main differences between the options in terms of the scale and location of growth is the increased scale of development at the Civic Quarter from 250 to 700 dwellings, the Galleries from 206 to 500 dwellings and Union Street East from 80 to 130 dwellings and delivery of housing (150 to 180 dwellings) at site 572 (Blandford House and Malta Barracks) under Options 2 and 3. Option 3 also proposes the development of deallocated employment sites (Council offices (150 units) and Esterline (175 units)) and undeveloped land within existing employment designations (Farnborough Business Park (Plot C - 300 units) and the Civil Enclave (150 units)).

For a number of the SA topics, it was not possible to predict any significant differences between the options. The similarity between them in terms of the overall level and location of growth made it difficult to differentiate between them with respect to climate change, historic environment, landscape and natural resources. On balance, it was concluded that they all have the potential to result in a residual neutral effect against these topics.

The appraisal found that as the level of growth increases so does the likelihood and significance of negative effects in relation to biodiversity and transport and traffic. As a result, Option 3 was considered to perform poorly compared to the other options against these topics with Option 1 preferred. Conversely, Option 3 performed well against the housing topic as it proposes a slightly higher level of growth and would therefore deliver more new homes. However, the appraisal found that all of the options would be likely to have a significant positive effect against housing by helping to meet identified needs. Significant positive effects were also identified for all the options against the community and wellbeing topic through improvements to existing or delivery of new community infrastructure. Options 2 and 3 were both preferred as the higher level of growth would be likely to deliver greater improvements to community infrastructure; however, the extent of infrastructure delivery is uncertain.

As for a number of other topics, the appraisal found it difficult to accurately predict any significant differences between the options in terms of the economy and employment. All are likely to support existing as well as new employment opportunities across the Borough with the potential for positive effects at the Borough scale. Option 2 was considered to perform the best as it supports an increased level of residential growth at sites within or in close proximity to Farnborough and Aldershot Town Centres. Option 3 would result in the loss of existing or potential employment land and is therefore likely to have a reduced positive effect compared to the other options (on the basis that the availability of land for employment purposes could in some senses be considered finite).

2.3 The Council's response / justification for the preferred approach

The following text is in the form of a general discussion of the reasoning and justification behind the preferred option, which is **Option 2**.

The NPPF requires local planning authorities to have a clear understanding of housing needs in its area. It stipulates that this should be established through the preparation a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to assess full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries. The Council undertook an analysis in 2013, which identified that, whilst Rushmoor has cross-boundary migration and commuting links with a number of neighbouring local authorities, the strongest links are with Hart and Surrey Heath Councils. This was corroborated by work undertaken on the same issue by those two councils.

The conclusion was that the three authorities form a housing market area (HMA), so endorsing the continuation of a long history of joint working on the housing evidence base. On this basis, the three councils commissioned the preparation of a new joint SHMA. This study used a range of demographic, employment and market factors, including population projections, housing affordability, prices, rents and anticipated employment growth, to assess future housing need across the three authority areas.

The SHMA (2016) identifies a housing need for 1,200 homes per annum across the HMA between 2014 and 2032. Of these, 436 homes per annum are identified as being required within Rushmoor, which equates to a total need of 7,850 dwellings to be provided in the Borough over the Plan period (2014 to 2032).

The housing need figure set out in the SHMA is the starting point against which an assessment of physical and environmental constraints must be made to determine whether the housing needs can be met or, if not, what the capacity of the Borough might be.

The NPPF requires that local planning authorities meet their full, 'objectively assessed' needs for both market and affordable housing in their housing market area, as far as is consistent with other policies in the NPPF. Rushmoor, Hart and Surrey Heath have agreed that, in the first instance, they will do what they can to meet their own proportion of the housing needs identified in the SHMA. However, to satisfy the test that a local plan has been prepared positively, local planning authorities should also anticipate meeting unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development.

The main piece of evidence which is used to help determine whether housing needs can be met is the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). Using a base date of 31st March 2016, the SHELAA identifies potential capacity for the delivery of 7,800 dwellings up to 2031 from sites with planning permission where development has not yet started and other sites identified as having potential for housing development. In addition to potential identified through the SHELAA, an assessment has been made of overall delivery needs to include the number of homes already completed since 2014 (472) and a windfall allowance for sites which are not covered by site-specific identification in the SHELAA because they are too small.

