

# South Kesteven Local Plan 2011-2036

Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Statement

March 2020

## Quality information

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# 1. Introduction

## Background

- 1.1 South Kesteven District Council has recently prepared a new Local Plan to replace the planning policies in the South Kesteven Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Site Allocation and Policies Development Plan Document, as well as the remaining 'saved' policies from the 1995 South Kesteven Local Plan. The South Kesteven Local Plan 2011-2036, which covers the period to 2036, will be the key planning policy document for the District and will guide decisions on the use and development of land.
- 1.2 The Local Plan was submitted to the Government for examination by an appointed Planning Inspector in January 2019. Examination hearings were held in May 2019, subsequent to which the Council held a consultation on Main Modifications (to the submitted plan) for a six week period ending on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2019.
- 1.3 The Inspector published a report into the Local Plan's legal compliance and soundness on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and concluded that the Plan is legally compliant and sound. The Local Plan was recommended for adoption at a Full Council meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020.
- 1.4 A parallel process of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) was undertaken alongside plan-making, led by consultants AECOM (from 2017 onwards; with the initial stages of the SA having been led by South Kesteven District Council). SA is a mechanism for assessing and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and reasonable alternatives, with a view to achieving sustainable development.

## SA explained

- 1.5 SA assesses the likely significant effects of an emerging plan, and the reasonable alternatives considered during the plan making process, in terms of key sustainability issues. The aim of SA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding or mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects. Through this approach, the SA seeks to maximise the emerging Local Plan's contribution towards sustainable development.
- 1.6 An SA is undertaken in line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations) which transpose into national law European Union Directive 2001/42/EC 'on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment'. SA widens the scope of the assessment to also include social and economic issues.

## This SA Adoption Statement

- 1.7 Regulation 16 of the SEA Regulations sets out the post-adoption procedures for the SEA, and requires that, as soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of a plan for which an SA/SEA has been carried out, the planning authority must make a copy of the plan publicly available alongside a copy of the SA Report and an 'SEA adoption statement', and inform the public and consultation bodies about the availability of these documents. The consultation bodies are Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency.
- 1.8 In addition Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012) sets out a need to publish the final SA Report alongside the Adopted Local Plan.

1.9 In the context of the requirements of the SEA Regulations, this SA Adoption Statement for the South Kesteven Local Plan must explain:

- How environmental (and sustainability) considerations have been integrated into the Local Plan.
- How the Environmental Report (contained within the SA Report) has been taken into account during preparation of the plan.
- The reasons for choosing the plan as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with.
- How the opinions expressed by the public and consultation bodies during consultation on the plan and SA Report have been taken into account.
- The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant effects identified for the Local Plan.

