

Response to EIP Matter 2 Q 5: Sustainability Appraisal – is it comprehensive and are there outstanding elements or queries; does it for instance have adequate regard to the implications of the Core Strategy on the primary highway network?

1. This note sets out a response as to how impacts on the highway network have been addressed through the sustainability appraisal (SA) of the Castle Point Core Strategy. This looks at:
 - how transport and traffic were addressed in the sustainability objectives developed for the sustainability appraisal
 - how travel and transport relate to delivering sustainable development
 - the findings of the sustainability appraisal in the appraisal of the spatial strategy for Castle Point
 - specific findings in the appraisal of policies of the Core Strategy
 - recommendations for mitigating transport impacts from the sustainability appraisal.

Sustainability objectives

2. The impacts on transport and traffic are implicit in the sustainability objectives developed specifically for the sustainability appraisal of the Castle Point Core Strategy. There is no transport specific objective, as transport itself is not a core matter that represents sustainable development. Instead, transport is covered as part of several other sustainability objectives. These objectives are:

Accessibility

- to enable people all to have similar and sufficient levels of access to services, facilities and opportunities

Air

- to reduce all forms of air pollution in the interests of local air quality and the integrity of the atmosphere

3. The summary conclusions on how the Core Strategy performs against these objectives is included as Annex 1 to this note.
4. Good transport, access and avoiding congestion are also identified as part of the 'wealth creation' sustainability objective. Travel and access are recognised as an important part of making a place attractive to investors and supporting the local economy.
5. The objectives, strategy and policies of the Core Strategy are all assessed in a systematic way against these objectives. The output of this process is presented in full in Appendix 2 of the sustainability appraisal report and summarised in the main sustainability appraisal report.

Travel and transport issues in delivering sustainable development

6. The main way in which the Core Strategy can help in reducing congestion on the existing highway network is by reducing peoples' need to travel by car. Therefore, the sustainability appraisal is looking for ways in which the Local Development Framework's spatial strategy will help deliver this.
7. The spatial strategy can that promotes greater self-containment can help reduce the need to travel. The need to create places that have good access to a mix of jobs, homes and services and a more compact urban form is a focus of the sustainability appraisal. The need for the spatial strategy to address accessibility and the benefits of this approach for sustainable development is summarised in the sustainability appraisal report, paragraphs 9.3 and 9.4:

“The spatial strategy has an essential role in distributing development and therefore shaping the future form of the urban areas of Castle Point. It needs to look for ways to provide a mix of different land uses, such as homes, jobs and services, which people can access without getting in their car. A key concern of a sustainable spatial strategy is linking the place where people live to where they work”.

Reducing car travel, through encouraging a more sustainable pattern of development, can help in achieving several aspects of sustainable development. These include:

- *reducing emissions to air helping mitigate against climate change*
- *reducing congestion can be beneficial for the economy*
- *health benefits from reduced air pollution and reducing adverse impacts on wellbeing caused by busy and congested roads*
- *social benefits as more people have equitable access to jobs and services.”*

The sustainability appraisal of travel and transport in the core strategy

8. The sustainability appraisal finds that aspects of the spatial strategy will help to reduce the overall increase in car traffic, which would otherwise result from the quantity of development proposed. Paragraph 9.10 of the SA report finds that:

“The sustainable spatial strategy should help secure greater accessibility to the services needed to meet peoples' day-to-day needs. The approach looks for greater concentration of development and supporting more sustainable transport modes, including walking and cycling. However, peripheral housing and employment development will also rely on high quality public transport provision to successfully reduce car use and promote equitable access. Positive sustainability implications include a high target for use of previously developed land, demonstrating more efficient use. Additional employment on Canvey Island can also help make this area more self-contained in terms of travel to work, and help reduce car use. However, to help achieve the aim the new jobs provided will need to match the skills of the workforce.”

9. However, the appraisal does query the basis for some of the split of jobs and homes between the 'mainland' and Canvey Island. Despite this query, the split should help to redress some of the current imbalance between the availability of homes to jobs. Therefore, the strategy would assist in making Canvey Island more self-contained in terms of access to employment. This would aid in reducing the amount of people travelling off the Island for work, helping to reduce overall levels of traffic congestion on the highway network.
10. The sustainability appraisal also looks at the sustainability implications of the specific sites allocations. Where mixed use development is proposed as part of a large site, such as East of Canvey Island, this has the potential to improve local self-containment. New services provided on these large sites should be easily accessible from the new homes without needing to travel by car. However, the SA report does comment (paragraph 9.37) that it is important that these larger housing sites are monitored for delivery of the mix of uses to make sure these are in place prior to completion of all residential component of any scheme.