In total, these sources identify potential capacity in the Borough of around 8,700 new dwellings between 2014 and 2032. This is in line with Option 2, which would deliver a range between 8,762 - 8,792 homes over the plan period (914 to 944 above the OAHN).

The estimated capacity for housing which can be delivered up to 2032 of about 8,700 dwellings is sufficient to meet the objectively assessed need for 7,848 dwellings identified in the SHMA. In meeting this need, the Council has sought to maximise the use of town centre sites, both to enable housing delivery and to support town centre regeneration objectives, and has explored opportunities for the further release of employment sites, having regard to the need to provide a reasonable balance between employment and housing whilst ensuring that there is sufficient employment land to meet the economic needs of the FEA and to support the wider Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership. The estimated capacity of about 8,700 dwellings, when set against the identified need of 7,848 dwellings, provides sufficient flexibility should there be unimplemented, or slower

implementation of, housing schemes because of unforeseen circumstances; it also maximises housing development within the parameters of sustainable development and supports affordable housing delivery.

As noted in the summary findings and conclusions above, it is difficult to predict significant differences between options on many of the sustainability topics. Any increase in growth will enable the Council to deliver more homes, including affordable homes, and contribute to meeting the needs of the HMA. However, this would also result in the loss of existing or potential employment land, which the evidence demonstrates is in tight supply. Therefore, the Council consider that Option 2 is the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives.

3. Appraisal findings at this stage

Part 2 of the SA Report answers the question - What are appraisal findings at this stage? - by presenting an appraisal of the Draft (Pre-Submission) Local Plan. Appraisal findings are presented under nine sustainability topic headings (see Table 1, above), with each narrative ending in concluding paragraphs, which are provided below.

3.1 Biodiversity

The spatial strategy directs new development towards existing urban areas and restricts new development in the countryside surrounding Aldershot and Farnborough. A large proportion of the identified capacity to accommodate development within the Borough is comprised of completions (472 dwellings) and sites with existing planning permission (5,089, dwellings), which includes the 3,850 dwellings proposed at Wellesley (Aldershot Urban Extension). The majority of the remaining sites with capacity are within the urban area and on existing brownfield land. While brownfield land can be important for biodiversity, project level surveys and assessments will be able to determine its value and suitable mitigation is proposed through draft plan policies. It is therefore considered that development proposed through the draft plan alone is not likely to result in significant negative effects on biodiversity.

While there is the potential for cumulative negative effects on designated and non-designated biodiversity, it is considered that the mitigation provided through draft plan policies and available at the project level will be able to reduce the significance of any residual negative effects. It is important that biodiversity is considered early as part of any proposal for development and that the Council works with partners, including adjacent Local Authorities and Natural England to protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity not only within the Borough but in the surrounding areas. Overall, it is predicted that there will be a **residual neutral effect on biodiversity**, with an element of uncertainty as this will be dependent on mitigation delivered at the project level.

3.2 Climate change

The draft plan directs development towards existing urban areas where there is good access to existing sustainable transport modes, employment and facilities/services. This, along with the improvements to sustainable transport modes and facilities/services delivered as part of development, will help to reduce reliance on the private vehicle. Draft plan policies seek to minimise the need to travel, promote opportunities for sustainable transport modes, and improve accessibility to local facilities and linkages with the surrounding pedestrian and cycle network. While the evidence suggests that there is likely to be some increase in traffic flows as a result of proposed development, it is predicted that there will be suitable mitigation to ensure that these impacts are not significant.

The draft plan requires that new development is directed to areas of lowest flood risk and that it is appropriately flood resilient and resistant. Any proposals within a defined area at risk of surface water flooding must be accompanied by a surface water assessment that demonstrates that flood resilience and resistance measures have been incorporated. The draft plan also requires the implementation of integrated and maintainable SuDS in all flood zones. The majority of development proposed in the draft plan is within Flood Zone 1; however, there are existing issues within areas of surface water flood risk that will need to be considered further through site specific work.