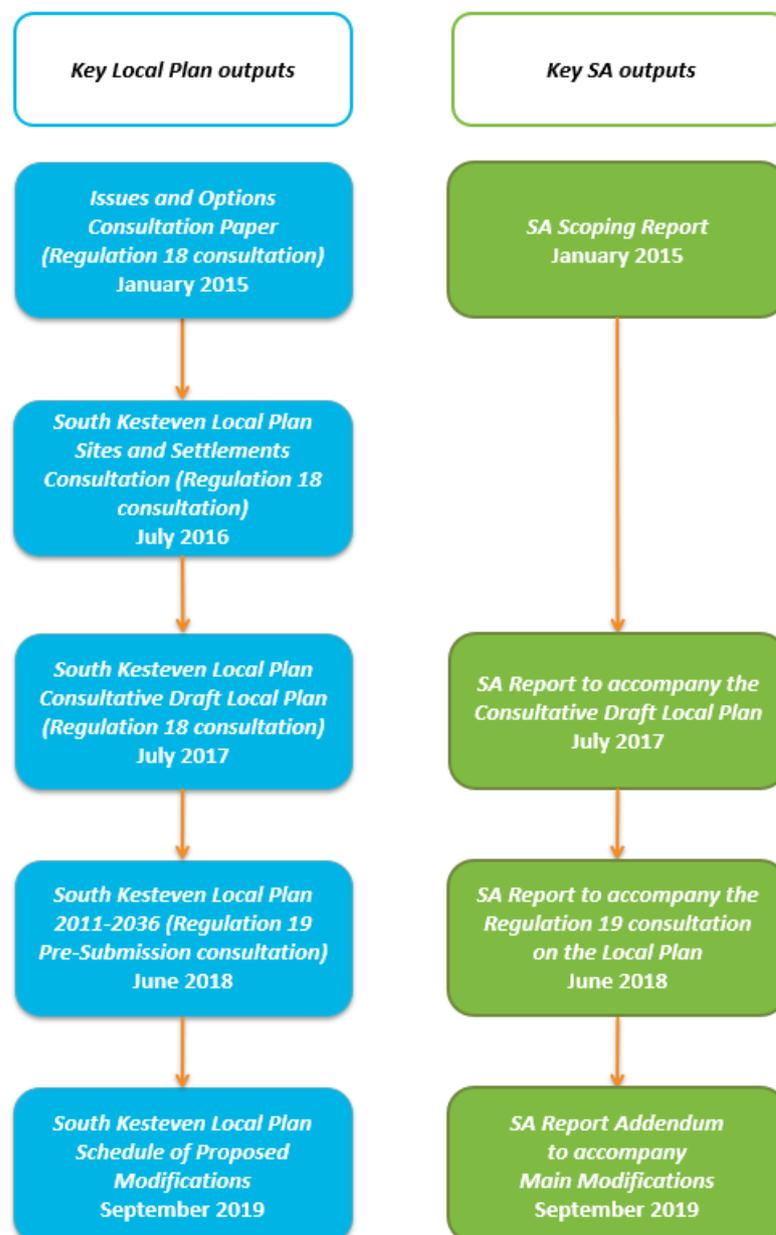
1.10 In association with the above requirements, the SA Adoption Statement is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** of this SA Adoption Statement presents the narrative for plan making and the accompanying SA process to date. This incorporates a description of the elements required by the first three bullet points above
- **Chapter 3** describes how consultation responses have been taken into account through the Local Plan/SA process
- **Chapter 4** presents the monitoring programme for the SA.

## 2. How the SA process has informed and influenced the development of the Local Plan

### Overview of Local Plan development/SA since 2013

- 2.1 Preparation of the South Kesteven Local Plan began in 2014. The SA process has informed and influenced the Local Plan throughout its development. Reflecting this, four main SA documents have been prepared to accompany key points in plan development, all of which have supported consultation and decision making at the relevant stage.
- 2.2 **Figure 2.1** below summarises the key documents which have been prepared for the Local Plan and accompanying SA process to date.



**Figure 2.1: Key outputs of the South Kesteven Local Plan and accompanying SA process**

## Appraisal of reasonable alternatives for the Local Plan

- 2.3 A key element of the SA process is the appraisal of 'reasonable alternatives' for the Local Plan, which should be undertaken in time to inform development of the draft plan. The assessment of reasonable alternatives was undertaken between 2015 and early 2017, and informed the preferred spatial strategy (specifically in terms of housing numbers and distribution) for the District and potential locations for proposed development.

### *Establishing housing numbers to deliver through the Local Plan*

- 2.4 In March 2017, a revised estimate of objectively assessed housing need (OAHN) for South Kesteven District was published through an update to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (completed in 2014 by GL Hearn) for the Peterborough sub-region (Peterborough, Rutland, South Holland and South Kesteven) and Boston<sup>1</sup>. The March 2017 OAHN established a need for in the region of 624 dwellings per annum to be delivered in the District over the period 2011 – 2036. This was a reduction from the 660-710 dwellings per annum previously determined by the 2014 SHMA, and the 635 figure established through the 2015 SHMA update.

### *Establishing a settlement hierarchy*

- 2.5 During the initial stage of the Local Plan preparation, consideration was made as to the role and functions of key settlements in South Kesteven District. This was with a view to establishing a settlement hierarchy for the Local Plan, which would help guide the choice of locations for growth in the District. In particular, it examined whether there are any villages in the District that should move higher in the settlement hierarchy or should no longer remain as a Local Service Centre. Subsequent to this process, Grantham was recognised as the key Sub-Regional Centre in the District. Alongside, the market towns of Stamford, Bourne and The Deepings were recognised as, after Grantham, the most sustainable locations for growth in South Kesteven. The following settlements were also assigned 'Larger Village' status, recognising their roles as service centres, including for surrounding communities and rural areas:

