



# **Dartford Local Plan**

## **Sustainability Appraisal**

### Non-Technical Summary

## **Dartford Borough Council**

**Final report**

Prepared by LUC

January 2021

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1	Draft for client comment	E Smith S Smith O Dunham	S Smith J Owen	J Owen	29.01.2021
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## Introduction

**1.1** This Non-Technical Summary relates to the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report for the Dartford Local Plan and should be read in conjunction with that document as well as the Dartford Local Plan itself.

**1.2** This Non-Technical Summary and the SA Report were prepared by LUC on behalf of Dartford Borough Council as part of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Dartford Local Plan.

## Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

**1.3** Dartford Borough Council is required by law to carry out both Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Draft Local Plan. The Council appointed LUC to do this on its behalf.

**1.4** Strategic Environmental Assessment is the process of assessing the likely environmental effects of a plan or programme (such as the Local Plan) and the requirements for this are set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations). The Government recommends that the requirements for both Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment are met through one integrated process, referred to as Sustainability Appraisal.

**1.5** The purpose of Sustainability Appraisal is to promote sustainable development through by better integrating sustainability considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans. It should be viewed as an integral part of good plan making and an ongoing process, involving ongoing iterations to identify and report on the potential social, economic and environmental effects

of the Local Plan and alternatives to the Local Plan to consider how well sustainable development will be achieved.

**1.6** An overview of the stages of Sustainability Appraisal is set out below.

## **SA Stage A: Scoping**

**1.7** The SA process began with the production of a Scoping Report for the Dartford Local Plan, which was prepared by LUC on behalf of Dartford Borough Council.

**1.8** The Scoping stage of the SA involves understanding the social, economic and environmental baseline for the plan area as well as the sustainability policy context and key sustainability issues. The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report also sets out information about the methodology for this and later stages of the Sustainability Appraisal, in particular the 'Sustainability Appraisal Framework' - the sustainability objectives against which Local Plan options and policies have been appraised. The sustainability objectives making up the Sustainability Appraisal Framework, and decision-making questions used to aid assessments, are presented below. The Scoping Report was published for consultation from 31st October 2018 until 5th December 2018. An updated Scoping Report was published in January 2019, which responded to the comments received in this consultation.

## **Sustainability Appraisal Framework**

### **SA 1: To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home**

- Does the Plan deliver the range of types, tenures and affordable homes the Borough needs over the Plan Period?

## **SA 2: To ensure ready access to essential services and facilities for all residents**

- Does the Plan provide sufficient local services and facilities to support new and growing communities (e.g. schools, employment training and lifetime learning facilities, health facilities, recreation areas and services in local centres)?
- Does the Plan provide housing within proximity to existing services and facilities that are accessible for all, if not to be provided on site?
- Does the plan impact on the quality and extent of existing recreational assets, including formal and informal paths?

## **SA 3: To strengthen community cohesion**

- Will the Plan help deliver cohesive neighbourhoods with high levels of pedestrian activity/ outdoor interaction, where people mix?
- Will the Plan facilitate the integration of new neighbourhoods with existing neighbourhoods?
- Does the Plan promote developments that benefit and are used by existing and new residents in the Borough, particularly for the Borough's most deprived areas?
- Will the Plan help to reduce levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime?

## **SA 4: To improve the population's health and reduce inequalities**

- Does the Plan promote health and wellbeing by maintaining, enhancing, connecting and creating multifunctional open spaces, green infrastructure, recreation and sports facilities?

- Does the Plan protect health and wellbeing by preventing, avoiding and mitigating adverse health effects associated with, noise, vibration, pollution/contamination, and odour?
- Does the Plan promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging and facilitating walking and cycling?
- Does the Plan safeguard human health and well-being by promoting climate change resilience through sustainable siting, design, landscaping and infrastructure?

## **SA 5: Facilitate a sustainable and growing economy and a vital and viable town centre**

- Does the Plan provide an adequate supply of land and infrastructure to meet the Borough's forecast employment needs with sufficient flexibility to respond to uncertainties and changing economic circumstances?
- Does the Plan support opportunities for the expansion and diversification of business and inward investment?
- Does the Plan maintain and enhance the economic vitality and vibrancy of the Borough's town centre?
- Does the Plan provide new and improved education facilities leading to a work ready population of school and college leavers?

## **SA 6: To reduce the need to travel and encourage sustainable and active alternatives to motorised vehicles to reduce congestion**

- Does the Plan promote the delivery of integrated, compact communities made-up of a complementary mix of land uses?
- Does the Plan support the maintenance and expansion of public transport networks including areas with sufficient demand for the introduction of new public transport?

- Does the Plan facilitate new and enhanced walking and cycling links?
- Does the Plan help to address road congestion and its causes?

## **SA 7: To conserve the Borough's mineral resources**

- Does the Plan ensure adequate consideration is given to balancing the need for development with safeguarding resources?

## **SA 8: To conserve the Borough's soils**

- Does the Plan prioritise the development brownfield land over greenfield land?
- Does the Plan take an appropriate approach to dealing with the potential health and economic risks potentially associated with despoiled land?
- Does the Plan avoid development on the Borough's best and most versatile agricultural land?