On balance, it is predicted that the draft plan as a whole will have **residual neutral effect** with regard to climate change as it is not possible to conclude a positive or negative effect on the baseline. There is an element of uncertainty as surface water flooding issues still need to be addressed through site specific work. The extent to which the plan and proposed development will help to minimise the need to travel and reduce reliance on the private vehicle is also uncertain as it will be dependent on what is delivered through the development management (planning application) stage.

3.3 Community and wellbeing

Development proposed and supported through the draft plan will result in improvements to as well as the delivery of new community infrastructure, including health facilities and recreational areas, for

existing communities. The Wellesley (Aldershot Urban Extension) development and regeneration of Aldershot and Farnborough Town Centres will result in significant improvements to community infrastructure and pedestrian movement and this is predicted to have the potential for a significant long-term positive effect on communities and wellbeing. It will be important to improve pedestrian and public transport links into these areas for surrounding communities to ensure that the maximum number of residents in the Borough benefit from improvements to and delivery of new community infrastructure.

The draft plan directs development towards deprived areas in the borough and proposes a partnership approach towards the delivery of neighbourhood development in these areas. Good quality development can help to improve quality of life for communities and reduce inequalities. Overall, it is predicted that the draft plan as a whole has the potential for a **significant long-term positive effect** on communities and wellbeing.

3.4 Economy and employment

The draft plan seeks to protect strategic and locally employment sites within Rushmoor and supports the delivery of employment uses to ensure that the employment land needs of the Borough and wider FEA can be met. It supports opportunities to develop key employment sectors including specialist / advanced manufacturing (including research and development), manufacturing and distribution and business services in Aldershot and Farnborough town centres and the established office locations of Farnborough Business Park and Frimley Business Park. The draft plan seeks to regenerate and enhance the vitality and viability of existing town centres and supports opportunities for the development that will improve education, skills and training. As a whole, it is considered that the draft plan will have a **significant long-term positive effect** on economy and employment.

3.5 Historic environment

The spatial strategy directs new development towards existing urban areas and a large proportion of the identified capacity to accommodate development within the Borough is comprised of completions (472 dwellings) and sites with existing planning permission (5,059 dwellings), which includes the 3,850 dwellings proposed at Wellesley (Aldershot Urban Extension). The majority of the remaining development proposed in the draft plan is on previously developed land in the existing urban area and, while there is still the potential for negative effects on the historic environment, sensitive design should ensure that these are not significant.

The draft plan includes policies that seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. Development will only be supported if it makes a positive contribution towards improving the quality of the built environment. This includes high quality design that respects the character and appearance of the local area; using materials sympathetic to local character; and having regard to the relevant Character Appraisal if proposing development within a Conservation Area. The redevelopment of previously developed land can also provide an opportunity to remove existing development that is detracting from the significance of designated heritage assets and the wider historic environment.

On balance, it is considered that there is sufficient mitigation provided through draft plan policies and available at the project level to ensure that there are no significant negative effects on the historic environment as a result of the draft plan alone or acting cumulatively with other plans and programmes. It is important for the historic environment to be considered at an early stage in the design of development to allow for the identification of opportunities for enhancement. At this stage, it is considered that the draft plan will have a **residual neutral effect on the historic environment**, as it is not possible to conclude a minor positive or negative effect on the baseline. There is uncertainty at this stage as the avoidance of a minor negative effect is dependent on the mitigation delivered at the project level. Similarly, the potential for a minor positive effect is also uncertain as this will be dependent on the potential opportunities for enhancement at each site.

3.6 Housing

The draft plan proposes the delivery of enough homes to meet the identified needs of the Borough and identifies additional capacity to ensure that there is enough flexibility in the plan to allow for unforeseen circumstances. It also sets out affordable housing requirements for new developments

and this will help to meet the identified needs within Rushmoor. The draft plan seeks to deliver good quality housing that makes a positive contribution towards communities and improve the quality of the built environment. Furthermore, it seeks to meet the needs of the range of people within the borough by delivering a suitable mix of housing and supports proposals for specialist and supported housing care and allocates sites for Travelling Showpeople. Overall, it is considered that the draft plan as a whole will have a **significant long-term positive effect** on housing.

