

ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL

Core Strategy Consultation on Strategy Directions

Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report

Non Technical Summary

November 2008



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1 NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1.1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.2 The purpose of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is to help planning authorities contribute to achieving sustainable development in preparing their plans. Sustainable Development aims to integrate the need to stimulate economic growth, to deliver the needs of all sectors of society, and to conserve and enhance the local environment.
- 1.1.3 SEA involves examining certain plans and programmes primarily for significant environmental effects. SA widens the approach to include social and economic as well as environmental issues. Local Planning Authority (LPA) plans must undergo both the process of SA and SEA as a result of legislative changes enacted in the UK in summer 2004.
- 1.1.4 The combined process reviews plans against a set of criteria reflecting local problems and the LPA's objectives in delivering Sustainable Development and addressing these problems.
- 1.1.5 This report is the combined output of the SA and SEA processes and hereafter is called the SA. The stages of the SA preceding this report culminated in the production of a SA Scoping Report (available upon request from the Council), which documents the results of the gathering of evidence concerning the current social, economic and environmental conditions in the District.
- 1.1.6 The Scoping Report identifies key sustainability problems or likely future problems by looking at statistical trends and comparing the performance of the District with East Sussex as a whole, the South East and England. Section 3.5 of this SA Report contains the full range of sustainability problems identified in the SA Scoping Report.

The Local Development Framework and the Core Strategy

- 1.1.7 Rother District Council is currently preparing its Local Development Framework (LDF), a set of planning policy documents, which will replace the existing Local Plan. This document concerns the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) – which sets the overall spatial vision, objectives and policies for Rother District.
- 1.1.8 The long term spatial vision for the District, extracted from the Core Strategy *Consultation on Strategy Directions Document*, is shown in the yellow box overleaf.
- 1.1.9 The Core Strategy is a key planning document under the new planning regime. It is also a key component in the delivery of the Community Strategy (a strategy all local authorities are required to produce in partnership with representatives from local bodies and interest groups,

with the aim of improving the future economic, social and environmental well being of the area).

Vision for Rother in 2026

Rother District will be recognised for its high quality of life where there is a strong emphasis on community life. This will have been achieved by continuing to support, and further develop, vibrant, safe, balanced and inclusive communities.

Sustainable economic growth will have been secured, with much improved job opportunities, and which encourages young people to stay in the area and provides greater prosperity for all.

Improved economic and social well-being will be facilitated by better access to jobs and services for all ages, in both urban and rural areas, and improved connectivity with the rest of the region.

The area's outstanding environmental and cultural assets will continue to be highly valued and conserved. Sensitive stewardship of environmental resources will be integral to a local commitment to a more sustainable future and a responsible, positive approach to helping address climate change issues.

Development and change will have contributed significantly to meeting local needs and aspirations. It will have responded positively to the area's particular local circumstances and environmental resources, as well as according with the South East Plan.

Bexhill will have retained and strengthened its distinct identity and become one of the most attractive places to live on the south coast - attractive to families, the young and older people alike. As the main focus of development in the district, it will be playing its part within an integrated approach to securing a more prosperous future for the Bexhill and Hastings area.

Battle continues to be a thriving small market town and tourist centre which retains its essential character, with sensitive conservation of its historic core and setting.

Rye has improved economic and social circumstances with a stronger and more sustainable market town role, tourism sector and Port. This will have been achieved whilst fully respecting and sensitively managing its historic character, vulnerability to flooding and ecologically important setting.

Rural areas of the district will have evolved "organically" in a manner sensitive to their essential character, diversity and relationship with their surroundings. Villages will be vibrant and inclusive, while the countryside will be economically active, accessible and well-managed.

- 1.1.10 The Council has prepared its Core Strategy Directions on the basis of the consultation on the Issues and Options between October and December 2006.
- 1.1.11 The Core Strategy is also progressed with full regard to the Council's Corporate Plan which sets out the Council's contribution to achieving the Community Strategy.
- 1.1.12 It is concerned with 'place-shaping' and will establish the way in which the social, economic and environmental needs of the area can be delivered in the most sustainable way.
- 1.1.13 It provides broad guidance on the scale and distribution of development and the provision of supporting infrastructure. It also contains 'higher level' policies for delivering the spatial vision. It aims to ensure that investment decisions are not made in isolation, but are properly co-ordinated, with a focus on promoting the principles of sustainable development.

