

Halsnead Masterplan SPD

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Draft Environmental Report – Non Technical Summary

January 2017

1 INTRODUCTION

Background to the Masterplan

- 1.1 The Local Plan: Core Strategy (LPCS) (adopted in January 2016)¹ sets out the strategic spatial framework for the growth and development of Knowsley to 2028 and beyond, and seeks to ensure that the population and economic growth the borough needs is captured in an appropriate and sustainable way.
- 1.2 When the LPCS was adopted, nine sites across the Borough were removed from the Green Belt and allocated as *Sustainable Urban Extensions* (SUEs)² to provide additional land for development during and beyond the local plan period. The three largest and most complex of these - South Whiston and Land South of M62³; East of Halewood, and Knowsley Lane, Huyton— are anticipated to make the most significant contribution to delivering the local plan and growth objectives. A further large site at Knowsley Village was safeguarded for residential use after 2028.
- 1.3 Policy SUE2 in the LPCS identifies the three SUEs noted above as requiring additional planning guidance, due to their size and complexity. The South Whiston and Land South of M62 SUE site is the largest and most complex SUE site. It also has the most significant potential impact on biodiversity. Moreover, the site has multiple land owners, (including the Council), which presents a potential risk in the site coming forward in a piecemeal way.
- 1.4 For the three largest SUE sites, Policy SUE2 commits the Council to preparing a Supplementary Planning Document which will “...provide a proposed spatial development framework for the site together with further details of development and infrastructure requirements”. To account for this requirement, the Council has prepared a draft SPD for the South of Whiston and Land South of the M62 SUE site. The draft SPD refers to the site as Halsnead reflecting that a significant part of the site was formerly the Halsnead Estate Park. To ensure consistency, the draft SPD is hereafter referred to as the Halsnead Masterplan SPD or Masterplan SPD.

¹ Available online via www.knowsley.gov.uk/localplan.

² One of these sites, at Knowsley Village, is identified as ‘safeguarded land’ for beyond the plan period – in other words, it *may* be allocated as a housing site for development after 2028 in a future plan.

³ Core Strategy Policy SUE1 identifies *South of Whiston* and *Land South of M62* as separate sites, but they are dealt with together by Policy SUE2c, and throughout this document.

Purpose of this Document

- 1.5 The draft environmental report builds on the work undertaken for the screening and scoping exercises, previously consulted upon in October/November 2016. The screening and scoping reports set out the conclusion that the Halsnead Masterplan SPD will have significant environmental effects that go beyond matters already considered during the preparation of the LPCS.
- 1.6 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a statutory assessment process required to formally assess plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. The Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) identifies that supplementary planning documents may in exceptional circumstances require a SEA. In considering the need for SEA, a number of statutory consultation bodies have been given the opportunity to provide their views. The bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. In addition, given the geographical location of Knowsley, Natural Resources Wales has also been consulted. Historic England and Natural England responded to consultation at both stages and their full responses are set out in Appendix 1 of the environmental report. In summary, both agencies concurred that the Masterplan SPD required SEA and they provided some additional advice on the issues to consider. Their advice has been reflected in an updated version of the scoping report and relevant sections in this draft environmental report.

Habitat Regulations Assessment

- 1.7 Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is the name given to the overall process that considers the impacts that a plan or project may have on a European site. Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna - the 'Habitats Directive' - provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. It provides the legislative means to protect habitats and species through the establishment and conservation of a network of sites of nature conservation importance known as Natura 2000.

- 1.8 The HRA has been conducted as a separate assessment from the SEA. However, any issues raised by the HRA that are pertinent have been considered alongside this SEA.

Consultation on the draft Environmental Report

- 1.9 Comments are invited on the content of the draft environmental report that accompanies the draft Masterplan SPD.
- 1.10 The consultation period will run for a period of six weeks. Responses should be made in writing by letter or e-mail to arrive no later than 5 pm on 23 February 2017 marked for the attention of:

Halsnead Consultation
Knowsley Council
Ground Floor, Yorkon Building
Huyton
Merseyside
L36 9FB

(postage required)

or e-mail: discoverhalsnead@knowsley.gov.uk

- 1.11 Following the period of consultation, any comments received will inform the production of a final version of the environmental report that will sit alongside the adopted Masterplan SPD.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 The approach for carrying out the SEA of the Masterplan SPD is based on current best practice and the following guidance:
- A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive, (September 2005) Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly Government, Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland.
 - SEA guidance within National Planning Practice Guidance (<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>).