3.7 Landscape

The draft plan directs new development towards existing urban areas and restricts new development in the countryside surrounding Aldershot and Farnborough. A large proportion of the identified capacity to accommodate development within the Borough is comprised of completions (472 dwellings) and sites with planning permission (5,059 dwellings), which includes the 3,850 dwellings proposed at Wellesley (Aldershot Urban Extension). The majority of the remaining sites with capacity are within the urban area and situated on brownfield land. Only a small proportion of these sites are within landscape character areas that are identified as being 'high value' and 'at risk'.

The draft plan includes policies that require new development to make a positive contribution towards improving the quality of the built environment through high quality design that respects the character and appearance of the local area. It also expects new development to make provision for tree and general planting and major development schemes to include comprehensive landscaping and tree management plans, including where appropriate, the mechanisms for long term maintenance.

The majority of development is proposed in areas that are not highly sensitive in landscape terms. While there is the potential for development to have negative effects on landscape, it is considered that there is sufficient mitigation provided through policies and available at the project level to ensure that these are not significant. At this stage, it is considered that the draft plan will have a **residual neutral effect on landscape**, as it is not possible to conclude a minor positive or negative effect on the baseline. There is uncertainty at this stage as the avoidance of a minor negative effect is dependent on the mitigation delivered at the project level. Similarly, the potential for a minor positive effect is also uncertain as this will be dependent on the potential opportunities for enhancement at each site.

3.8 Transport and traffic

Transport modelling suggests that development proposed through the draft plan will have impacts on the existing highway network and increase traffic flows in a number of areas. A position statement has been agreed between Hampshire County Council and Rushmoor Borough Council⁵. This states that the Borough Council with the support of HCC will develop a series of proposals to mitigate the impact of growth in the borough. The Borough Council and HCC have agreed that there are no 'show stoppers' that could not be mitigated and hence, it is expected that the transport impacts of the Rushmoor Local Plan development can be appropriately mitigated.

The draft plan will deliver housing, employment and associated improvements to services/ facilities and public transport, which has the potential for positive effects on transport and traffic by helping to increase accessibility and reduce the need to travel and as well as reliance on the private vehicle. At this stage the precise scale and extent of these improvements are not known so there is an element of uncertainty. The draft plan encourages development to minimise the need to travel, promote opportunities for sustainable transport modes, and improve accessibility to local facilities and linkages with the surrounding pedestrian and cycle network

On balance, it is considered that the draft plan will have a **residual neutral effect** on transport and traffic at this stage based on the evidence available.

⁵ Ibid.

3.9 Natural resources

Development proposed through the draft plan has the potential for impacts on the quality and quantity of natural resources. The draft plan directs the majority of growth towards existing urban areas and on previously developed land, which is positive in terms of the efficient use of land and means there will be no significant loss of agricultural land. Previously developed land can sometimes be contaminated but there is no evidence to suggest that this is a significant issue within the Borough and that it couldn't be addressed through further site level studies and assessments.

The findings of the appraisal under the transport and traffic topic are a residual neutral effect at this stage. A position statement has been agreed between Hampshire County Council and Rushmoor Borough Council⁶. This states that the Borough Council with the support of HCC will develop a series of proposals to mitigate the impact of growth in the borough. The Borough Council and HCC have agreed that there are no 'show stoppers' that could not be mitigated and hence, it is expected that the transport impacts of the Rushmoor Local Plan development can be appropriately mitigated. As a result, it is predicted that the proposed spatial strategy will not have a significant negative effect on air quality. In terms of water resources and quality, the evidence available suggests that the level of growth proposed through the draft plan and in surrounding areas can be accommodated without any significant negative effects.

It is considered that the draft plan includes suitable policies to ensure that the impacts of new development on natural resources are minimised and that suitable mitigation is delivered to address significant effects if they are identified. On balance, it is considered that the draft plan will have a **residual neutral effect** on this topic.

3.10 Cumulative effects

Cumulative effects occur from the combined impacts of policies and proposals on specific areas or sensitive receptors. In the context of SA/SEA, cumulative effects can arise as a result of the in-combination and synergistic effects of a plan's policies and proposals. Comprising 'intra-plan' effects, these interactions have been discussed earlier in this section, which evaluate the in-combination and synergistic effects of the various policies of the Draft Local Plan.

Cumulative effects can also result from the combined impacts of a plan with impacts of another plan, or the 'inter-plan' effects. These can affect the same receptor, resulting in in-combination or synergistic effects. The Rushmoor Local Plan therefore has the potential to combine with other planned or on-going activities in the vicinity of the borough to result in cumulative effects.