- Ancaster
- Barkston
- Barrowby
- Baston
- Billingborough
- Caythorpe
- Colsterworth
- Corby Glen
- Great Gonerby
- Harlaxton
- Langtoft
- Long Bennington
- Morton
- South Witham
- Thurlby

### *Potential locations for development*

- 2.6 To facilitate consideration of potential locations for site allocations, a number of broad areas around key settlements in the District were evaluated, with a view to establishing the likely environmental and physical constraints to development in each area. The purpose of this analysis was to aid the consideration of appropriate locations for growth to be taken forward in South Kesteven District for the purposes of the Local Plan. Between 2015 and 2016, capacity studies were undertaken which consider the key constraints in and around the key towns of Grantham, Stamford, Bourne and The Deepings, as well as the identified 15 Larger Villages. In this context, a range of broad areas were proposed by South Kesteven District Council for each settlement, loosely reflecting the various 'points of the compass'. The 'points of the compass'

<sup>1</sup> JG Consulting (march 2017) Peterborough Housing Market Area and Boston Borough Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update Final Report

characterisation for the settlement areas was presented in Part 1 of the Technical Annex accompanying the full SA Report.

### *Spatial strategy options*

- 2.7 The most recent Housing Needs Assessment established a minimum need to deliver in the region of 624 dwellings per annum between the period 2011 and 2036. Since 2011 there has been a shortfall in delivery, resulting in a level of unmet needs. Alongside this, a review of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has proposed a new standardised methodology for assessing housing needs. These updates are likely to affect the forecasted needs. Therefore, alternative options for the level of growth in the District, which reflect these changing circumstances, were explored through the SA.
- 2.8 The spatial strategy options explored through the SA are identified below.
- **Option 1; 624 dwellings per annum** – according with the housing need established using the current housing needs assessment (HNA) methodology, recognised through the existing NPPF. This includes housing completions since 2011 – the base date utilised through the March 2017 housing needs assessment.
  - **Option 2; 685 dwellings per annum** – to account for a shortfall in housing provision between 2011 and 2018, raising the requirement for the remaining plan period to 686 dwellings per annum. This option sets out a level of growth approximately 12.9% in excess of the minimum objectively assessed housing need. This includes housing completions since 2016 – the base date utilised by the standardised housing needs assessment methodology under the provisions of the revised NPPF currently undergoing consultation.
  - **Option 3; 720 dwellings per annum** – to reflect the housing need figure determined through the new standardised housing needs assessment methodology (784 dwellings per annum) to be implemented through the revised NPPF. This option proposes the delivery of 785 dwellings per annum between 2016-2026, and 655 dwellings per annum in the latter ten years of the plan period (2026-2036).
  - **Option 4; 785 dwellings per annum** – this option reflects the housing need figure determined through the emerging housing needs assessment methodology anticipated to be implemented through revisions to the NPPF.
- 2.9 Further to this, each of the four options were split into two sub-options which identified a different spatial approach to delivering these housing numbers. These two sub-options were as follows:
- **a) Grantham approach** – this option seeks to support the economic vitality of the north of the District through facilitating an additional level of development in the vicinity of Grantham.
  - **b) More permissive approach in the south of the District (more market-led)** – this option reflects the buoyancy of the housing market in the south of the District and the relatively higher number of planning applications in Stamford and other settlements. In this context, the option facilitates the allocation of an additional number of homes in Stamford, Bourne and The Deepings.
- 2.10 The eight reasonable alternatives identified above were subject to appraisal through the SA process. The findings of the SA for the spatial strategy alternatives was presented in Chapter 3 of the Regulation 19 SA Report (2018)<sup>2</sup>. The findings of the SA informed the Council's outline

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<sup>2</sup> South Kesteven District Council (June 2018) SA Report to accompany the Regulation 19 consultation on the Local Plan. Available [online]: <http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=14391>

reasons for selecting the preferred approach, which is presented in the Regulation 19 SA Report (2018) and repeated below