The SA process so far

- 1.1.14 The outcome of the preliminary 'Scoping' stage of the SA process is a set of Sustainability Objectives created to address the sustainability problems. These objectives can then be used collectively as a means to assess the Core Strategy Plan Objectives, Options and Strategies.
- 1.1.15 The statutory environmental agencies (Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage) were consulted on the SA Scoping Report in August 2006 and again between December 2007 and February 2008 because the scope was updated.
- 1.1.16 To comply with the SA/SEA process the Council's Strategic Options and Spatial and Thematic Strategies for the Core Strategy, which set out the key elements of the planning framework for Rother, have been reviewed against the Sustainability Objectives bearing in mind the following:
- Relevant government planning policy guidance on Local Spatial Planning PPS12
 - The extent to which the option supports other planning policy, for example, the Community Strategy, the Local Transport Plan and the key regional document the South East Plan
 - Evidence from the environmental baseline about local conditions and problems
 - Representations received in the initial consultation on the Issues and Options between October and December 2006
 - Guidance and best practice documents including the ODPM SA SEA Guidance Documents

- Other relevant guidance issued by bodies such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage and the RSPB on matters such as biodiversity, land use and climate change

1.1.17 Options were developed for the following policy areas (more detail of the options can be found in Appendix 3 of the Initial SA Report):

- **The scale of growth**
 - Option 1 = 5,600 dwellings in line with South East Plan
 - Option 2 = 7,000 = +25% of South East Plan quota
- **The Overall Distribution of Development up to 2026**
 - Option 1 = Based on relative proportion of current population
 - Option 2 = Based on service centre role
 - Option 3 = Trend-based option
 - Option 4 = Based on the extension of current housing commitments to 2011
 - Option 5 = Based on housing needs
- **Bexhill**
 - Option 1 = Maintain Bexhill's role
 - Option 2 = Expand Bexhill's role
 - Option 3 = Coordinated approach to the Bexhill/ Hastings area
- **Battle**
 - Option 1 = Continued development to support the town's role
 - Option 2 = Limited growth
- **Rye**
 - Option 1 = Strengthen the market town role of Rye and the commercial role of Rye Harbour and the Port of Rye
 - Option 2 = Strengthen the social functions of Rye and Rye Harbour and make the most of the important environmental circumstances
- **Rural Areas (Villages)**
 - Option 1 = continue to focus on service centres
 - Option 2 = Development to support community needs and deficiencies
 - Option 3 = Focus development on few larger villages
 - Option 4 = Dispersed development
 - 4a: Population based across villages
 - 4b: Historic farmstead based
 - Option 5 = Focus development on transport corridors
- **Rural Areas (Countryside)**
 - Option 1 = Continue to limit development in the countryside
 - Option 2 = support more extensive development in the countryside
 - Option 3 = Override countryside policy
- **Communities (Affordable Housing Percentage)**
 - Option 1 = Continue with the percentages set out in Local Plan Policy HG1
 - Option 2 = Adjust percentage 50% rural villages; 40% Rye and Battle; 35% Bexhill
- **Communities (Affordable Housing Threshold)**

- Option 1 = Continue with the thresholds set out in Local Plan Policy HG1
- Option 2a = Lower threshold in all urban areas
- Option 2b = Lower threshold in Rye and Battle, maintain Bexhill
- Option 3a = Lower threshold in rural areas
- Option 3b = all developments 3+4 bed to provide 1 affordable
- **Communities (Affordable Housing Type)**
 - Option 1 = 25% social housing and 10% intermediate on all sites
 - Option 2 = 20-25% social rented on Bexhill major sites and 15-20% intermediate
 - Option 3 = Mix of 10%-20% intermediate, 20%-30% social rented in rural areas
- **Communities (Affordable Housing Allocations)**
 - Option 1 = Retain principle of exception sites in line with Local Plan
 - Option 2 = Allocate small sites (less than 10 dwellings) wholly or substantially for affordable housing in areas of need
- **Communities (Housing Mix)**
 - Option 1 = Retain Local Plan policy of 30% requirement of 1&2 bed properties as stands
 - Option 2 = Aim for a higher target of 40% in rural areas, where the need is greatest
- **Economy**
 - Option 1 = Make generous provision for sites and premises
 - Option 2 = Set aside only modest areas for employment uses.
- **Environment (Design Quality)**
 - Option 1 = Maintain a general expectation of design quality
 - Option 2 = Set achieving high design quality as a central theme in the planning process
- **Environment (Biodiversity and Greenspace)**
 - Option 1 = Using existing policy to conserve and enhance natural green space when opportunities arise
 - Option 2 = Identify areas where there is potential for improvement
- **Environment (Sustainable Resource Management)**
 - Option 1 = Promotion and application of new Government targets
 - Option 2 = Extend beyond the Government targets and set locally specific targets and criteria where appropriate
- **Transport and Accessibility**
 - Option 1 = Focus on investment in road and rail transport
 - Option 2 = Focus on investment in improvements in local transport infrastructure and services

1.1.18 It should be noted that options are not necessarily mutually exclusive and could therefore be implemented in combination with other options.