Defining the Scope

- 2.2 The scoping exercise set out the key information considered in the SEA and provided an assessment framework to be consulted upon with the consultation bodies.
- 2.3 The key information includes the baseline data assessment of current conditions associated with the project (i.e. the Masterplan SPD area) and identification of relevant plans, policies and programmes and their impacts that need to be considered alongside the Masterplan SPD. The baseline data and review of plans, policies and programmes enabled the identification of the key local environmental and sustainability issues included in the assessment.
- 2.4 The scoping exercise described the options or “reasonable alternatives” that were intended to be tested to inform the approach developed in the draft Masterplan SPD. The scoping report also derived a set of objectives and assessment framework intended to consider the impacts of the Masterplan SPD (see Table 1). The work undertaken for the previous SA/SEA framework used to assess the LPCS was also drawn upon to assist in developing the new assessment framework. An additional important aspect is to derive suitable monitoring indicators to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the Masterplan SPD.

Table 1: Assessment Framework

SEA Objective	Sub Objective	SEA Topic	Suggested Indicators
To preserve, enhance and manage Knowsley’s rich diversity of cultural, historic and archaeological buildings, areas, sites and features.		Cultural Heritage	Number of listed buildings on the Heritage at Risk Register
To protect, enhance and manage the local character and accessibility of the landscape and countryside across Knowsley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the required amount of open space. 	Landscape Material Assets	Hectares of open space per 1000 population by type of open space

SEA Objective	Sub Objective	SEA Topic	Suggested Indicators
<p>To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity, the viability of protected and endangered species, habitats, geodiversity and sites of geological importance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To conserve and enhance the natural environment, including species and habitat diversity. • Ensure current ecological networks are not compromised, and future improvements in habitat connectivity are not prejudiced. 	<p>Biodiversity</p>	<p>Number of local sites in 'active conservation management'</p>
<p>To adapt to climate change including flood risk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce flood risk 	<p>Climatic Factors Flood Risk</p>	<p>Percentage of development within flood zones 2 and 3; and areas of high risk with respect to surface water</p>

SEA Objective	Sub Objective	SEA Topic	Suggested Indicators
<p>To provide, conserve, maintain and enhance green infrastructure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve the size and quality of the green infrastructure network. • To improve the size and quality of the Ecological Framework • Avoid impacts on the quality and extent of existing recreational assets, such as formal or informal footpaths 	<p>Biodiversity Material Assets</p>	<p>Performance of area relative to adopted greenspace standards</p>
<p>To protect, manage and restore land and soil quality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the amount of derelict land. • Direct new housing to previously developed land. • Reduce the amount of contaminated land • Ensure avoidance of the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land 	<p>Soil</p>	<p>Amount of previously developed land that is derelict. New build on previously developed land.</p>

SEA Objective	Sub Objective	SEA Topic	Suggested Indicators
To protect, and where necessary, improve local air quality		Air	Area of site subject to air quality mitigation measures
To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a wider choice of accommodation to create a greater tenure mix. • Minimise resource and energy use when developing housing and the energy efficiency of housing. 	Material Assets	Housing by tenure type and size
To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business, exploit the growth potential of business sectors and increase the number of new businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of local and new businesses • Increase industrial / commercial floorspace 	Material Assets	Amount of floorspace developed for employment purposes
Reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of more sustainable transport modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage sustainable transport use 	Material Assets	Traffic volumes at key junctions

Options

- 2.5 The SEA regulations require that reasonable alternatives are considered in the preparation of a relevant plan. This means that a number of options that could potentially deliver the intended development envisaged by the Masterplan SPD need to be identified. The following options have been derived by the consultancy team working on the Masterplan SPD:
- Approach 1 SPD Framework Adapted: around 1500 homes delivered, with development orientated towards access points around the edge of the site
 - Approach 2 Urban Connection: '1500 plus' homes delivered, focussing on reinforcing the existing Lickers Lane facilities
 - Approach 3 'Central focus': '1500 plus plus' homes delivered, orientated around a central hub.
- 2.6 The SEA has appraised each of the options to inform the selection of a preferred option for the Masterplan SPD. The SEA has also appraised the draft key requirements and masterplan guidance contained within the Masterplan SPD. Consideration has been given to the baseline situation where a comparison is made with the current situation.

Assessment Approach

- 2.7 A summary of the assessment undertaken of the draft Masterplan SPD is set out in section 5 of this report. Evidence for the predicted impact effect is primarily based on the data utilised for the baseline analysis plus any additional data produced in the development of the Masterplan SPD. The assessment of the impacts of the options and subsequent preferred option, plus the policies and proposals in the draft Masterplan SPD has enabled the identification of significant environmental impacts (positive and negative). This has enabled a commentary to be included in the environmental report on how significant positive impacts can be incorporated as opportunities into the Masterplan SPD; and provide mitigation measures that deal with any significant negative impacts. Table 2 provides a summary of the scale of assessment used in section 5.