## **SA 9: To maintain and improve the quality of the Borough's waters**

- Does the Plan minimise inappropriate development in source protection zones?
- Does the Plan ensure there is sufficient waste water treatment capacity to accommodate the new development?

## **SA 10: To reduce air pollution and ensure improvements in air quality**

- Does the Plan avoid, minimise and mitigate the effects of poor air quality?

- Does the Plan contain measures which will help to reduce congestion, particularly involving HGVs?
- Will the Plan minimise increases in traffic in the Air Quality Management Areas?

## **SA 11: To avoid and mitigate flood risk**

- Does the Plan minimise development in areas prone to Flood risk and areas prone to increasing Flood risk elsewhere, taking into account the impacts of climate change?
- Does the Plan minimise Flood risk and promote the use of SuDS and other flood resilient design?

## **SA 12: To minimise the Borough's contribution to climate change**

- Does the Plan promote energy efficient design?
- Does the Plan encourage the provision of renewable energy infrastructure where possible?
- Does the Plan minimise greenhouse gas emissions from transport?

## **SA 13: To conserve, connect and enhance the Borough's wildlife, habitats and species**

- Does the Plan conserve and enhance designated and undesignated ecological assets within and outside the Borough, including identification of opportunities for improvements to the conservation, connection and enhancement of ecological assets and achievement of biodiversity net gain?



## **Introduction** Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- Does the Plan ensure ecological networks are not compromised, and future improvements in habitat connectivity are not prejudiced, taking into account the impact of climate change?
- Does the Plan ensure that the biodiversity value of brownfield sites is identified, protected and enhanced?
- Does the Plan provide and manage opportunities for people to come into contact with resilient wildlife places whilst encouraging respect for and raising awareness of the sensitivity of such locations?
- Does the Plan conserve priority habitats within and outside the Borough and identify opportunities to enhance them?

### **SA 14: To conserve and/or enhance the significant qualities, fabric, setting and accessibility of the Borough's historic environment**

- Does the Plan conserve the Borough's designated and undesignated heritage assets, including their setting and their contribution to wider local character and distinctiveness?
- Does the Plan outline opportunities for improvements to the conservation, management and enhancement of the Borough's historic environment, particularly at risk heritage assets?
- Does the Plan promote access to, as well as enjoyment and understanding of, the local historic environment for the Borough's residents and visitors?

## **SA 15: To conserve and enhance the special qualities, accessibility, local character and distinctiveness of the Borough's settlements, countryside and landscape**

- Does the Plan protect the Borough's sensitive and special landscapes and townscapes?
- Does the Plan encourage development that will have a positive effect on the character of the Borough's neighbourhoods, countryside and settlements?

## **SA Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects**

**1.9** Developing options for a plan is an iterative process, usually involving a number of consultations with the public and stakeholders. Consultation responses and the SA can help to identify where there may be other 'reasonable alternatives' to the options being considered for a plan.

**1.10** The Sustainability Appraisal can help decision makers by identifying the potential positive and negative sustainability effects of each Local Plan option being considered, and therefore where there are opportunities to enhance positive effects and avoid or reduce negative ones.

**1.11** The Sustainability Appraisal findings are not the only factors taken into account when determining a preferred option to take forward in a plan. Factors such as public opinion, deliverability, conformity with national policy will also be taken into account by plan-makers when selecting preferred options for their plan.

**1.12** The first consultation to inform the Local Plan was the Strategic Issues Consultation, which took place from June to July 2018. This consisted of a series of open-ended questions so that residents and stakeholders could voice their opinions on the direction that the new Local Plan should take.

**1.13** The responses to the Strategic Issues Consultation fed into the Preferred Options for the Local Plan, which were subject to SA and then subject to consultation from January to February 2020. At this stage of the plan preparation process, the Council focused on the most critical planning policy matters, topics and potential development locations which will define the Borough in future, its environment and main areas of regeneration. The SA made a series of recommendations for the Dartford Local Plan and Preferred Options Consultation Document, some of which resulted in updates to that document (prior to consultation) and some of which have been implemented in preparation of the full Local Plan. The SA Report for the Dartford Local Plan Review Preferred Options Consultation Document (Regulation 18 stage) was subject to public consultation alongside the Preferred Options Consultation document between 10th January and 21st February 2020.

## **SA Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report**

**1.14** This Non-Technical Summary summarises the process that has been undertaken to date in carrying out the SA of the Dartford Local Plan. It summarises the findings of the appraisal of the Local Plan, highlighting any likely significant effects (both positive and negative, and taking into account the likely secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long term and permanent and temporary effects).

## **SA Stage D: Consultation on the Local Plan and this SA Report**

**1.15** Dartford Borough Council is inviting comments on the Local Plan and the SA Report. Comments received will be submitted to the Inspector, alongside the Dartford Local Plan, the SA Report and the rest of the Local Plan evidence base.

## **SA Stage E: Monitoring implementation of the Local Plan**

**1.16** Recommendations for monitoring the likely significant social, environmental and economic effects of implementing the Dartford Local Plan are set out in Chapter 7 of the main SA Report.

