

# CHAPTER 14: ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL

## INTRODUCTION

- 14.1 Local planning authorities are required to have careful regard to environmental considerations when formulating their development plans. Planning Policy Guidance Note 12, "Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance", suggests that account should be taken of environmental issues in their widest sense. It is the Government's intention to work towards ensuring that all development and growth are more sustainable in their impact upon the environment and their use of non-renewable resources. Development plans have a key role to play in achieving such goals, especially by ensuring that future generations are not denied the best of today's environment. The Government considers environmental appraisal of plans is essential to achieve these objectives by evaluating both the total and individual impact of proposals upon the environment.
- 14.2 Environmental appraisal enables the consequences of planning decisions to be taken into account systematically in the preparation of the policies and proposals of a plan. The Department of the Environment has published its guidance in "Environmental Appraisal of Development Plans: A Good Practice Guide, 1993". Ideally, environmental appraisal should be undertaken in conjunction with production of a Consultation Draft Local Plan. This would enable those considering the plan to see exactly how the environmental objectives have been met and to allow comments to be made on the environmental impact of individual policies and proposals.
- 14.3 The guidance on environmental appraisal was, however, only published during the latter stages in the production of the Consultation Draft of the new Borough Local Plan. It was not therefore, practical at that stage, to carry out a full appraisal of the plan using the guide. Instead, Chapter 13 of the Consultation Draft contained a general review of the overall environmental effects of the plan. Subsequently, it has been possible to undertake an appraisal of the Consultation Draft, based upon the
- accompany the Deposit Draft plan. The findings of the appraisal have been summarised in the following section. Where appropriate, the findings have been used to modify policies for the Deposit Draft to increase environmental gains and to reduce environmental disbenefits. In due course, a supplement to the published Environmental Appraisal will be produced reviewing again the environmental impact

development is to be provided for only where it does not conflict with this objective.

14.8 The Local Plan's strategy builds upon the Secretary of State's logic. The strategy for the location of development is one of concentrating homes, jobs and facilities in a few specific locations so as to minimise the need to travel, particularly by car, and to maximise the potential to use more energy efficient modes of transport. This approach also makes the best use of land resources and existing or new infrastructure, and provides for better environmental protection and improvement measures.

14.9



its importance as an employment and shopping centre is to be enhanced. All these factors will inevitably give rise to greater demands for travel and movement which, even handled in the most sustainable manner, will still consume resources and have a significant impact upon the environment. The appraisal therefore identifies the detrimental environmental impact of certain proposals, such as the High Street Relief Road and the provision of short term car parking spaces even though these proposals have themselves the objective of producing environmental benefits in other areas. Overall, the appraisal recognises that if the proposed strategy for transportation and movement is not adopted, the impact upon the local and wider environment of catering for future travel demands could be far worse.

## **Housing**

- 14.18 The appraisal recognises that the development of land necessary to meet the Structure Plan housing requirement will have some environmental disbenefits.

## **Gatwick Airport**

- 14.21 It is the Government's policy for Gatwick Airport to achieve its full potential as an international airport with a single runway and two terminals. The Local Plan has to accord with this policy. However, as Gatwick Airport has the potential to increase passenger levels up to 40 million passengers per annum, there will almost inevitably be an increase in the number of plane movements and a need for a variety of additional developments at the airport. This could have considerable environmental disbenefits when judged against most of the environmental stock criteria. However,

In general, the appraisal demonstrates that the adverse impact of accommodating new development could be reduced by the Strategy adopted by the Plan to the location of development and to transport and movement issues. In addition, the positive impact upon the environment, both locally and further afield.

14.26 Overall, it is considered that the Plan represented a significant step in the direction