

APPENDIX 2

Sustainability 'Checklist': Extract from HCC Proof of Evidence to
Three Rivers District Local Plan Inquiry in 1999

PROPOSED TEXT TO BE INSERTED INTO THE LOCAL PLAN AFTER PARAGRAPH 1.1, AS FOLLOWS:

1.2 Making Development More Sustainable

1.3 The introduction to this Local Plan recognises the fundamental role which the Plan plays in contributing to the aim of making development in Three Rivers more sustainable. The location, design, construction and future use of all development, regardless of scale, can contribute towards this aim and many of the policies in the Plan have been developed to achieve this. Policy GEN.1 is an overarching policy, the purpose of which is to seek to enable all aspects of development to make as full a contribution to sustainable development principles as possible.

1.4 Applicants will be required (except in the case of “householder” development) to submit a statement to demonstrate how sustainability principles have been incorporated into the location, design, construction and future use of their proposals. To provide a basis for this statement, appendix 1 contains a sustainability checklist against which applicants should prepare their statements. Advice may be sought from the local planning authority on the range of issues which should be covered, and in what detail. All local authorities in Hertfordshire, under the auspices of the Hertfordshire Technical Chief Officers Association (HTCOA), are collaborating to develop advice and guidance to applicants which will support the checklist and assist in the preparation of statements.

GEN. 1: MAKING DEVELOPMENT MORE SUSTAINABLE

As part of their applications for development, applicants should submit an assessment of their proposals against the sustainable development checklist in Appendix 1. Development will be permitted where it is demonstrated that sustainable development principles are satisfied to the extent of compliance with the policies of this Local Plan and Government statements of planning policy.

APPENDIX

MAKING DEVELOPMENT MORE SUSTAINABLE

Policy GEN.1 Making Development More Sustainable is an overarching policy in the Local Plan having the objective of ensuring that the location, design, construction and future use of development in Three Rivers is as sustainable as possible. To help to achieve this, applicants will be required to submit sustainability assessment statements with their applications demonstrating how they have taken into account a range of sustainability issues. Applicants in preparing their statements should use the sustainability checklist contained in this Appendix.

Please contact the local planning authority if you are in any doubt as to whether a statement is required, the range of issues it should cover and in what detail. The following text is based on advice issued nationally by the Local Government Association and the Local Government Management Board (now the Improvement and Development Agency for local government) contained in ‘Sustainability in Development Control – a research report’¹.

All local authorities in Hertfordshire, under the auspices of the Hertfordshire Technical Chief Officers Association (HTCOA), are collaborating to develop advice and guidance to applicants to support the checklist. For the avoidance of doubt, should there be any conflict between the text below and the policies of the Local Plan, the latter will prevail for the purposes of the Local Planning Authority’s determining applications.

What is sustainability?

Sustainable development is defined and described in the introduction to the Local Plan. It can be viewed as encompassing the following²:

protect and enhance the environment

- use energy, water and other natural resources efficiently and with care.
- minimise waste, then re-use or recover it through recycling, composting or energy recovery, and finally dispose of what is left in as sustainable way as possible.
- limit pollution to levels which do not damage natural systems.
- value and protect and where possible enhance the diversity of nature and quality of landscapes for wildlife.

meet social needs

¹ The following addition should be incorporated into the References and Bibliography Appendix – Other Principal Publications Cited:

“Sustainability in Development Control – a research report”. Report for the Local Government Association and the Local Government Management Board by CAG Consultants. 1997.

² Adapted from ‘Sustainable local communities for the 21st century’ (The Local Government Association, the local Government Management Board and the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions) by the Hertfordshire Public Sector Environmental Pledge.

- create or enhance places, spaces and buildings that work well, wear well and look well;
- make settlements 'human' in scale and form.
- value and protect local character and distinctiveness and strengthen local community and cultural identity.
- protect human health and amenity through safe, clean, pleasant environments.
- as well as health care place a greater emphasis on a preventative approach to ill health.
- create public confidence and satisfaction in communities which are safer and more secure.
- ensure access to good food, water, housing and fuel at reasonable cost.
- meet needs locally wherever possible.
- maximise everyone's access to the skills and knowledge needed to play a full part in society.
- empower all sections of the community to participate in decision-making and consider the social and community impacts of decisions.

promote economic success

- create a vibrant local economy that gives access to satisfying and rewarding work without damaging the local, national or global environment.
- value unpaid work in the form of carers and voluntary workers.
- encourage necessary access to facilities, services, goods and other people in ways which make less use of the car and minimise impacts on the environment.
- make opportunities for culture, leisure and recreation readily available to all.
- promote a green economy through the use of green purchasing/supply chain practice.