The combination of Local Plan proposals and other proposals being taken forward in the wider area has the potential to lead to the following cumulative effects:

- Increases in traffic flows and congestion from the in-combination effects of development, with potential impacts on air and noise quality. However the in-combination effects of proposals on enhancing public transport and pedestrian and cycle infrastructure may help limit potential negative effects and secure positive effects in this regard.
- Cumulative impacts on ecological networks. This is from the in-combination effects of new development and associated infrastructure on habitats and biodiversity corridors. However, enhancements to green infrastructure provision facilitated through Local Plan proposals and other projects in the area have the potential to support local, sub-regional and regional ecological networks.
- Incremental erosion of green and open space as a result of the need to deliver objectively assessed need, and associated cumulative impacts on landscape character and the historic environment from new development.
- Increased pressure on water resources in a region that is recognised as being seriously water stressed.

⁶ Position Statement on the Transport Assessment to Support the Draft Rushmoor Local Plan 2014 – 2032

- Impacts on flood risk from the in-combination effects of new development, including relating to surface water and fluvial flooding. However, the provisions of the NPPF and measures and policy approaches implemented through the relevant plans and proposals will limit the significance of effects.
- Improvements to accessibility resulting from the in-combination effects of enhancements to public transport and walking and cycling networks.
- Impacts on the urban heat island effect (a key likely impact of climate change) from an intensification of land uses across the wider area. This however has the potential to be offset by enhancements to sub-regional green infrastructure networks and open space provision.

As highlighted above, for many potential cumulative effects, the policy approaches proposed by the current version of the Local Plan will help reduce the significance of these in-combination impacts. However monitoring for the various Local Plans will be a key means of ensuring that unforeseen adverse environmental effects are highlighted, and remedial action can be taken where adverse environmental effects arise.

4. Next steps

Part 3 of the SA Report answers - What happens next? - by discussing plan finalisation and monitoring.

4.1 Plan finalisation

Subsequent to publication stage, the main issues raised will be identified and summarised by the Council, who will then consider whether the plan can still be deemed to be 'sound'. Assuming that this is the case, the plan (and the summary of representations received) will be submitted for Examination. At Examination a government appointed Planning Inspector will consider representations (in addition to the SA Report and other submitted evidence) before determining whether the plan is sound (or requires further modifications).

If found to be 'sound' the plan will be formally adopted by the Council. At the time of adoption an 'SA Statement' will be published that sets out (amongst other things) 'the measures decided concerning monitoring'.

4.2 Monitoring

At the current time, there is a need only to present 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring'. The draft plan includes a range of proposed monitoring indicators, with each indicator attached to a plan objective. The table below lists a selection of the Council's proposed measures that are of relevance to the SA topics.

Table 3: Proposed monitoring measures

SA topic	Relevant indicators proposed in the draft plan
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to green infrastructure • Quality and area of SPA • Quality and area of SSSIs • Quality and area of SINCs • Amount of land (ha) implemented as SANG. • Air quality monitoring on the SPA/SAC
Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding and water quality grounds • Number of developments completed with SuDS measures implemented • Number of planning applications granted contrary to Thames Water's advice on pluvial flooding • Improvements to green infrastructure
Community and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Super Output Areas in the bottom 20% in the National Indices of Multiple Deprivation • Amount of open space (in terms of district parks, recreational grounds and local open space) • Annual total number of business aviation movements • Total number of weekend flight movements
Economy and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of jobs in the Borough • Loss of land to non-employment uses at the defined Strategic Employment Sites • Loss of land to non-employment uses at the defined Locally Important Employment Sites
Historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and status of listed buildings.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net additional dwellings • Net affordable housing completions
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of open space (in terms of district parks, recreational grounds and local open space).

SA topic	Relevant indicators proposed in the draft plan
Transport and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congestion-average extra journey time during the morning peak - A325 Farnborough Road
Natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding and water quality grounds• Number of developments completed with SuDS measures implemented• Proportion of new homes meeting the Building Regulations optional requirement of 110 litres/person/day• Proportion of new major, non-residential developments reaching or exceeding BREEAM 'very good' standard