1.1.19 There are some areas of policy where it has been considered that there are no reasonable alternatives, for example on flood risk and Gypsy and Traveller permanent site provision; therefore no options

have been assessed in the SA for these areas. The policies themselves will be subject to SA when all the policies are tested for sustainability and published at the next, 'pre-submission' stage.

1.2 Outcomes of the Sustainability Appraisal Process

1.2.1 The following table documents those options that the Council has accepted and those it has rejected and the reasons for this. The full appraisal of the options can be found in Appendix 4 of the Initial SA Appendices Report.

Table 1.1 Options accepted and rejected and the reasons

Option	Reason for Acceptance or Rejection
Scale of Growth	
1	Accepted – Analysis against SA and Plan Objectives support this option
2	Rejected – economic, infrastructure and environmental concerns
SPATIAL OPTIONS	
Spatial Distribution of Growth	
1	Accepted in part - used to moderate Option 2
2	Accepted moderated by need and accessibility
3	Rejected – Analysis against SA and Plan Objectives show could be unacceptable levels of growth for some villages
4	Rejected – Analysis against SA and Plan Objectives show could be unacceptable levels of growth for some villages and the market towns
5	Accepted in part - used to moderate Option 2 in terms of housing needs, but could be unacceptable levels of growth for the market towns
Bexhill	
1	Accepted in conjunction with Option 3
2	Rejected as economic growth forecasts and housing market conditions do not support this growth agenda; uncertainty over infrastructure provision and cumulative impact on town's character
3	Accepted in line with Plan Objectives and shared vision moderated by Option 1 recognising Bexhill's independent but complementary function vis à vis Hastings, as well as its own priorities for future well-being
Battle	
1	Accepted – cross check against SA and Plan Objectives has shown that careful implementation of this option would be more beneficial than a lower growth option in terms of recognising Battle's service centre role and providing for local economic, housing and community needs subject to

		environmental acceptability
2		Rejected – option would not provide adequate support for the local economic, housing and community needs
Rye		
1	Accepted in part	Assessment against the SA and Plan Objectives has found that an amalgam of the two options would best address the particular circumstances of the area. A balance is required between housing and employment whilst minimising adverse effects on the high quality natural, built and historic environment, notwithstanding the need to plan carefully with regard to flood risk taking into account climate change
2	Accepted in part	
Rural Areas (labelled A-E in the Core Strategy)		
1		Accepted taking into account environmental constraints, local needs (Option 2) and accessibility (Option 5)
2		Accepted in part – does the most out of all options to address affordable housing but doesn't necessarily seek the most sustainable options
3		Rejected – focussing development on a small number of villages may have a negative impact on the cohesiveness of those settlements, furthermore smaller villages in the District may be denied development which could be used to facilitate community services and facilities
4a		Rejected – although option may distribute development in a way that is perceived as 'equal', population is not always a gauge to accessibility, provision of services or local needs and therefore the option may be contrary to sustainable planning. SA assessment shows that the option has a greater potential for adverse effects than options 1-3
4b		Rejected at outset – such a policy is contrary to national (PPS3 and PPS7) and regional planning policy, SA identified potential adverse affects for improving accessibility and reducing car use. Matters dealt with in this option overlap more directly with the issues of exception site policy and key worker affordable housing
5		Accepted in part – concern over the issues of encouraging car use and withholding development from other buoyant local service villages such as Northiam and Peasmarsch
Rural Areas - Countryside		
1		Accepted – option offers the best and most appropriate level of protection for the AONB. In terms of addressing rural housing needs the option should be mitigated to ensure greater provision of affordable housing particularly for those employed in local land-based economies and ensure the option does not lead to increased deprivation in rural areas due to a lack of affordable housing

