

Cheshire East

Site Allocations and Development  
Policies Document

Sustainability Appraisal  
Adoption Statement

December 2022

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# 1. This SA Adoption Statement

- 1.1 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a systematic process that must be carried out during the preparation of a Local Plan relating to development. SA incorporates the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and this SA/Environmental Statement for the Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD) has been prepared in accordance with the following requirements:
- Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012
  - Regulation 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012
  - Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations)
  - Paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF)
- 1.2 For the purpose of this Statement, which complies with planning and environmental assessment Regulations, the integrated appraisal will be referred to as the Sustainability Appraisal (SA).
- 1.3 The SA process comprises a number of stages that are designed to comply with the requirements of the SEA Regulations and as guided through Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).<sup>1</sup> This SA Adoption Statement satisfies the requirements for post adoption (Stage E) and demonstrates compliance with the requirements of the SEA Regulations as follows:
- a) how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
  - b) how the environmental report has been taken into account;
  - c) how opinions expressed in response to
    - i. the invitation referred to in regulation 13(2)(d);
    - ii. action taken by the responsible authority in accordance with regulation 13(4), have been taken into account;
  - d) how the results of any consultations entered into under regulation 14(4) have been taken into account;
  - e) the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
  - f) the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

## 2. Development of the SADPD

- 2.1 The Cheshire East Local Plan will set out planning policies and allocate sites for development up to 2030; once completed it will be made up of the following documents: the Local Plan Strategy (LPS); the SADPD; and the Minerals and Waste Plan (MWP). The LPS is the overarching element of the Plan, setting out strategic priorities for the development of the Borough along with planning policies and proposals. The SADPD allocates additional sites for development, where necessary, and sets out more detailed policies to guide planning application decisions in the Borough. The MWP is a stand-alone document that will allocate sites and areas so that the Council can sustainably meet identified requirements for the provision of minerals and the management of waste, as well as set out policies to guide decisions on planning applications for minerals and waste in the Borough.
- 2.2 Considerable work and consultation have been undertaken since the fourth quarter of 2016 to prepare the SADPD (as set out in Table 4.1 of this Statement), including SA/SEA in accordance with the NPPF and PPG. Various studies were undertaken to provide the evidence base to inform decision-making, including landscape character assessment and landscape designation review, review of employment allocations, open space, outdoor sports and indoor built facilities strategies, and heritage impact assessments. The SADPD was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent Examination on 29 April 2021. The Examination Hearings were held during October and November 2021 and the proposed Main Modifications likely to be required to make the SADPD sound and/or legally compliant were subject to public consultation between April and May 2022. The Inspector's Final Report issued on 19 October 2022 concluded that the SADPD is sound, subject to the Main Modifications, and could be adopted.
- 2.3 At each stage of the development of the SADPD, public consultation was undertaken to help make sure that stakeholders views were taken into consideration in the next steps of plan preparation. Issues raised and responses prepared have been documented during the development of the SADPD and published on the Council's website.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Document references [CEC/39], [ED 56] and ED 56a]  
[https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial-planning/cheshire\\_east\\_local\\_plan/site-allocations-and-policies/sadpd-examination/examination-library.aspx](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial-planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/site-allocations-and-policies/sadpd-examination/examination-library.aspx)

### 3. How environmental and sustainability considerations have been integrated into the SADPD; How the Sustainability/ Environment Report has been taken into account