Travel and transport in the sustainability appraisal of the Core Strategy core policies

11. The sustainability appraisal includes a systematic appraisal of all of the proposed Core Strategy policies. Core Policy 3 covers transport issues in the borough. Paragraphs 10.8 and 10.9 of the sustainability appraisal report state that:

“The SA of Policy CP3 on transport is supportive of those initiatives that would help achieve a modal shift away from car use. This includes support of delivering the cycle and footpath routes and public transport strategies. However, those schemes that would create new roads to increase capacity are likely to result in some adverse sustainability impacts. These impacts relate to the increase in car use that this type of infrastructure is likely to promote. With negative impacts on air quality, climate change, health and impacts on congestion on businesses and residents’ wellbeing.

There is the potential for new road development to bring some sustainable travel benefits. However, to secure these sustainable travel considerations need to be planned into new road layout from the outset. This could include dedicated bus lanes to make travelling by public transport quicker, and therefore a more attractive option, than car travel. There could also be segregated cyclepaths to ensure cyclist safety on all new roads, with particular focus on the main routes through the borough.”

12. The SA comments on the Core Strategy are also supportive of the town centre focus of the spatial strategy. These locations have some of the greatest potential to deliver a mix of development that can help reduce the need to travel by car. Making new walkable neighbourhoods will be positive in reducing the overall impact on the highway network through proposed levels of growth. These points are covered in the SA report at paragraphs 10.16 to 10.18.

Mitigating impacts

13. The sustainability appraisal does draw generally positive conclusions on how the spatial strategy would help reduce the overall level of traffic increase resulting from new development. However, the Core Strategy, will not act alone and additional measures and implementation of other plans and strategies will work to further reduce traffic impacts. These are summarised in the sustainability report and shown for two sustainability objectives in Annex 1 to this note.

14. Mitigation measures include:

- additional public transport provision and support for improved bus services
- improvements to walking and cycling routes in new development and as part of the Greengrid
- permeable layout of new development to promote pedestrian accessibility.
- phasing development to ensure a mix of housing and employment development
- incorporating a mix of uses on larger housing sites. This will include the need for development to contribute towards the creation of 'community hubs'.

Annex 1: Summary of impacts of the DPD against the two transport related sustainability objectives developed for the SA

Concern	Objectives and desired direction of change	Relationship of the Core Strategy DPD with each sustainability objective	Delivering the objective – through the Core Strategy DPD and other strategies
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to enable people all to have similar and sufficient levels of access to services, facilities and opportunities 	<p>The focus of development in the existing urban area, with limited development on the periphery may mean that accessibility is improved through implementation of the Spatial Strategy. New ‘community hubs’ will also help provide accessible services for existing and new residents.</p> <p>The distribution of development types would see additional employment land allocated in Canvey Island. This could help improve access to jobs on the island so more people have the option to live locally to where they work.</p> <p>The site allocations have included an assessment of accessibility. This has helped make sure allocations will have reasonable access to new services.</p>	<p>Additional public transport provision.</p> <p>Improvements to walking and cycling routes.</p> <p>Permeable layout of new development to promote pedestrian accessibility.</p> <p>Phasing development to ensure a mix of housing and employment development.</p> <p>Incorporating a mix of uses on larger housing sites. This will include the need for development to contribute towards the creation of ‘community hubs’.</p>

<p>Air</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to reduce all forms of air pollution in the interests of local air quality and the integrity of the atmosphere 	<p>The main impact on air quality from new development proposed in the borough will relate to transport, primarily car use. It is the aim of the spatial strategy to help make a pattern of development that reduces the need to travel, by making more jobs and services available near where people live and promoting a mix of uses. The impacts of the plan on this objective may be similar to the accessibility objective.</p> <p>The spatial strategy contains many elements that should help in meeting this objective. This includes support of development in town centres to enhance Hadleigh and Canvey centres as a focus of activity in the borough. In addition, the allocation of new peripheral development sites has taken into consideration access to jobs and services to help reduce car travel. However, the SA does note that a site with potentially good accessibility at Rayleigh Road has not been allocated.</p> <p>The distribution of development types would see additional employment land allocated in Canvey Island. This could help improve access to jobs on the island so more people have the option to live locally to where they work.</p>	<p>Additional public transport provision.</p> <p>Improvements to walking and cycling routes.</p> <p>Permeable layout of new development to promote pedestrian accessibility.</p> <p>Phasing development to ensure a mix of housing and employment development.</p> <p>Incorporating a mix of uses on larger housing sites. This will include the need for development to contribute towards the creation of 'community hubs'.</p>
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