

Sustainability Appraisal

Non-Technical Summary

Draft Gosport Borough Local Plan 2038

Published September 2021

Gosport Borough Council



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The draft Local Plan and associated evidence can be seen on the Council’s website:
www.gosport.gov.uk/GBLP2038

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Non-Technical Summary

- 1.1 This document is a non-technical summary of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) which has been prepared by Gosport Borough Council alongside the draft Gosport Borough Local Plan 2038 (GBLP 2038). The draft GBLP 2038 is subject to public consultation (referred to as Regulation 18 stage) and the Sustainability Appraisal should be read alongside that document. Once adopted the GBLP 2038 will ultimately replace the adopted Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029.
- 1.2 This non-technical summary provides an overview of the SA process, the draft Local Plan, and the findings of the SA. It accompanies three other documents which together make up the SA for the GBLP 2038, these are:
 - The Sustainability Appraisal of the Draft Gosport Borough Local Plan 2038
 - Annex A – Detailed Sustainability Appraisal Proforma for the Strategic Policies and General Development Policies
 - Annex B – Detailed Sustainability Appraisal Proforma for the Strategic Development Sites and Other Allocation Sites
- 1.3 Local planning authorities use SA to assess Local Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed following a review of evidence and in consultation with stakeholders. This assessment helps the Borough Council to identify the relevant environmental, social and economic performance of the proposed policies and site development proposals in its Local Plan, and to evaluate which of these may be more sustainable. SA is required by law.
- 1.4 A **glossary** of terms used in the Local Plan and other planning documents produced by the Borough Council is available online: www.gosport.gov.uk/GBLP2038

About the Gosport Borough Local Plan 2038

- 1.5 Currently the adopted Development Plan for Gosport Borough is the Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 which was adopted in October 2015 following public consultation and an examination by an Inspector. The adopted Local Plan covers the period to 2029. It has however been necessary to review the adopted Local Plan in line with national planning guidance which sets out the requirements for regular reviews.
- 1.6 A local plan is a document which sets out planning policies and proposals for new development. Local plans are prepared by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), which is usually the local Borough or District Council. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the planning system should be genuinely plan-led. Succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area and a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities. It is a legal requirement that local plans are monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure that they are kept up-to-date.

- 1.7 The draft Gosport Borough Local Plan 2038 sets out Gosport Borough Council’s planning strategy for the Borough covering the period to 2038. It identifies key proposals, allocates land for development and sets out detailed policies which the Borough Council will use to determine planning applications.

What does the Local Plan include?

- 1.8 The Local Plan identifies the national and sub-regional policy context and outlines the key issues affecting the Borough. It also includes an overarching Vision and a set of Objectives which aim to deliver the vision and address the issues set out. The policies and proposals of the Local Plan are included as follows:
- **Development Strategy and Strategic Policies (Section 2)** includes the overall Development Strategy which details the overall level and location of growth in the Borough over the period to 2038. It identifies strategic considerations for development proposals. This section includes a suite of strategic policies relating to regeneration, strategic open space, climate change, ecology, flood risk, health, design, heritage and infrastructure.
 - **Strategic Development Sites (Section 3)** highlights the opportunities relating to a number key Regeneration Areas in the Borough including the Gosport Waterfront and Town Centre, Daedalus, Haslar Peninsula including Blockhouse, HMS Sultan and Rowner.
 - **Other Allocation Sites (Section 4)** includes details of the smaller allocations for residential, employment and other uses outside the main Regeneration Areas.
 - **General Development Policies (Section 5)** includes a set of detailed policies relating to housing, employment, community and commercial uses, detailed design matters, and biodiversity, open space and environmental considerations.
 - **Implementation and Monitoring (Section 6)** details key delivery mechanisms and how each policy will be monitored. It also sets out the triggers for further reviews.

What is Sustainability Appraisal?

- 1.9 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (referred to as the SEA Regulations) require certain plans and programmes to undergo a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). In addition, Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires LPAs to carry out an SA of each of the proposals in a plan during its preparation.
- 1.10 SEA is a systematic process for evaluating environmental consequences to ensure environmental issues are fully integrated and addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision making. The process of SA is broader and seeks to promote sustainable development through the integration of environmental, social and economic considerations into a Local

Plan's preparation. In accordance with the NPPF, the Borough Council's SA Report integrates the requirements of both SA and SEA by undertaking the two processes simultaneously.

- 1.11 The requirement to undertake SA is contained in paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out that local plans should be informed throughout their preparation by an SA that meets the relevant legal requirements.
- 1.12 The SA is an iterative process that identifies and reports on the likely significant economic, social and environmental effects of a plan. Its role is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives which together define sustainable development. This process can identify issues to be addressed as well as enhancement opportunities. It is a systematic and transparent process for informing decision-making and for improving the performance and sustainability of plans.