How does sustainability affect how development is planned?

The planning system plays a major part in making our living environment and our lifestyles more sustainable. For instance, placing developments which generate many jobs near public transport allows car travel to be reduced. Ensuring that developments are located so that they make optimal use of sunshine and so that they are sheltered from wind reduces energy consumption. The provision of works of art as part of new developments makes our living environment more beautiful. Often, sustainable practices help to save money, for instance from utility bills. They can also make developments more attractive to future users, thus raising their value.

When planning development, applicants will need to take account of:

- the policies in the Hertfordshire Structure Plan, the Three Rivers Local Plan and the Hertfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plans (where appropriate) and any Supplementary Planning Guidance;
- Building Regulations;
- the requirements of the Environment Agency, the local environmental health department, and possibly other organisations.

These deal with many sustainability issues like nature conservation, land use, and energy efficiency.

Applicants should discuss proposed development with the local planning authority, who can give valuable advice on what is expected from developments in the area. The local planning authority is responsible for setting planning conditions for developments: these are conditions that must be fulfilled. Planning obligations may also be sought with applicants which restrict what can be undertaken with land/development or which involves paying for certain amenities. Examples of sustainability-oriented planning obligations include carrying out archaeological investigations on a site if there may be important archaeological material there, or paying for traffic management near the site of the development if it is likely to generate considerable extra traffic. Development can be refused on sustainability-related grounds, particularly on grounds of unacceptable traffic increase and incompatible land use. As such, it is important to discuss these issues with the local planning authority at an early stage.

How can a proposed development be made more sustainable?

The checklist below gives an idea of many of the issues that should be considered when planning development. It also gives some ideas for how development might be adapted to make it more sustainable. It should not be treated as a complete list of sustainability issues and appropriate additions to the list by applicants will be welcomed. Not all of the questions apply to all developments and some indicative thresholds are identified below. Developments will, however, be encouraged to maximise opportunities in all areas where possible.

- if the development does not involve any buildings (if, for instance, it is a car park or landscaping), then consider only questions marked “**n**”;
- if the development is a conversion of an existing building, then consider only questions marked “**c**”;
- if the development is for 10 houses or less, or less than 300 square metres, consider only questions marked “**s**”;
- if the development is for more than 10 houses, or more than 300 square metres, then consider only questions marked “**I**”.

In each case, an applicant should consider "does my proposal.... ? "

The Sustainability Checklist:

1. Land Use

- ls provide local facilities or favour the central town over green field sites?
- cl site high traffic-generating uses near good public transport?
- nls avoid loss of open land or urban open space?
- nls use derelict/under-used/vacant land or buildings? (including upper stories)
- l avoid adding to housing pressure?
- ncls encourage a long period of use? (eg. durable construction, accommodating changing patterns of use)

2. Minerals and Soils

- nl minimise the need for aggregates both in construction and operation, and safeguard long-term local resources of sand and gravel?
- nl avoid areas of high quality agricultural land?
- nls include a proper site investigation to identify areas of soil contamination where necessary, and take correct measures for decontamination?

3. Waste

- ncls reduce the size of the waste stream, including toxic and contaminated waste, and ensure that what is produced and used is safely handled? (eg. reuse/recycling, composting, proper safety procedures)
- ncls encourage the use and purchase of recycled, recyclable, and durable products? (eg. use recycled, reused, renewable and durable building materials, salvage material for reuse/recycling, use demolition materials for hardcore and aggregate)
- nl promote recycling and waste sorting as a normal activity? (eg. provide recycling facilities)
- n reduce litter and dog mess? (eg. dog bins in parks, fencing to reduce windblown litter)

4. Energy

- l reduce the requirements for transport fuel? (eg. more attractive public transport, development layouts favouring non-motorised transport, self-contained settlements)
- cls maximise energy efficiency in buildings? (eg. orientation, spacing and grouping of buildings, size and orientation of windows, natural ventilation, earth sheltering, insulation, lobbies and conservatories as buffer zones, draught proofing, localised temperature controls, weather-breaking plantings)
- ls avoid overshadowing other buildings?
- cls generate energy sustainably? (eg. combined heat and power, heat/methane recovery from waste, solar panels, other forms of renewable energy) or opt for supply generated from such sources when there is a choice from energy companies.

nls consider the full energy costs of extraction, manufacture, transport, use, and disposal both in construction and operation? (eg. minimise changes made to site levels during construction, avoid the use of aluminium, renew/repair/refurbish)?