## **Appraisal Methodology**

**1.17** The findings of the Sustainability Appraisal are presented as colour coded symbols showing a score for each option against each of the Sustainability Appraisal objectives. The main SA Report presents these scores along with a justification for the score given, where appropriate. The use of colour coding and symbols allows for likely significant effects (both positive and negative) to be easily identified, as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Key to symbols and colour coding used in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan**

Symbol	Meaning
++	The option or policy is likely to have a <b>significant positive effect</b> on the SA objectives.
++/-	The option or policy is likely to have a mixture of <b>significant positive and minor negative effects</b> on the SA objectives.
+	The option or policy is likely to have a <b>minor positive effect</b> on the SA objectives.
0	The option or policy is likely to have <b>negligible or no effect</b> on the SA objectives.
?	It is <b>uncertain</b> what effect the option or policy will have on the SA objectives.
-	The option or policy is likely to have a <b>minor negative effect</b> on the SA objectives.
--/+	The option or policy is likely to have a <b>mixture of minor positive and significant negative effects</b> on the SA objectives.
	The option or policy is likely to have a <b>significant negative effect</b> on the SA objectives.
+/-	The option or policy is likely to have a <b>mixture of positive and negative effects</b> on the SA objectives.

**1.18** Where a potential positive or negative effect is uncertain, a question mark was added to the relevant score (such as +? or -?) and the score has been colour coded as per the potential positive, negligible or negative effect (such as green, yellow or pink).

# Sustainability Appraisal Findings

## Vision and Objectives

**1.19** Table 1 shows a summary of SA scores for the Dartford Local Plan vision and objectives. The vision sets out the aspirations for the Borough, which range from being well connected, served by good infrastructure and local facilities and able to access a choice of homes to providing new green space for health and wellbeing and local wildlife, mitigating flood risk, and sensitively integrating new development with the local heritage and landscape. The vision is accompanied by a number of objectives, as follows:

- W1: Achieving cohesive, safe, walkable and attractive neighbourhoods, with a real sense of place and vitality that reflects the area's heritage and potential; and whose residents enjoy a choice of homes suited to their needs and easy access to local everyday facilities, including education and healthcare.
- W2: Improving health and wellbeing, and air quality/ congestion, through reducing the need to travel by private vehicle; particularly by retaining and providing jobs, services, shops, community facilities and open space at suitable locations close to residential areas and where easily walkable for good public transport services.
- W3: Providing well designed new housing that is genuinely mixed, affordable and of varied tenure, sustainable, and promotes healthy living; to secure the quality of life of residents and the ability for them to continue residing at their home or within the Borough.
- W4: Realising whole lifetime residential accommodation options and facilities; with accessible types and designs of living environments catering for people as their circumstances change.
- W5: Encouraging development that provides a wide range of opportunities for residents to enjoy good quality cultural, art, leisure and sports pursuits.

- I1: Continuing urban regeneration through optimising the re-use of accessible and suitable brownfield land primarily within the north of the Borough to meet future local housing and employment needs, and delivering new infrastructure for travel, schools/ skills, health, and other local services.
- I2: Facilitating a range of upgrades to the transport network, a choice of sustainable and active travel options; with rapid and reliable public transport linking existing neighbourhoods and developments to key destinations and facilities, together with a high quality and comprehensive walking and cycling network.
- I3: Achieving a vibrant Dartford Town Centre with an attractive public realm in an enjoyable and accessible environment; new residential communities, improved connections and services, and a flourishing day and evening economy with an enticing cultural, retail and leisure offer.
- I4: Retaining a prosperous economy with a good choice of jobs per resident, increasing high quality, accessible, local employment opportunities, maintaining a diverse supply of premises and supporting existing business needs in the urban area; with Ebbsfleet providing a productive mix of new commercial, community and residential activities.
- G1: Protecting Green Belt land to maintain a distinct and enduring open environment for the Borough, and the positive setting of Dartford's villages and rural heritage assets; retaining overall countryside character and openness of the Green Belt.
- G2: Securing quality and sustainable built design, public streets, and good open and amenity space provision in new development, and recognising and respecting heritage and green assets so that Dartford's historic environments and new neighbourhoods are enjoyed by current and future generations.
- G3: Ensuring the Borough is able to adapt to the effects of climate change and contributes towards reducing Dartford's carbon footprint, through an increase in the proportion of water efficient buildings, the uptake of domestic and small scale renewable energy, and promoting environmental resilience, new greenspace and tree planting.

- G4: Promoting sustainable local environments and habitats, achieving biodiversity net gain and active and healthy living, at new developments and through greenspace and landscape protection and provision; enhancing the green grid of footpaths, public rights of way, cycle routes, wildlife corridors, rivers and countryside link.
- G5: Acting to ensure no increase in flood risk in the Borough; and creating attractive and accessible riversides, encouraging sensitive recreation and travel on and alongside the Rivers Thames, Darent and Ebbsfleet.



