

# Thanet District Council

## Thanet Local Plan Review Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment Scoping Reports - Summary



(LUC 2021)

The Council are working with Land Use Consultants to produce a Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Local Plan Review.

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (incorporating the SEA Directive) requires that Local plans should be informed throughout their preparation by a sustainability appraisal that meets the relevant legal requirements. This should demonstrate how the plan has addressed relevant economic, social and environmental objectives (including opportunities for net gains). Significant adverse impacts on these objectives should be avoided and, wherever possible, alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued. Where significant adverse impacts are unavoidable, suitable mitigation measures should be proposed (or, where this is not possible, compensatory measures should be considered). SA iteratively informs the plan-making process by helping to refine the contents of such documents, so that they maximise the benefits of sustainable development, avoid or at least minimise the potential for adverse effects. This is communicated in the Sustainability Appraisal document.

In addition the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (2017) SI No. 2017/1012, as amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/579) requires that a Habitats Regulations Assessment is carried out.

Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations') states that if a land-use plan is "(a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects); and (b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site" then the plan-making authority must "...make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives" before the plan is given effect. The process by which Regulation 105 is met is known as Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). An HRA determines whether there will be any 'likely significant effects' on any European site as a result of a plan's implementation (either on its own or 'in combination' with other plans or projects) and, if so, whether these effects will result in any adverse effects on the site's integrity.

If the conclusion is that the Plan is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site then an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan for the site, in view of the site's conservation objectives, must be undertaken.

The scoping stage of the Sustainability Appraisal identifies the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report. It sets out the context, objectives

and approach of the assessment; establishes the baseline; and identifies relevant environmental issues and objectives. The 14 objectives identified are then used to test the Plan's policies and proposed allocations. These objectives are:

- SA Objective 1: To provide a suitable supply of housing including an appropriate mix of types and tenures to reflect demand and need
- SA Objective 2: To reduce inequality, poverty and social exclusion by improving access to services, facilities and wider community infrastructure, which will help reduce crime and fear of crime
- SA Objective 3: Improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents and reduce health inequalities between local communities within the District
- SA Objective 4: To deliver and maintain sustainable and diverse employment opportunities
- SA Objective 5: Support the vitality of the District's town and retail centres
- SA Objective 6: To reduce the need to travel and encourage sustainable and active alternatives to the private car
- SA Objective 7: To improve air quality, particularly in areas where air quality (pollutant) levels exceed national standards
- SA Objective 8: To improve efficiency in land use through the re-use of previously developed land and existing buildings, including reuse of materials from buildings, and encourage urban renaissance
- SA Objective 9: Minimise water use and protect and improve the quality of water resources
- SA Objective 10: To mitigate climate change by actively reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- SA Objective 11: To avoid and mitigate flood risk and adapt to the effects of climate change
- SA Objective 12: To conserve, connect and enhance the District's wildlife habitats and species
- SA Objective 13: To conserve and enhance sites, features and areas of historic archaeological or architectural importance, and their settings
- SA Objective 14: To conserve and enhance the character and quality of the area's landscape and townscape particularly associated with town centres and coastal areas

For the Habitats Regulations Assessment the report either scopes in or out assessments of the different European Sites/Designations within the Plan area according to whether or not the Plan will have a likely significant effect on them or not.

These reports provide the framework for assessment of the Local Plan and are not the assessments themselves. The assessments will be available alongside the draft Local Plan for consultation.