2	Rejected – the results of the SA show a number of uncertainties with this option as it stands. It is considered that there would be unacceptable adverse impacts for the AONB and its historic settlement pattern. The SA identifies adverse impacts in relation to the need to reduce traffic movements, improve air quality and reduce greenhouse emissions
3	Rejected – contrary to PPS3 Housing, PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas and PPG13. South East Plan recently had supporting policy removed through the Panel Report
CROSS-CUTTING OPTIONS	
Communities – Affordable Housing	
Affordable Housing Percentage	
1	Undetermined – the SA has shown a flat 40% doesn't at present recognise the different requirements within different parts of the District, particularly between Bexhill and the rural area. Waiting for the input from consultation.
2	Undetermined - lowering the requirement to 35% for Bexhill should help facilitate development in the District's largest urban service centre. Waiting for the input from consultation.
Affordable Housing Threshold	
1	Rejected - the Affordable Housing SPD has resulted in increased delivery of affordable housing; however the problem of affordability is still intensely felt and could be addressed further.
2 (a)	Rejected - the Housing needs Survey 2005 demonstrated particularly high housing need in Rye and Battle, which suggests that a distinction should be made between the two market towns and Bexhill. This option makes no such distinction.
2 (b)	Accepted in principle – waiting for input from consultation.
3 (a)	Accepted in principle – waiting for input from consultation. SA highlights that if the threshold were 50% option 3a would result in the delivery of more affordable housing than option 3b.
3 (b)	Accepted in principle – waiting for input from consultation. if the threshold were 50% option 3a would result in the delivery of more affordable housing than this option.
Affordable Housing Type	
1	Rejected - this option would rigidly and inflexibly apply the Draft South East Plan stipulation that the mix should include at least 25% social-rented and at least 10% intermediate. This option would apply blanket proportions to urban and rural areas which evidence shows have different needs.

2	Accepted - evidence shows that on sites in rural Rother, Rye and Battle the balance should be tilted slightly more towards social housing – SA supports this option showing the potential for more significant beneficial effects.
3	Accepted – the HMA showed the stock of social rented housing in Rural Rother has been eroded by the ‘right to buy’ therefore this option provides a way to redress the balance by increasing the percentage of social rented required on new sites.
Affordable Housing Allocations	
1	Accepted – the SA concludes that policy remains a positive step to address the issue of affordable housing shortage and should be retained.
2	Accepted - should supplement the provision of affordable housing in settlements of particular need.
Communities - Housing	
Housing Mix	
1	Rejected – the SA has highlighted that this option may not be appropriately addressing the housing need
2	Accepted – a higher proportion of one and two bed properties than the current local plan requirement of 30% would seem to be heavily supported by evidence. The SA supports this option.
Economy	
1	Accepted – assessment against Sustainability Objectives has shown that Option 1 should broadly deliver economic and social benefits but may have several adverse environmental impacts, although these may be mitigated through measures such as sustainable use of resources in construction and energy generation, as well as citing in highly accessible locations
2	Accepted in part – SA of Option 2 shows it could offer more positive impacts against the range of sustainability objectives, but its economic contribution is difficult to assess as the nature and potential of smart growth is not yet clear
Environment - Design Quality	
1	Rejected – doesn’t perform poorly against SA or Plan Objectives but doesn’t have the potential of Option 2 for ensuring government policy and best practice are implemented, furthermore it doesn’t raise the profile of design emphasising the critical importance of good design in the planning process
2	Accepted – assessment against SA and Plan Objectives shows this option has the greater potential to ensure design quality properly responds to the district’s environmental character

Environment - Biodiversity and Greenspace		
1		Rejected - The option is limited to improvements where development is proposed and does not as such take a strategic overview of greenspace provision in the District or of the multifunctional nature that greenspace can offer through its ability to mitigate flooding, provide land for sustainable drainage and provide wildlife corridors to support and enhance biodiversity
2		Accepted – option would allow a more proactive approach to provision of greenspace and conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. The option allows for the elaboration of the idea of areas of strategic opportunity as identified in the SE Plan. The development of a green network across the District is considered important helping to protect wildlife from the potential impact of climate change. SA and Plan Objective assessment supports this option
Environment - Sustainable Resource Management		
1		Undetermined – assessment against the Sustainability Objectives has shown Option 1 promotes sustainable resource management in line with the Government’s objective for sustainable communities. Beneficial impacts as identified will become greater over time as the Government raises the standards to be met and introduces a mandatory level of the Code for Sustainable Homes (consultation on both options to inform decision)
2		Undetermined - the SA has shown that option 2 aims to place the District at the forefront of sustainable resource management, it would ensure better resource management in rural areas and would particularly allow for tighter control over greenfield and AONB sites. Consideration of these options against the Plan Objectives has shown that Option 2 has the greater potential to meet the objectives – particularly minimising emissions and making efficient use of resources though more research is required to determine viability of various sites in the District
Transport		
1	Accepted	Option 1 would contribute to strategic transport infrastructure and services, the longer-term prosperity of the area, key improvements and reducing the relative peripherality of the District. However, this should not detract, or distract, from local priorities (Option 2) for improved access to local jobs, shops, education and healthcare, and for the opportunities for this by sustainable transport modes
2	Accepted	