Table 1: SA Scores for the vision and objectives of the Dartford Local Plan

Vision and objectives	SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6	SA7	SA8	SA9	SA10	SA11	SA12	SA13	SA14	SA15
<b>Vision</b>	++	++	++	++	++	++	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	+	+
<b>Objective W1</b>	++	++	++	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	+	+
<b>Objective W2</b>	0	+	+	++	+	++	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	0
<b>Objective W3</b>	++	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Objective W4</b>	++	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Objective W5</b>	0	+	+	++	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0
<b>Objective I1</b>	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	+	0	+
<b>Objective I2</b>	0	+	+	+	+	++	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	0
<b>Objective I3</b>	+	+	+	+	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Objective I4</b>	0	0	+	+	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Objective G1</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+
<b>Objective G2</b>	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+

## Sustainability Appraisal Findings

### Vision and Objectives

Vision and objectives	SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6	SA7	SA8	SA9	SA10	SA11	SA12	SA13	SA14	SA15
<b>Objective G3</b>	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	++	++	0	0
<b>Objective G4</b>	0	0	0	++	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	++
<b>Objective G5</b>	0	0	0	+	0	+?	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0

## Policies

**1.20** Table 2 shows a summary of SA scores for the policies contained in the Dartford Local Plan. Note that this is a high-level overview only and should be read alongside the appraisals set out in the main report. The policies are listed below, by the section of the Local Plan they appear in:

### Strategy

- Policy S1: Borough Spatial Strategy.
- Policy S2: Infrastructure Planning Strategy.
- Policy S3: Climate Change Strategy.
- Policy S4: Borough Development Levels.

### Central Dartford

- Policy D1: Central Dartford Strategy.
- Policy D2: Central Dartford Development Principles.
- Policy D3: The mix of uses in Dartford Town Centre.
- Policy D4: Westgate allocation.
- Policy D5: East of Lowfield Street allocation.
- Policy D6: Priory Centre Road allocation.
- Policy D7: Station Surrounds/River Darent.

### Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe

- Policy E1: Ebbsfleet Garden City Strategy.

- Policy E2: Ebbsfleet Garden City Development Principles.
- Policy E3: Swanscombe.
- Policy E4: Ebbsfleet Central Allocation.
- Policy E5: Ebbsfleet South and West Area.
- Policy E6: Land North of Swanscombe Area.

## **Development Management**

- Policy M1: Good Design for Dartford.
- Policy M2: Environmental and Amenity Protection.
- Policy M3: Sustainable Technology, Construction and Performance.
- Policy M4: Flood Risk and Riverside Design.
- Policy M5: Designated Heritage Assets.
- Policy M6: Historic Environment Strategy.
- Policy M7: Affordable Housing.
- Policy M8: Housing Mix.
- Policy M9: Sustainable Housing Locations.
- Policy M10: Residential Amenity Space.
- Policy M11: Extensions, New Dwellings and Garden Land.
- Policy M12: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation.
- Policy M13: Green Belt.
- Policy M14: Green and Blue Infrastructure and Open Space Provision.
- Policy M15: Biodiversity and Landscape.
- Policy M16: Travel Management.
- Policy M17: Active Travel, Access and Parking.

## **Sustainability Appraisal Findings**      Policies

- Policy M18: Community Uses.
- Policy M19: Sustainable Economic Locations.
- Policy M20: Provision for Local Business and Skills.
- Policy M21: Identified Employment Areas.
- Policy M22: Bluewater.
- Policy M23: District and Local Centres.
- Policy M24: Food and Drink Establishments

Table 2: SA Scores for the policies of the Dartford Local Plan

Policy	SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6	SA7	SA8	SA9	SA10	SA11	SA12	SA13	SA14	SA15
Policy S1	++	++/-	+	++/-	++	++/-	-	++/-?	-	++/--	?	++/-	++/-	--/+?	+/
Policy S2	+/?	++	+	+	+	++/-	-?	0	-?	+/	+/?	+/	+/?	-?	+/?
Policy S3	+/?	0	0	+	+/?	+	0	+	+	+	++	++	+	0	+
Policy S4	++	+	+	+	++	+	-?	++/-	-?	+/	-?	+/	-?	-?	-?
Policy D1	+	+++?	+++?	+++?	++	++/-	-?	+	-?	++/--	?	++/-	+/?	+/?	+
Policy D2	++	++	++	++	++	++	0	0	0	++	++	++	+	++	+
Policy D3	+	+++?	+	+	++	+?/	-?	+	-?	--/+?	?	+?/	0	+/	+
Policy D4	+	+++?	+++?	+++?	++	+/	0	++	0	--/+	?	+/	0	+/?	++
Policy D5	++	+++?	+++?	+?	+	+/	0?	+	-?	++/--		+/	0	+/?	++
Policy D6	++	+++?	+?	+?	++	+/	0	++	0	--/+	?	+/	0	+	++
Policy D7	+?	+?	+++?	+++?	+	++/-	0?	++	-?	++/--	--?/+	++/-	--/+	+/?	++
Policy E1	++	++	++	++	++	++/-	-?	++/-?	-	++/--	?	++/-	++/-- ?	?	+/
Policy E2	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	0	+