Table 2: Assessment Approach

++	major positive
+	minor positive
0	Neutral
-	minor negative
--	major negative
?	Uncertain

2.8 The draft environmental report and this non-technical summary are being published alongside the draft Masterplan SPD to enable consultation to be undertaken on the findings and recommendations of the report; and for consultees to understand how the SEA process has influenced the development of the Masterplan SPD. A further version of the environmental report and non-technical summary will provide the assessment of any revisions to the proposed final Masterplan SPD and will be published alongside the final agreed Masterplan SPD. A Post-Adoption Statement will be produced, which will explain how environmental and sustainability considerations have been integrated into the Masterplan SPD. It will also include the reasons for choosing the Masterplan SPD as adopted in light of other reasonable alternatives and will detail the monitoring measures chosen to ensure compliance with Article 9(1) of the SEA Directive.

3. Identifying Other Relevant Policies, Plans and Programmes

3.1 The Masterplan SPD does not exist in isolation from other plans, programmes, and strategies. The purpose of this stage is to identify plans, programmes, and strategies that are relevant to the Masterplan SPD and to assess their implications for the Masterplan SPD and to inform the scope of the SEA.

3.2 Appendix 2 of the environmental report lists the main documents that are relevant to the Masterplan SPD. It is important to note that the primary relationship is between the Masterplan SPD and the LPCS, and that the LPCS has in the main accounted for the key issues raised in many of the policies, plans and programmes listed. The table indicates where there are specific issues that need to be further considered by the Masterplan SPD.

4. Baseline Information

Introduction

4.1 The collection of baseline information is a legal requirement of the SEA Directive. Assembling baseline information helps to identify sustainability issues and provide a basis for predicting and monitoring the effects that the Masterplan SPD will have. The environmental report contains more detailed information on the baseline data collected (see Section 4). In summary the key sustainability issues identified from the analysis of the baseline data are as follows:

- Need to consider impacts on identified ecological resources (habitats and species) and ensuring Local Wildlife Sites are carefully integrated with the development proposed. There needs to be consideration of potential opportunities for the restoration or enhancement of biodiversity. Moreover, the Masterplan SPD could identify how improving people's access to nature (either through linear routes or open space) could be incorporated.
- Need to consider geo-technical impacts as a result of delivering the development proposed for the site. The delivery of the development proposals will lead to the loss of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land.
- Parts of the site are in Flood Zones 2 and 3, and areas have been identified where surface water flooding presents potential high risks.
- Initial assessment of air quality suggests some potential issues with respect to NO₂ concentrations given the proximity to the M62 and M57.
- Delivery of housing to assist in meeting the Borough's housing needs as set out in the Local Plan – Core Strategy.
- Delivery of employment land to assist in meeting the Borough's economic needs as set out in the Local Plan – Core Strategy.
- Ensuring the transport implications of the development are successfully integrated into the wider transport network.
- Need to consider impacts on listed buildings identified in the baseline assessment. Also need to assess impact on archaeological potential of the site.

- Need to consider impacts on landscape assets and features identified in the baseline assessment.
- Some deficiencies in open space identified within the wider area that contains the site.

Evolution without Masterplan SPD

- 4.2 The site could come forward as a number of planning applications that are not informed by a Masterplan SPD. This would run contrary to the policy intention of Policy SUE2 and SUE2c. Nonetheless, if it did occur, it is likely that there could be potential negative impacts on the various sustainability issues as a result of piecemeal development proposals that did not deliver the comprehensive approach envisaged as a result of the Masterplan SPD.

5 Strategic Environmental Assessment – Summary of Findings

- 5.1 A summary of the assessment of the draft Halsnead Masterplan SPD is set out in the following tables (Tables 3 to 6).
- 5.2 The assessment considered the three approaches in developing the SPD. The analysis suggests that approach 2 is likely to deliver the greatest positive environmental benefits (Table 3). Table 4 identifies potential mitigation that can be considered in any potential further draft of the SPD to further improve the environmental benefits that may accrue from developing the site.
- 5.3 Table 5 sets out the summary of the assessment of the key requirements and masterplan guidance contained in the draft SPD. Table 6 then repeats the process undertaken in Table 4.

Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment

Table 3: Options – Approaches Considered

	SEA Objectives									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Approach 1	0	-	0	-	0	-/--	-	+;++	++	+
Approach 2	0	0	0	-	+	-/--	0	+;++	++	++
Approach 3	+	-	0	-	0	-/--	-	+;++	++	+

Table 4: Potential Mitigation (Approaches)

Sustainability Objective	Mitigation
2. To protect, enhance and manage the local character and accessibility of the landscape and countryside across Knowsley.	<p>Policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy and the Masterplan SPD should ensure the retention of existing trees.</p> <p>Approach 3 specifically identifies the opportunity for reinterpretation of the historic Halsnead Park features.</p>
3. To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity, the viability of protected and endangered species, habitats, geodiversity and sites of geological importance.	<p>Utilise appropriate ecological surveys.</p> <p>Consideration as to how the LWS and areas of priority habitat will be integrated with the development proposals.</p> <p>Policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy and additional guidance in the Masterplan SPD should ensure that appropriate measures to mitigate the impact of the development are implemented, such as the provision of on-site habitats, the creation of a buffer around the LWSs and the retention of areas of woodland.</p>
4. To adapt to climate change including flood risk.	<p>Apply the sequential and exception test to the development proposals and, if necessary, exclude parts of the site at greatest risk of flooding from the developable area.</p>

	<p>Policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy and additional guidance in the Masterplan SPD should ensure that appropriate measures are taken to mitigate flood risk, such as the use of SuDS.</p>
<p>5. To provide, conserve, maintain and enhance green infrastructure.</p>	<p>Secure the provision of appropriate on-site open space and green corridors through the site.</p> <p>Policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy and additional guidance in the Masterplan SPD should ensure the retention of areas of woodland and the provision of a substantial, high quality and connected green infrastructure network.</p>
<p>6. To protect, manage and restore land and soil quality</p>	<p>Ensure development is built to an appropriate density to ensure efficient use of land and minimise the need to release further greenfield sites.</p>
<p>7. To protect, and where necessary, improve local air quality.</p>	<p>Secure improvements to the public transport network and ensure that the development is accessible by a choice of means of transport.</p> <p>Policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy and the “Ensuring a Choice of Travel” SPD should support the aim of ensuring that new development caters for an appropriate range and choice of transport options.</p> <p>Policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy and additional guidance in the Masterplan SPD should seek to retain trees and areas of woodland, and provide appropriate air quality attenuation for the site from the M62.</p>
<p>8. To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing.</p>	<p>Policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy and additional guidance in the Masterplan SPD should ensure that new</p>

	dwellings achieve high standards of design and resource efficiency.
10. To reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of more sustainable transport mode	<p>Secure improvements to the public transport network and ensure that the development is accessible by a choice of means of transport.</p> <p>Policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy and the “Ensuring a Choice of Travel” SPD should support the aim of ensuring that new development caters for an appropriate range and choice of transport options.</p>

Table 5: Key Requirements and Masterplan Guidance

	SEA Objectives									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Key Requirements										
HSPD1 (Strategic Objectives); HSPD2 (Framework Plan); and HSPD3 (Use and amount)	+	0	0	+	+	-/--	0	+/+++	+/+++	+
HSPD4 (Residential Development); HSPD5 (Employment Development); and HSPD8 (Community Facilities)	0	0	0	0	+	-/--	0	+/+++	+/+++	+
HSPD6 (Heritage response); HSPD11 (Open Space); and HSPD12 (Ecology)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0
HSPD7 (Movement); HSPD9 (Strategic utilities); and HSPD10 (Ground conditions)	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	+	+	+
Masterplan Guidance										
Placemaking Vision	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+/+++	+	+
Placemaking Pillars	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	+/+++	+	+
Design Framework	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+/+++	+/+++	+

Table 6: Potential Mitigation (Key Requirements and Masterplan Guidance)

Sustainability Objectives	Mitigation
Key Requirements	
HSPD1 (Strategic Objectives); HSPD2 (Framework Plan); and HSPD3 (Use and amount)	
6. To protect, manage and restore land and soil quality.	Ensure development is built to an appropriate density to