- 3.1 During the plan-making process, SA (incorporating SEA) has been carried out as an iterative and ongoing process to inform decision making for the developing SADPD. The SA was undertaken in accordance with government guidance<sup>3</sup> for a staged approach that integrates appraisal to consider the effects of the emerging plan on social, economic and environmental factors.
- 3.2 The SA of the submitted SADPD uses the same SA Framework developed during the SA scoping process (set out in the SA Scoping Report 2017) as the basis for assessing the emerging SADPD, and as explained in Chapter 2 of the Revised Publication Draft SADPD SA Report (August 2020). Relevant plans/programmes had been reviewed; baseline information regarding the character of the area and its likely evolution collated and analysed; and sustainability problems, issues and opportunities had been identified during the SA scoping to compile a Framework of Objectives and decision-aiding questions that seek to resolve the sustainability issues identified, and relevant to the plan and the Cheshire East area. The assessment used both quantitative and qualitative assessments, including defined thresholds of significance, where possible.
- 3.3 The SA considered the likely significant effects of the implementation of the SADPD on the sustainability objectives for the Borough. For each aspect of the SADPD, the assessment against the SA Objectives was recorded with a narrative describing any significant effects identified, mitigation of any significant negative effects, and any suggestions for enhancing potential beneficial effects. In line with requirements of the SEA Regulations, the appraisal considered effects including short, medium and long term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative, secondary, cumulative and synergistic, wherever possible and relevant. Any gaps or difficulties were also reported.
- 3.4 The findings and recommendations of the SA informed plan-making and were integrated into the further development of the SADPD - as set out in the Revised Publication Draft SADPD SA Report (August 2020) and SA Addendum Report (April 2022) accompanying the Revised Publication Draft SADPD and Main Modifications to the SADPD. The SA Reports recorded that overall, the mitigation provided by the SADPD policies, along with existing policies in the LPS, would address identified likely significant negative effects. Where

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

relevant, the SA made recommendations for lower level planning, for example where possible, any proposal should seek:

- a net gain for biodiversity
- a net gain for open space, along with improvement to provide further opportunities for active transport
- a reduction in surface water runoff and minimise the risk from flooding
- to provide renewable or low carbon energy
- to provide services, facilities and amenities
- to provide landscaping schemes along with sensitively designed development proposals
- to provide a mix of housing types and tenures, with homes designed to be flexible to meet changing needs
- to provide attractive surroundings

3.5 The Main Modifications to the SADPD likely to be required to make the SADPD sound and/or legally compliant were subject to SA, reported and subject to consultation. Generally, the SA found that the changes to the SADPD strengthened the positive effects that had been identified. The modifications strengthen and confirm implementation of mitigation measures, particularly through the increased protection of ecology and landscape. This improved the overall sustainability of the SADPD. It further confirmed potential enhancement for effects on all sustainability topics, with the exception of climatic factors.

3.6 The SA reports have been available on the Council's website and at each stage the responses to comments made and issues raised have been reported. Throughout, the appraisals have been proportionate and appropriate to the stages of plan-making. Thus, environmental and sustainability considerations have been integrated and the SA Reports taken into account throughout the plan-making process.

## 4. How the results of the consultation have been taken into account

4.1 Consultation is an important aspect of SA and there was statutory and public consultation at each key stage of the SADPD preparation and the SA as set out in Table 4.1.

<b>SADPD documents and consultation</b>	<b>SA documents and consultation</b>
<b>SADPD: Issues Paper</b> Public consultation between 27 February and 10 April 2017	<b>Draft SA Scoping Report (February 2017)</b> Public consultation between 27 February and 10 April 2017
	<b>SA Scoping Report (June 2017)</b> Incorporated changes as a result of previous consultation
<b>First Draft SADPD</b> Public consultation between 11 September and 22 October 2018	<b>First Draft SADPD Interim SA Report (August 2018)</b> Public consultation between 11 September and 22 October 2018
<b>Publication Draft SADPD</b> Public consultation between 19 August and 30 September 2019	<b>Publication Draft SADPD SA (July 2019)</b> Public consultation between 19 August and 30 September 2019
<b>Revised Publication Draft SADPD</b> Public consultation between 26 October and 23 December 2020	<b>Revised Publication Draft SADPD SA (August 2020)</b> Public consultation between 26 October and 23 December 2020
<b>Draft SADPD Main Modifications version</b> Public consultation between 19 April and 31 May 2022	<b>SADPD Main Modifications SA Addendum (April 2022)</b> Public consultation between 19 April and 31 May 2022
<b>SADPD Adoption December 2022</b>	<b>SA Adoption Statement December 2022</b>