## Sustainability Appraisal Findings

## Policies

Policy	SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6	SA7	SA8	SA9	SA10	SA11	SA12	SA13	SA14	SA15
Policy E3	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	0	+
Policy E4	++	++?	++?	++?	++/-	++/-	-?	--?/+	-?	++/--	?	++/-	--?/+	?	++/-?
Policy E5	+	++?	++	++?	+	++/-	0	--/+	-	++/--	0	++/-	--/+	?	+/?
Policy E6	+?	+?	+?	+?	+?	++/-	-?	++	-?	++/--	?	++/-	--/+	?	+
Policy M1	0	0	++	++	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	+	++
Policy M2	0	0	0	+?	0	0	0	+?	+?	+?	0	+?	+?	0	+?
Policy M3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+?	++	0	0	++	+?	+?	+?
Policy M4	0	0	+?	+?	0	+?	0	0	+	0	++	+	+?	0	+
Policy M5	0?	0	0	0	0?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++?	+
Policy M6	0?	0	0	0	0?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	+
Policy M7	++/-	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy M8	++	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy M9	+	+	0	+	+	+	0	++	0	+	+?	+	+?	0	+?
Policy M10	0	0	0	++	0	+?	0	+?	+?	+?	+?	+?	+	0	+
Policy M11	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+
Policy M12	++	+	0	+	0	+	-?	+	0	+/	0	+	-	0	+

## Sustainability Appraisal Findings

## Policies

Policy	SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6	SA7	SA8	SA9	SA10	SA11	SA12	SA13	SA14	SA15
Policy M13	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	+	0	+
Policy M14	0	+	+	++	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	++	0	++
Policy M15	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	++	0	++
Policy M16	0	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	0
Policy M17	0	+	+	+	+	++	0	0	0	+/	0	+/	0	0	0
Policy M18	0	+	++	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	0
Policy M19	0	+	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	0
Policy M20	0	+	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy M21	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	+/	0	+/	0	0	0
Policy M22	0	0	0	0	++	+	0	0	0	+/	+	+/	+?	0	+?
Policy M23	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+
Policy M24	0	+	0	+?	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



# Overall effects of the Local Plan against the SA Objectives

**1.21** In addition to assessments for individual policies, the SA also includes an assessment of the cumulative effects of the plan as a whole, as well as consideration of effects in combination with other development in the surrounding area. The results of this cumulative effects assessment are presented below, by SA objective.

## **SA Objective 1: To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home**

**1.22** The Plan seeks to meet the housing need for Dartford over the plan period, an average of 790 dwellings per annum. In addition, Policies M7 (Affordable Housing) and M8 (Housing Mix), along with allocations and area-specific policies seek to ensure a suitable mix of housing. Whilst requiring developer contributions and enhanced sustainability have potential to affect viability, it is still expected that the housing targets set out in the plan can be achieved.

**1.23** Overall, significant positive effects are expected for this SA objective.

## **SA Objective 2: To ensure ready access to essential services and facilities for all residents**

**1.24** The Plan directs new development to the Central Dartford and to Ebbsfleet Garden City. Central Dartford is well served by existing services and facilities, and Ebbsfleet Garden City will provide a range of new services and facilities to support development. In addition, the focus on sustainable and active transport in the Plan should help ensure residents have good access to services and facilities elsewhere, if required.

**1.25** The Plan also requires provision of new services and facilities to support development, with Policy S2 (Infrastructure Planning Strategy) seeking to ensure demand is managed within capacity. It will be important to ensure new infrastructure is provided early on in development, so that existing services and facilities do not become overwhelmed by demand.

**1.26** Overall, significant positive effects are expected in relation to this SA objective.

## **SA Objective 3: To strengthen community cohesion**

**1.27** The Plan is expected to help strengthen community cohesion in a range of ways. By encouraging active transport and provision of green/open space, as well as new community facilities and other leisure and recreation opportunities, the plan is expected to increase the levels of interaction between residents, which can help foster a sense of community. In addition, Policy M18 (Community Uses) supports creation of new community uses, including a requirement for strategic developments to provide these at an early stage, which will provide space for residents to mix.

**1.28** Overall, a significant positive effect is expected in relation to this objective.

## **SA Objective 4: To improve the population's health and reduce inequalities**

**1.29** The Plan is expected to contribute to maintaining and improving the health of the population by promoting active travel and providing recreational opportunities, particularly via the provision of green space. In addition, mental health and wellbeing will be positively impacted by creating attractive places, particularly via Policy M1 (Good Design for Dartford) and through regeneration of Central Dartford, and encouraging community interaction.

**1.30** The Plan may also help reduce inequalities by ensuring provision of accessible and adaptable dwellings, and dwellings suitable for wheelchair users, as well as custom and self-build dwellings (Policy M8: Housing Mix) and in requiring there to be no segregation between or difference in appearance of different tenures of housing (Policy M7: Affordable Housing). Accessibility to services and facilities discussed for SA objective 2 above will also contribute to ensuring good levels of health and wellbeing.

**1.31** However, some adverse effects recorded for other objectives, such as potential for increased air pollution (SA objective 10), could mean that improvements in physical health are not as great as would otherwise be expected.