1.2.2 The options were also considered with regard to the Core Strategy Vision and Objectives and both this and the SA helped to inform the development of the Strategies for each of the above mentioned areas, which will in turn guide the development of the Core Strategy Policies.

Summary of the Likely Significant Effects of the Strategies

1.2.3 Table 1.2 below summarises the assessment of the potentially significant effects of the Plan Strategies on the SA Objectives. The SA Objectives are in bold and italics. (The Plan Strategies and the detailed appraisal of them can be found in Appendix 5 and 6 respectively.)

1.2.4 It is worth noting that the detail of how the strategies will be delivered, documented in the Core Strategy as: *'this will be achieved by'*, has not been assessed at this stage, just the higher level strategy. The detail, which in turn will develop into policy, will be assessed at the next stage once the strategies have been finalised in light of consultation feedback and any further evidence studies.

Table 1.2 Summary of likely significant effects

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent, sustainably constructed and affordable home</i> <p>The significant effects on this SA Objective are beneficial and will potentially be from the Distribution of Development, Bexhill, Battle, Rye, Rural Areas and Communities Strategies.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Improve the health and well-being of the population and reduce inequalities in health</i> <p>Potential for the most significant beneficial effects on this Objective will be from the Distribution of Development, Bexhill and Communities Strategies. The reason for this is largely connected to the links between good quality, affordable housing and health and well-being.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reduce crime and the fear of crime</i> <p>This SA Objective is mainly affected by the Communities Strategy, which promotes working with partner authorities to address issues of crime and disorder and should help lead to significant beneficial effects for reducing crime and the fear of crime.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reduce deprivation and social exclusion</i> <p>Significant beneficial effects on reducing deprivation and social exclusion should be experienced as a result of the implementation of the Strategy for Economy and all the spatial strategies. Particularly the Strategy for Bexhill with its focus on providing additional employment opportunities, further education facilities, housing for younger people and support for older people and the focus of the Rye Strategy on improving local social and economic conditions should significantly contribute to this SA Objective.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise educational achievement levels and develop the opportunities for lifelong learning <p>The Strategy with potential for significant beneficial effects for raising educational attainment is the Strategy for Economy, which requires action in increasing workforce skills through investment in education and through extended vocational training. The Strategies for Rye and Bexhill also have a strong focus on improving educational opportunities including new learning facilities and initiatives.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain economic growth and competitiveness and encourage innovation in higher value, lower impact activities <p>Collectively, the Strategies within the Core Strategy have a strong economic focus, as directed by the South East Plan in order to raise the economic profile of the region and particularly to deliver economic regeneration to this part of the Sussex Coast Sub-Region.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve accessibility to services and facilities for all ages across the District <p>Potential for the most significant beneficial effects on improving accessibility within the District is from the Bexhill, Battle, Rural Areas and Transport Strategies. Other strategies including that for Rye and the general Distribution Strategy should have beneficial effects but are not judged to be as significant.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and facilitate increased engagement in cultural and leisure activities <p>The Strategy for Battle has been judged to give rise to significant beneficial effects for increased engagement in cultural and leisure activities. A number of the strategies have been assessed as having more minor beneficial effects which cumulatively could have more significant effects.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve efficiency in land use and encourage the prudent use of natural resources <p>There is a level of uncertainty in predicting the effects of the strategies on the prudent use of natural resources due to actual locations for development linked to certain strategies (including Rye and the Economy) not having been determined at this stage. The general strategy for the Distribution of Development has clear direction for making the most effective and efficient use of land, prioritising previously developed land; however the significance of beneficial effects may reduce over time as previously developed land and infill opportunities become scarcer.</p>

- ***Reduce road congestion and pollution levels and ensure air quality continues to improve by increasing travel choice and reducing car usage***

There is a clear direction in the Strategy for Battle to reduce congestion and cross- town traffic movements, which should improve air quality in the town centre. The development of a wide-ranging integrated transport strategy for Bexhill that maximises accessibility both within the town and between the town and neighbouring Hastings should contribute to significant beneficial effects in the long term.