Overview of the SA process undertaken

The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (Consultation Version - January 2021)

- 1.13 In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Borough Council published the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for comment from the consultation bodies in January 2021. The Report was sent to Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency and responses were received from all.
- 1.14 The Scoping Report set out the approach the Borough Council would use to conduct this SA. It also comprised the Gosport Profile which is published as an online web resource and forms the baseline information for the SA. The Gosport Profile can be seen online: www.gosport.gov.uk/gosportprofile
- 1.15 This SA Report and its accompanying Annexes reflect the next stage of the SA process undertaken by the Borough Council. Further information on the next steps is set out at the end of this document.

Overview of the SA findings

- 1.16 An SA assessment has been undertaken for each of the Local Plan policies:
 - Twelve Local Plan Policies which make up the Development Strategy and Strategic Policies (Section 2 of the Local Plan);
 - Eleven Local Plan Policies which make up the Strategic Development Sites (Section 3 of the Local Plan);
 - Twenty six allocation sites which are allocated by the Local Plan's six allocation Policies (Section 4 of the Local Plan);
 - Eight other sites which were received through the Call for Sites consultations and which are not allocated in the Local Plan; and

- Thirty four Local Plan Policies which fall within five themes and make up the General Development Policies (Section 5 of the Local Plan).

1.17 The Borough Council has used an SA Proforma to appraise each Local Plan Policy and site development proposal. These are summarised within the SA Report and presented in full in Annex A and B: Detailed Sustainability Appraisal Proforma. Below, a high level overview of the key SA findings is provided:

Positive Effects

1.18 The SA assessment undertaken for the Local Plan Policies and Development Proposals shows that on balance all would contribute a significant number of positive effects. The cumulative effects of the policies and proposals, when considered in combination, shows that the effects of the Local Plan are largely positive in delivering sustainable development.

Negative Effects

1.19 When read in conjunction with each other, it can be seen that many of the potential negative consequences of the Local Plan policies and proposals are offset by each other. In addition, the development management framework and decision making process allows for the amelioration or avoidance of adverse impacts on a case-by-case basis.

1.20 The main adverse impacts arising from the Local Plan are likely to be:

- demands on infrastructure (for example flood defences); and
- Environmental issues e.g. the impact of development on nature conservation designations and protected habitats and impacts of waste water on water quality.

1.21 If mitigation policies are implemented alongside growth policies, it is anticipated that many adverse impacts can be largely eliminated or at least minimised. The process of preparing the draft Local Plan is iterative and involves constant testing of the Plan as it progresses, against the SA objectives, in order to ensure that its impact is acceptable in general terms.

1.22 Consequently the negative effects arising from the draft Local Plan are considered minor and fall into two categories:

- **Effects which can be eliminated or reduced to be an acceptable or manageable level:** This can be achieved through the development management framework and decision making process. It can also be achieved through the preparation of supplementary planning documents (SPDs) which seek to address specific issues in greater detail; and
- **Unavoidable negative impacts** arising from a policy which is otherwise beneficial and of which no other policy will reduce the adverse impacts. This shows the need for trade-offs and the balancing of different issues. Whilst the ideal Local Plan would likely have no negative effects, it is sometimes necessary to accept small negative effects in order to secure larger overall benefits. The Local Plan will be used as a strategy for facilitating

and guiding development to achieve as many positive effects as possible. Some adverse effects are the inevitable result of growth and human activity so need to be managed through effective decision making and management to ensure these adverse effects are eliminated or at least minimised as far as possible.

- 1.23 Potential negative impacts have generally remained because other sustainability considerations indicate the policy is necessary. The appraisal indicates where mitigation of these potential impacts should be built into another policy in the draft Local Plan. For example, for some development proposals there is adverse and/or uncertain impacts related to flood risk and coastal change as the Local Plan's Development Strategy does not totally exclude development in these areas. However, the Flood Risk and Coastal Erosion Policy (D7) sets out the criteria that development will have to meet in order to reduce and manage any flood risk and ensure a development proposal is appropriate.

What happens next?

- 1.24 The local planning authority is required to invite the public and other stakeholders to make representations about the Local Plan and supporting evidence documents and take these into account. Once comments are considered the Borough Council will amend the Local Plan where necessary and undertake further consultation in accordance with regulations.
- 1.25 Once the Borough Council has finished preparing and consulting on the Local Plan it will be submitted to the Secretary of State who will appoint an Inspector to carry out an examination. This will assess whether the plan has been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements and if it is sound (as set out in the NPPF). This process will be dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate. An indicative timetable of this process is set out in the Borough Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) which will be kept up-to-date:
www.gosport.gov.uk/LDS

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