**1.32** Overall, a mixed significant positive and minor negative effect is expected for this SA objective.

## **SA Objective 5: Facilitate a sustainable and growing economy and a vital and viable town centre**

**1.33** The Plan provides for new employment via mixed use development at the allocation sites and regeneration of Central Dartford, which is also expected to contribute to ensuring Dartford remains a vital and viable town centre. Further employment land and a new centre will be provided at Ebbsfleet Garden City, particularly Ebbsfleet Central. Whilst Ebbsfleet Central is intended to serve the new Garden City, there is a risk it could draw people away from Dartford Town Centre, particularly when it is first established, as it will be a new place to explore for those living in Dartford (and Gravesham).

**1.34** Nevertheless, the Plan overall supports a vibrant economy in Dartford, including supporting a variety of businesses, such as including provision for small businesses and affordable accommodation, set out in Policy M20 (Provision for Local Business and Skills). Enabling evolution of Bluewater (Policy M22: Bluewater) and potential large-scale development north of Swanscombe (Policy E6: Land north of Swanscombe Area) may help attract visitors to the Borough, stimulating further investment and spending.

**1.35** Overall, significant positive effects are expected for this SA objective.

## **SA Objective 6: To reduce the need to travel and encourage sustainable and active alternatives to motorised vehicles to reduce congestion**

**1.36** As set out for SA objective 2 (services and facilities) the Plan seeks to locate housing development where there is existing access to services and facilities, or where these will be provided as part of a comprehensive new development at Ebbsfleet Garden City, therefore reducing the need to travel. In terms of employment development, Policy M19 (Sustainable Economic Locations) will help reduce the need to travel by locating employment in easy to access locations, i.e. Central Dartford, Ebbsfleet Garden City or near sustainable transport links. This, in combination with enhancing active travel links and provision of new infrastructure, is expected to reduce the need to travel by car.

**1.37** In addition, the Plan has a strong emphasis on sustainable transport, including maximising opportunities for strategic transport upgrades, such as the Crossrail extension and Fastrack bus services/routes set out in Policy S2 (Infrastructure Planning Strategy). This is likely to encourage travel by sustainable modes of transport. Whilst the increase in development in the Borough will likely result in a greater number of cars on the road overall, and potential for associated increases in congestion, the Plan goes a long way to mitigate this by promoting sustainable modes of transport.

**1.38** Overall, mixed significant positive and minor negative effects are expected for this objective.

## **SA Objective 7: To conserve the Borough's mineral resources**

**1.39** The majority of policies are not expected to affect this objective. The Plan could lead to sterilisation of some mineral deposits, although in some cases this is in relation to mineral deposits underlying previously developed land, which are unlikely to be extracted anyway.

**1.40** Overall, minor negative effects are expected.

## **SA Objective 8: To conserve the Borough's soils**

**1.41** The majority of development supported by the Plan is to take place on brownfield land, which is considered an efficient use of land and likely to minimise the amount of best and most versatile agricultural land lost to development. Whilst there is a possibility that some development will take place on agricultural land, the plan seeks to maximise use of brownfield land.

**1.42** Overall, significant positive effects are expected for this objective.

## **SA Objective 9: To maintain and improve the quality of the Borough's waters**

**1.43** A large proportion of the Borough is covered by Source Protection Zones, including many areas proposed for development, or redevelopment. In addition,

it is not known whether there is capacity at the appropriate wastewater treatment works to accommodate the level of development proposed.

**1.44** Nevertheless, Policy M3 (Sustainable Technology, Construction and Performance) requires development to demonstrate water efficiency, which will help minimise increases in demand on water supply and wastewater treatment. Policy M2 requires development to demonstrate it will not have unacceptable impacts on water quality, including groundwater source protection zones.

**1.45** Overall, mixed minor positive effects are expected for this SA objective.

## **SA Objective 10: To reduce air pollution and ensure improvements in air quality**

**1.46** Effects on this objective are largely driven by transport. As explained for SA objective 6, the Plan is expected to reduce the need to travel by car and promotes a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport. Nevertheless, a substantial amount of development is planned to come forward in the Borough, which will inevitably result in more cars on the road.

**1.47** In addition, whilst focusing development in Central Dartford and Ebbsfleet is expected to minimise car use overall, it is likely to lead to increases in traffic within existing AQMAs, therefore exacerbating air quality issues in these areas. However, Policy M2 requires development to demonstrate it will not have unacceptable impacts on air quality, particularly within or adjacent to AQMAs.

**1.48** Overall, mixed significant positive and minor negative effects are expected for this objective.

## **SA Objective 11: To avoid and mitigate flood risk**

**1.49** Much of the northern part of Dartford Borough, including a large proportion of land identified for development in the Plan, is at risk of flooding from the Thames, and the River Darent poses a flood risk to Dartford Town Centre as well as other development alongside this river. Both the River Thames and part of the River Darent benefit from flood defences, although climate change poses an ongoing risk of increases in flooding.

**1.50** In focusing on previously developed land, the plan is expected to have limited effects on surface water flooding and seeks to manage flood risk. In particular, Policy M4 (Flood Risk and Riverside Design) requires that development does not constrain the future management and upgrading of flood defences, must demonstrate it is safe from all types of flooding for the lifetime of the development, and must not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. This policy also requires major development to incorporate SuDS and the plan as a whole promotes maintenance and provision of green infrastructure, which can help manage flood risk.