The Strategy for Transport and Accessibility has been judged to have minor beneficial effect for this SA Objective in the short to medium term with beneficial effects becoming more significant over time.

The encouragement of new enterprise and business into the District through the Economy Strategy and its facilitation of growth of 'home-grown' businesses are likely to put more pressure on the road transport system and increase traffic movements within the District.

- ***Reduce emissions of Greenhouse gases***

An increase in the number of households and businesses in the District has the potential for a significant adverse effect on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Other areas of policy (cross-cutting) will help to ensure sustainable construction which should help to limit the generation of new greenhouse gas emissions.

- ***Minimise the risk of flooding and resulting detriment to people and property***

There are uncertainties for the effects on this SA Objective linked to the Strategies for Rye and the Economy. The Strategy for the Environment should produce significant beneficial effects for this SA Objective.

- ***Maintain, improve and manage water resources in a sustainable way***

Potential for adverse effects on the management of water resources with the amount of development proposed by the Bexhill Strategy and the subsequent demand on water supply. The sustainable management of water is fundamental in achieving sustainable development and the Strategy for the Environment aims to minimise water use, to provide water supply in a sustainable way and to ensure efficient sustainable wastewater infrastructure. The element of the Strategy for Environment that addresses water supply and wastewater should help to mitigate the adverse impacts on this SA Objective from other strategies.

- ***Conserve and enhance biodiversity***

Overall quantities of development proposed by the South East Plan for the District are likely to result in a net loss of biodiversity. This is because inevitably there will be development other than redevelopment and infill, which may require substantial greenfield land take over the Plan period. The Strategy for the Environment seeks to reduce negative effects on biodiversity by protecting priority habitats, identifying a greenspace network and proposing mitigation for significant losses.

- ***Protect and enhance the high quality natural and built environment***

The effects of the Plan Strategies on this SA Objective are generally beneficial. The Strategy for the Environment leads with the management of the high quality built and natural landscape character and seeks to place high quality design centrally in the planning process.

- ***Reduce waste generation and disposal, and achieve the sustainable management of waste***

Even with the highest levels of sustainable construction and most effective development distribution patterns the level of development proposed will ultimately result in increased numbers of households and businesses and consequently increased waste generation.

1.2.5 Where appropriate, measures designed to offset negative effects of the Strategies (mitigation measures) have been proposed and can be viewed in Table 7.1 of the Initial SA Report. These measures will be further considered and evaluated for implementation during the public consultation on the Strategy Directions Document for the Core Strategy DPD and the Initial SA Report.

1.2.6 A Sustainability Appraisal Monitoring Framework will monitor the performance of the final policies and the surrounding environment identifying key challenges and opportunities, which will enable adjustments and revisions to be made if necessary. The Monitoring Framework has been produced and will be consulted upon as part of the SA process before the Core Strategy DPD is adopted as policy. Monitoring helps to verify whether policies are achieving their objectives particularly concerning sustainable development or whether they may have had unintended consequences.

1.3 Statement on the difference the process has made

1.3.1 The SA process has investigated the likely significant environmental and sustainability impacts of the options and strategies presented in the Core Strategy Directions Consultation Document. A range of impacts has been identified. The assessment has therefore provided an initial check on the sustainability of the Options and Strategies as envisaged by government guidance. The SA process has highlighted where options may be ambiguous or in themselves insufficient and this has led to clarification and careful rewording to improve them from a sustainability perspective.

1.3.2 The SA process has been influential in informing the development of the Core Strategy. The iterative nature of the process of developing the Core Strategy has allowed the SA to input at various stages and highlight how the Plan can be made more sustainable. This process

will continue as the Core Strategy is taken through the next stage and prepared for examination in public. The Council will consider further the proposed mitigation measures put forward in this report during this period of consultation.

- 1.3.3 The ultimate effectiveness of the DPD from the perspective of sustainable development will depend on an effective partnership between Rother District Council, prospective developers, infrastructure providers and the community at large.

1.4 How to Comment on the report

- 1.4.1 To comment on this report please use the Comments Form for the 'Consultation on Strategy Directions'. This is available on the Council's website at www.rother.gov.uk/corestrategy.
- 1.4.2 If possible please complete this online, as this will help the Council efficiently administer the consultation. Please visit the website for step-by-step instructions.
- 1.4.3 For further enquiries please contact Senior Planning Officer **Tondra Thom** on **01424 787637** or email tondra.thom@rother.gov.uk.