### *Reasonable alternatives for site allocations*

- 2.11 To support the consideration of which sites to potentially allocate through the Local Plan, in 2017 a site assessment was undertaken through the SA process on the range of sites available for development in the District. Potential sites for development were identified through:
- the adopted Core Strategy 2010;
  - the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document adopted in 2014;
  - a call for sites undertaken from 2015 to 2018; and
  - the Sites and Settlements Consultation undertaken during July – August 2016.
- 2.12 284 sites were reviewed and sites that did not meet the following criteria were removed:
- Located in a location at or well related to Local Service Centre (LSC)
  - Having a developable area greater than 0.4 hectares, capable of delivering at least 10 dwellings
  - Attached or well related to a settlement (to include sites adjacent to another potential allocation which is immediately adjacent to a settlement)
  - Planning permission has not already been granted
- 2.13 The second sieve considered the constraints and opportunities on each site. A 'red/amber/green' rating was used to assess the site constraints and opportunities. The remaining sites, totalling 118, were assessed against the SA framework of objectives and indicators. To support this process, an appraisal of each of these sites was undertaken with the aim of informing the proposed allocation of sites through the Local Plan. The appraisal of the sites considered was presented in Part 2 of the Technical Annex accompanying the Regulation 19 SA Report (June 2018).

### *The preferred spatial strategy option for the Local Plan*

- 2.14 The following presents South Kesteven District Council's reasons for selecting the preferred spatial strategy approach for the Local Plan.
- 2.15 The overall strategy of the Local Plan is to deliver sustainable growth, including new housing and job creation, in order to facilitate growth in the local economy and support local residents. The focus for the majority of growth is in and around the four market towns, with Grantham being a particular focal point. Development should create strong, sustainable, cohesive and inclusive communities, making the most effective use of previously developed land (where possible) and enabling a larger number of people to access jobs, services and facilities locally. Development should provide the scale and mix of housing types that will meet the identified need for South Kesteven (as informed by the Peterborough Sub Regional Housing Market Assessments) and a range of new job opportunities in order to secure balanced communities (as informed by the Employment Land Study).'
- 2.16 Grantham is a sub-regional centre and to ensure that Grantham continues to function effectively in that role both for the District and wider region, the majority of growth both already consented and proposed in the Local Plan is focused on Grantham.
- 2.17 The four towns - Grantham, Stamford, Bourne and The Deepings offer services and facilities to their local communities as well as supporting the network of larger villages and smaller settlements located around them. In order to ensure the continued success of these Market

Towns development proposals which support and enhance their role as service centres will be supported. The Local Plan will aim to protect existing retail and community facilities and to ensure that new housing and employment-generating development is sustainably located so as to complement the natural and built environments of the four Towns.

- 2.18 Beyond the four main towns – Grantham, Stamford, Bourne and The Deepings - the Larger Villages are considered to be the next most sustainable locations for growth within the District and therefore should positively contribute towards meeting the District’s overall growth needs.
- 2.19 A review of services and facilities has determined that the following locations should be Larger Villages:
- Ancaster
  - Barkston
  - Barrowby
  - Baston
  - Billingborough
  - Caythorpe and Frieston<sup>3</sup>
  - Colsterworth
  - Corby Glen
  - Great Gonerby
  - Harlaxton
  - Langtoft
  - Long Bennington
  - Morton
  - South Witham
  - Thurlby and Northorpe<sup>4</sup>
- 2.20 Allocations are proposed in some of these settlements, and the appropriateness of these sites has been demonstrated through a robust appraisal process.
- 2.21 Small scale development will be permitted in ‘Smaller Villages’ to enable them to have moderate growth. Development in the Countryside will be strictly controlled.

## Appraisal of the Draft Plan

- 2.22 At various stages of plan making, the SA process has appraised and informed emerging plan policies.
- 2.23 The planning policies for the Local Plan were developed in response to evidence base studies, the appraisal of reasonable alternatives undertaken through the SA process and to reflect consultation responses on plan-making, including the three consultations undertaken for the Local Plan prior to Regulation 19 consultation in January 2015, July 2016 and July 2017. An appraisal of the initial version of the Local Plan’s planning policies was presented in the SA Report (July 2017) accompanying the Consultative Draft Local Plan.
- 2.24 The planning policies were then updated for the Regulation 19 consultation and appraised in full through the SA process. The findings of the appraisal and the subsequent recommendations were presented in Part 2 (Chapter 4) of the Regulation 19 SA Report accompanying the Draft Local Plan for consultation in June 2018.