**1.51** Overall, Policy M4 is considered sufficient to address flood risk concerns, therefore a minor positive effect is expected for this objective.

## **SA Objective 12: To minimise the Borough's contribution to climate change**

**1.52** Effects on this objective are largely driven by transport. As explained for SA objective 6, the Plan is expected to reduce the need to travel by car and promotes a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport. Nevertheless, a substantial amount of development is planned to come forward in the Borough,



which will inevitably result in more cars on the road and therefore greenhouse gas emissions.

**1.53** With respect to the built development, the Plan seeks to achieve energy efficiency and minimise carbon emissions through Policy M3 (Sustainable Technology, Construction and Performance).

**1.54** Overall, mixed significant positive and minor negative effects are expected for this objective.

## **SA Objective 13: To conserve, connect and enhance the Borough's wildlife, habitats and species**

**1.55** Some development locations set out in the Plan include, or are in close proximity to, ecologically important or sensitive areas, such as priority habitat, ancient woodland, and nationally and locally designated biodiversity sites. Development has potential to lead to direct loss of or damage to these features, or indirect damage, for example through increases in recreation and urban edge effects.

**1.56** However, the Plan promotes biodiversity net gain, as well as protection and enhancement of the green infrastructure network, which is likely to be beneficial to biodiversity through habitat creation, particularly as a result of Policy M15 (Biodiversity and Landscape).

**1.57** In addition, the Plan promotes delivery and management of an estuarine ecological park on the Swanscombe Peninsula, which could be significant in promoting the important habitats at this location, as well as educating the public about them.

**1.58** The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Local Plan identified potential for the Local Plan to result in likely significant effects on the Thames Estuary and Marshes Special Protection Area/Ramsar site and the Medway Estuary and Marshes Special Protection Area/Ramsar site as a result of increased recreational pressure. These are sites that are designated as being of international importance for nature conservation. However, the Habitats Regulations Assessment concluded that the supporting text to Policy M15, regarding the need to follow the approach set out in the Council's document 'Habitats Regulations and Large Sites in Dartford Borough – Guidance for Developers (2021)' should ensure the Local Plan does not result in any adverse effects on the integrity of the Special Protection Area and Ramsar sites.

**1.59** Overall mixed significant positive and minor negative effects are expected.

## **SA Objective 14: To conserve and/or enhance the significant qualities, fabric, setting and accessibility of the Borough's historic environment**

**1.60** Many of the development locations set out in the Plan are in close proximity to designated heritage assets, including Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. A large part of the proposed Ebbsfleet Garden City and Dartford Town Centre coincide with Sites of Archaeological Significance. As such, development has potential to result in harm to these assets and their settings.

**1.61** Policies M5 (Designated Heritage Assets) and M6 (Historic Environment Strategy) go a long way to mitigating this, as they require development to protect and enhance the historic environment.

**1.62** As such, overall mixed minor positive and minor negative effects are expected.

## **SA Objective 15: To conserve and enhance the special qualities, accessibility, local character and distinctiveness of the Borough's settlements, countryside and landscape**

**1.63** In focusing on development of brownfield land and regeneration, the Plan is likely to result in improvements to townscape. In addition, the open nature of the countryside is likely to be maintained.

**1.64** Development of Ebbsfleet Garden City will result in a large-scale landscape change. However, Policies E1 (Ebbsfleet Garden City Strategy), E2 (Ebbsfleet Garden City Development Principles), E4 (Central Ebbsfleet Allocation), E5 (Ebbsfleet South and West Area), E6 (Land North of Swanscombe Area) and Policy M1 (Good Design for Dartford) promote good design and provision of green infrastructure, which should help to ensure an attractive new development. In addition, Policy M15 (Biodiversity and Landscape) requires development to be sensitive to the existing landscape and requires major development to deliver landscaping schemes.

**1.65** Overall, minor positive effects are expected for this SA objective.

## In Combination Effects

**1.66** The effects of development are not limited to within local authority boundaries and some development, particularly Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) are considered at a national level, by the Planning Inspectorate, rather than the local authority. This section identifies other development that could have sustainability impacts in combination with the Dartford Local Plan and discusses these effects.

## Development Proposed in Neighbouring Local Plans

**1.67** The neighbouring authorities of Bexley, Sevenoaks and Gravesham are all in the process of preparing new or revised Local Plans (note that Sevenoaks District Council has lodged an application to appeal against an unsuccessful Judicial Review of their draft Local Plan). These authorities have all recognised a need to provide for additional housing and employment development in their areas. Dartford also has a connection further afield with London, Essex and the rest of Kent, due to the strategic road links in the Borough; the A2 and M25/A282, including the Dartford Crossing, which provides the only direct road link between Kent and Essex.

**1.68** Additional development in surrounding areas is likely to have a significant negative in-combination effect with regards to SA objectives 10 (Air pollution) and 12 (Climate Change), as this will add to the number of vehicles on these strategic roads and associated increases in congestion. In addition, a minor negative effect is expected for SA objectives 4 (Health and wellbeing) and 13 (Biodiversity), as increases in air pollution have potential to negatively impact the health of people and habitats along these roads.