**Table 4.1: SADPD and SA documents and consultation**

4.2 SA and consultation responses have been considered in an iterative and ongoing way with the plan-making process and in accordance with the requirements of the SEA Regulations. Representations have been recorded and the responses made to issues and concerns raised have been published, including at key statutory stages, as follows:

- SA Scoping Report Consultation Statement (June 2017) sets out the comments received and the Council's responses<sup>4</sup>
- Appendix J of the Revised Publication Draft SA (August 2020) reports the comments received and the Council's response to the First Draft SADPD Interim SA (August 2018), and the Publication Draft SADPD SA (July 2019)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/planning/local-plan/sa-sco-rep-consult-stat-with-cover.pdf>

## 5. Reasons for choosing the SADPD as adopted, in light of other reasonable alternatives

- 5.1 The SEA Regulations requires assessment of the likely significant effects of implementing the plan and “reasonable alternatives” taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan; and the reasons for selecting alternatives should be outlined in the Report. Extant SA/SEA guidance advises that the term “reasonable alternative” should be taken to mean “realistic and relevant” i.e. deliverable and within the timescale of the plan.
- 5.2 At each stage of the development of the SADPD all options and any reasonable alternatives to policy and allocation proposals have been considered and assessed. Options for the Local Service Centres (LSCs) spatial distribution disaggregation as well as the spatial distribution of safeguarded land were considered at the First Draft stage in 2018. This included consideration of seven options covering population, households, services and facilities, constraints, Green Belt, opportunities and a hybrid approach in terms of the LSCs and three options regarding safeguarded land. Alternatives were also considered for site allocations and policies that seek to protect and enhance the environment, promote economic prosperity, create sustainable communities and reduce the need to travel.
- 5.3 Further alternatives were considered for the LSCs spatial distribution disaggregation as well as the spatial distribution of safeguarded land as part of the Revised Publication Draft SADPD in 2020. The reasons for progressing or not progressing options are provided in Chapters 3, 4, Appendix C and Appendix E of the Revised Publication Draft SADPD SA report (August 2020). The do-nothing scenario is not an option for a Local Plan as councils are required to provide for identified development needs; however, this was considered by the SA process and the SA reported that it was not a reasonable approach.
- 5.4 Overall, the reasons for choosing the SADPD as adopted include delivering the Vision and Strategic Priorities, set out in the LPS, for high quality development planning in the Cheshire East Borough area that delivers the most benefits and the least negative effects for sustainable development.
- 5.5 The Inspector found that the SA was robust and proportionate, assessed the likely environmental, social and economic effects of the SADPD and incorporated the requirements for SEA. The SA was also found to have influenced the SADPD policies and allocations and the proposed mitigation



measures. The Inspector concluded that the SA work undertaken on the SADPD is adequate.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> ¶43, Report on the Examination of the Cheshire East Local Plan SADPD (17 October 2022) <https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial-planning/cheshire-east-local-plan/site-allocations-and-policies/sadpd-examination/documents/examination-library/cheshire-east-sadpd-inspectors-report.pdf>

## 6. Measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant sustainability and environmental effects of the implementation of the SADPD

- 6.1 The SEA Regulations require that the significant environmental effects of implementing the plan should be monitored with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action. Local Planning Authorities are required to produce Authority Monitoring Reports on the progress of Local Plans. Government Guidance on SA/SEA advises a pragmatic approach with shared monitoring for the SA/SEA and the Plan. The SADPD Monitoring Framework set out in Table 13.1 of the SADPD includes a wide range of indicators that also relate to the SA Framework. It is considered that these indicators will be sufficient to identify any unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage, and provide information on the predicted effects from the SA. Monitoring of the SADPD will be incorporated into the Council's Authority Monitoring Report, available to view on the Council's website.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial-planning/cheshire\\_east\\_local\\_plan/authority-monitoring-report/authority-monitoring-report.aspx](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial-planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/authority-monitoring-report/authority-monitoring-report.aspx)