<sup>3</sup> The addition of Frieston was made through the Main Modifications (see paras 2.25-2.26 below)

<sup>4</sup> The addition of Northorpe was made through the Main Modifications (see paras 2.25-2.26 below)

## Main Modifications (2019)

- 2.25 The Local Plan was submitted to Government for Examination in January 2019. It was then the focus of Examination hearings in May 2019. As a result of discussion at the hearing sessions and representations received during examination, a number of changes were proposed to the Local Plan. The proposed modifications were published for consultation alongside an SA Report Addendum<sup>5</sup> for a six week period ending on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2019.
- 2.26 The Inspector's Report on the South Kesteven Local Plan was published in January 2020. It concluded that the Local Plan provides an appropriate basis for the planning of South Kesteven District in the period to 2036.

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<sup>5</sup> South Kesteven District Council (October 2019): South Kesteven Local Plan: SA Report Addendum to accompany Main Modifications

### 3. Consultation responses and how they have been taken into account

- 3.1 Regulation 16 of the SEA Regulations requires that the SA Adoption Statement includes a description of how the opinions expressed by the public and consultation bodies during consultation on the plan and SA Report have been taken into account.
- 3.2 As discussed in **Chapter 2**, at each stage of the Local Plan's development, an SA Report was published alongside the Local Plan for consultation.
- 3.3 Consultation included with:
- the three statutory bodies for SEA (the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England);
  - other stakeholders; and
  - the general public.

#### Responses received at Regulation 18 and 19 consultation and at Submission

- 3.4 The responses received prior, and subsequent, to publication of the Local Plan were presented in the Local Plan Statement of Community Consultation<sup>6</sup>. This included: a description of the key consultation processes undertaken for the Local Plan; a summary of the main issues raised by responses; and how they had been addressed.
- 3.5 The Statement of Community Consultation can be accessed at the following location:
- <http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=24253&p=0>

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<sup>6</sup> South Kesteven District Council (January 2019): South Kesteven District Council Local Plan 2011 -2036 Statement of Community Consultation

## 4. Monitoring

### Measures decided concerning monitoring

- 4.1 The SEA Regulations require that: "*The responsible authority shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of each plan or programme with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action.*"
- 4.2 The Regulations also state that the SA Adoption Statement should set out "*...the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.*"
- 4.3 The purpose of monitoring is to measure the significant sustainability effects of a plan, as well as to measure success against the plan's objectives. This will enable appropriate interventions to be undertaken if monitoring highlights negative trends relating to the relevant elements. It is therefore beneficial if the monitoring strategy builds on monitoring systems which are already in place. To this end, many of the indicators of progress chosen for the SA require data that is already being routinely collected at a local level by South Kesteven District Council and its partner organisations. It should also be noted that monitoring can provide useful information to inform the development of future plans and programmes, including future iterations of the Local Plan.
- 4.4 **Table 4.1** therefore outlines a monitoring programme for measuring the Local Plan's implementation in relation to the areas where the SA has identified significant effects or where significant opportunities for an improvement in sustainability performance may arise. It also seeks to monitor where uncertainties relating to the appraisal findings arose and suggests where monitoring is required to help ensure that the benefits of the Local Plan are achieved through the planning process.

**Table 4.1: SA monitoring programme for the South Kesteven Local Plan**

<i>Area to be monitored</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Data source</i>	<i>Frequency of monitoring</i>
Loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land	Number of hectares of land classified as Grade 1, 2 or 3 land sterilised by new development	Natural England Agricultural Map East Midlands	Annual
Effect of housing, employment and infrastructure provision on greenhouse gas emissions.	Carbon footprint of South Kesteven District Council	South Kesteven District Council	Annual
Effect on the delivery of renewable energy	Renewable energy installation capacity in MW	South Kesteven District Council	Annual
Effects on landscape and townscape character	Number of applications supported at appeal when citing Policy EN1: Landscape Character as a reason for refusal	South Kesteven District Council	Annual
Employment land provision	Amount of new employment (B1, B2 and B8) land permitted, and completed in m <sup>2</sup> /hectares	South Kesteven District Council	Annual
Car use	Developer contributions received for the delivery of sustainable transport	South Kesteven District Council	Annual

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