## Lower Thames Crossing

**1.69** A strategic new road crossing, the Lower Thames Crossing, is proposed to the east of Dartford, and would create a new river crossing from the M25 north of the river, through Thurrock, to join the A2 east of Gravesend. The application for this NSIP project has been withdrawn, but the applicant (Highways England) intends to resubmit it. The purpose of the Lower Thames Crossing is to provide an additional road link across the river, east of London, in part to reduce pressure on the Dartford Crossing.

**1.70** If granted consent, the Lower Thames Crossing would help to mitigate an increase in traffic on the M25/A282 in Dartford, although there is still likely to be an overall increase in traffic and congestion, and associated air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. It should be noted that the A2 is likely to be a major route to and from the Lower Thames Crossing and therefore this road may experience a greater increase in traffic.

## London Resort

**1.71** The London Resort is an NSIP proposal on the Swanscombe Peninsula, which lies within Dartford. An application has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for an entertainment resort, expected to consist of events spaces, themed rides and attractions, entertainment venues and hotels, along with associated transport and parking infrastructure, as well as flood defence works and habitat enhancement. Policy E6 (Land North of Swanscombe Location) of the Local Plan acknowledges this proposal and states that a Local Plan Review will be required if it is to go ahead.

**1.72** The development of the London Resort could have substantial impacts on a number of SA objectives, particularly in combination with the development of Ebbsfleet Garden City. The impacts will be assessed through the NSIP and, in the event that consent is granted, through a Local Plan Review. The concept of an entertainment resort at this location was assessed in the SA of the Preferred

Options Consultation Document (Main Plan Option 5a). A summary of the assessment results are presented in Chapter 4 and Appendix C. London Resort Company Holdings, who submitted the NSIP proposal responded to the consultation of the SA of the Preferred Options Consultation Document. Their comments and the response to these are set out in Appendix A (note that at the time of responding to these comments the NSIP proposal had not yet been submitted).

## **Ebbsfleet Garden City**

**1.73** Ebbsfleet Garden City is a cross-boundary development, which includes land both in Dartford and Gravesham. Delivery of the Garden City is being co-ordinated by Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, which acts as the local planning authority for determining planning applications in the Garden City. The majority of development for the Garden City is expected to come forward within Dartford and has been addressed by Policies in the Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe section of the plan (Policies E1 to E6), there are considered to be no substantial, additional effects beyond those recorded in the policy assessments and cumulative effects assessment.

## Monitoring

**1.74** The SEA Regulations require that monitoring is undertaken in relation to the significant effects of implementing the Plan in question. Since effects which the SA expects to be minor may become significant and vice versa, monitoring measures have been proposed in relation to all of the SA objectives in the SA Framework. Suggested monitoring measures are presented in Chapter 7 of the main SA Report.

## Mitigation and Recommendations

**1.75** Chapter 6 of the main SA Report sets out recommendations for mitigation measures for the negative cumulative effects identified. It is noted that the Local Plan already goes a long way to mitigating many potential negative effects and that some, such as those arising from increased levels of traffic or loss of mineral resources, are, to an extent, unavoidable in the context of growth. Many of the proposed mitigation measures are outside the remit of the Local Plan, or will need to be implemented at the planning application stage.

**1.76** Throughout the SA process, SA assessments identified a number of recommendations in order to minimise potential negative effects of the Dartford Local Plan and maximise the number, magnitude and likelihood of positive effects of the Dartford Local Plan. These recommendations, along with an overview of how the Council has responded to them, are set out in Appendix D of the main report.



## Conclusions

**1.77** Chapter 8 of the main report sets out the final conclusions of the SA Report. Overall, the spatial strategy generally performs well in sustainability terms, building on the adopted Local Plan by focusing development on well-connected brownfield sites within the town of Dartford, and also at Ebbsfleet Garden City, which is a long-term large-scale regeneration project in the area.

**1.78** When taken as a whole, the Plan is expected to have significant positive effects with regards to housing, access to services and services, community cohesion, economy and soils. Significant positive effects are also expected for sustainable travel, including associated implications for air quality and climate change, and biodiversity, although these are mixed with residual negative effects. Additional residual negative effects have been identified in relation to mineral resources and the historic environment.

**1.79** Adverse effects are also expected to arise in combination with other development nearby, particularly with regards to air pollution and climate change as a result of additional traffic from growth in surrounding authorities. There is uncertainty related to many of the effects identified, particularly the site allocations and other area-specific policies, as the effects depend on the exact nature and design of development, which will be agreed at the planning application stage. Nevertheless, the Local Plan should help to ensure that development is suitably located and well-designed.

## Next Steps

**1.80** This Non-Technical Summary and the Sustainability Appraisal Report to which this Non-Technical Summary refers will be available for consultation alongside the Dartford Local Plan for six weeks from February 2021. Following this consultation, the Council will consider whether to propose any modifications to the Local Plan. The Local Plan, any proposed modifications to this, other supporting and submission documents, including this SA and responses received during the consultation, will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination.

LUC

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Report produced by LUC

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