	<p>minimise the need to release further greenfield sites.</p> <p>Ensure the approach to the provision of open space including the country park maximises the opportunities to negate the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land; and enables any further improvements to areas of contaminated land can be addressed.</p>
8. To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing.	Policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy and additional guidance in the Masterplan SPD should ensure that new dwellings achieve high standards of design and resource efficiency.
HSPD4 (Residential Development); HSPD5 (Employment Development); and HSPD8 (Community Facilities)	
1. To preserve, enhance and manage Knowsley’s rich diversity of cultural, historic and archaeological buildings, areas, sites and features.	Heritage matters covered by HSPD6. Consider the inclusion of additional wording specifically covering heritage matters in HSPD4 and HSPD8.
2. To protect, enhance and manage the local character and accessibility of the landscape and countryside across Knowsley.	Heritage matters covered by HSPD6. Consider the inclusion of additional wording specifically covering landscape matters in HSPD4 and HSPD8.
3. To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity, the viability of protected and endangered species, habitats, geodiversity and sites of geological importance.	Ecology matters covered by HSPD12. Consider the inclusion of additional wording specifically covering ecological matters in HSPD4 and HSPD8.
4. To adapt to climate change including flood risk.	Consider the inclusion of additional wording specifically covering flood risk matters in the three key requirements.
5. To provide, conserve, maintain and enhance green infrastructure.	Consider the inclusion of additional wording specifically covering green infrastructure in HSPD4 and HSPD8.
6. To protect, manage and restore land and soil quality.	Ensure development is built to an appropriate density to minimise the need to release further greenfield sites.

	Ensure the approach to the provision of open space including the country park maximises the opportunities to negate the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land; and enables any further improvements to areas of contaminated land can be addressed.
8. To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing.	Policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy and additional guidance in the Masterplan SPD should ensure that new dwellings achieve high standards of design and resource efficiency.
HSPD6 (Heritage response); HSPD11 (Open Space); and HSPD12 (Ecology)	
8. To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing.	Policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy and additional guidance in the Masterplan SPD should ensure that new dwellings achieve high standards of design and resource efficiency.
Masterplan Guidance	
Placemaking Vision	
6. To protect, manage and restore land and soil quality.	Ensure development is built to an appropriate density to minimise the need to release further greenfield sites.
8. To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing.	Consider the inclusion of wording that captures in the vision the intention to deliver a choice of housing thereby contributing to the sub-objective in this sustainability objective. Policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy should ensure that new dwellings achieve high standards of design and resource efficiency.
9. To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business, exploit the growth potential of business sectors	Consider additional wording in the vision to make specific reference to the employment opportunity on the site.

and increase the number of new businesses.	
Placemaking Pillars	
3. To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity, the viability of protected and endangered species, habitats, geodiversity and sites of geological importance.	<p>HSPD7 specifically identifies the requirements to deal with ecological matters on site. HSPD6 includes specific requirements for the retention and enhancement of existing ecological features.</p> <p>Policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy and additional guidance in the Masterplan SPD also provide further direction on the need to protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity assets.</p>
5. To provide, conserve, maintain and enhance green infrastructure.	Policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy and the additional guidance in the Masterplan SPD will ensure that there is appropriate on-site open space and green corridors through the site.
6. To protect, manage and restore land and soil quality.	Ensure development is built to an appropriate density to ensure an efficient use of land and to minimise the need to release further greenfield sites.
8. To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing.	Policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy and additional guidance in the Masterplan SPD should ensure that new dwellings achieve high standards of design and resource efficiency.
Design Framework	
6. To protect, manage and restore land and soil quality.	Ensure development is built to an appropriate density to ensure an efficient use of land and to minimise the need to release further greenfield sites.
8. To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient	Policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy and additional

housing.	guidance in the Masterplan SPD should ensure that new dwellings achieve high standards of design and resource efficiency.
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Difficulties Encountered

5.4 The SEA Directive requires the identification of any difficulties encountered; these may include technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge. Assessing the potential effects of the Halsnead Masterplan SPD does present some areas of uncertainty due to the stage that the SPD sits in the process of delivering development at the site. The purpose of the SPD is to set a framework for more detailed development proposals to be produced in the form of planning applications. It is therefore part of an iterative process, whereby greater levels of detail will be presented as proposals are firmed up at the planning application stage.

Monitoring

5.5 The Assessment Framework set out in Table 1 includes a suite of indicators that will be utilised to monitor the effects of the development envisaged by the Masterplan SPD. These will be incorporated within the Authority Monitoring Reports that the Council produce.

Conclusion

5.6 The SEA of the Halsnead Masterplan SPD has considered the reasonable alternatives proposed for the site; and assessed the key requirements and masterplan guidance contained in the draft SPD. The assessment has concluded that approach 2 is likely to deliver the greatest positive environmental benefits. The assessment has then considered the key requirements and masterplan guidance produced in the draft SPD and identified potential mitigation that can be applied in any further draft of the SPD.