5. *Air, Water, Noise, Light*

nl reduce air pollution and dust both in construction and operation? (eg. low NO_x boilers, reduction in traffic volumes, damping and wheel cleaning to avoid dust)

nl reduce greenhouse gas emissions? (eg. condensing boilers, combined heat and power systems)

nl improve water quality and protect groundwater from contamination? (eg. sewer renewal, waterway maintenance, dredging, reedbeds for wastewater treatment)

cls reduce the need for water? (eg. water meters, storage and use of 'grey' water)

nls protect the hydrology of the site and surrounding area and prevent flooding? (eg. permeable surfaces for car parks/spaces/driveways, minimise road length, avoid water run-off into watercourses, avoid building on floodplains)

cls reduce noise levels? (eg. traffic reduction, meeting noise standards, noise insulation, use of quieter technology, hours of operation)

nl reduce levels of pollutants which are not statutorily controlled? (eg. provide litter bins, minimise nighttime lighting whilst maintaining safety, minimise odour)

l provide information on pollution levels and sources to allow effective action to be taken? (eg. pollutant monitoring schemes)

6. *Nature*

ncls protect designated sites and other sites/features of nature conservation importance? (SSSIs, green corridors, other sites of nature conservation importance, important trees, hedgerows and verges, drainage ditches)

nls conserve and make positive provision for nature conservation? (eg. nature reserves, naturally shaped watercourses, green corridors between sites, plantings to encourage wildlife and biodiversity, gardens and allotments, use native Hertfordshire or British species)

ncls ensure that waste products do not harm wildlife?

cls avoid the use of tropical hardwoods?

7. *Local Needs*

ncls meet local needs? (eg. gardens and allotments)

l make local facilities (shops, post office, chemist, youth club, bus service etc.) and centres more viable and reduce travel needs?

l link local production with local consumption, keep money in the local economy? (eg. local supplier/labour agreements)

l mainly benefit small and/or locally based businesses?

8. *Basic Needs*

- ncls work towards the eradication of poverty and a decent quality of life for all? (eg. start-up business units, gardens and allotments)
- cl reduce homelessness and unfit housing? (affordable housing, commuted payment for affordable/social housing)
- l target improvements to where fuel poverty or waste is greatest? (eg. thermal efficiency of renewal housing)

9. *Satisfying Work*

- cl increase employment opportunities for local people? (eg. training courses, inward investment, small business units)
- l encourage creativity, diversity and innovation in the local economy?
- l support economic life without incurring hidden environmental costs? (eg. life cycle costing, environmental impact assessments)
- cl promote socially and environmentally responsible business practice? (eg. waste minimisation, office recycling, energy saving schemes, noise reduction)

10. *Health*

- cls avoid unsafe building materials? (eg. asbestos, lead paints, organochlorides)
- l improve health provision in the local area?

11. *Access*

- l minimise distances to main employment centres, retail centres, recreation and community facilities, and schools?
- nl make walking safer and easier? (eg. provision of controlled crossings, pedestrian preference zones, adequate lighting, traffic calming)
- nls improve access to buildings for all? (wheelchair users, people with young children/prams, blind and disabled people)
- ncl improve facilities and conditions for cycling, particularly safety aspects? (secure cycle storage, cycle paths, signals and lanes)
- l make public transport more attractive or a more viable alternative? (eg. more frequent buses, bus preference measures, increased population density in transport corridors)
- l discourage the use of single occupant cars or large lorries? (eg. car sharing, teleworking, pooled bicycles or cars, load splitting, home delivery, bulk breaking)
- nl improve facilities for those without a car? (eg. local shopping, kerbside recycling, neighbourhood service delivery)
- nl make appropriate provisions for parking? (appropriate levels/standards of parking, car-free neighbourhoods, park-and-ride facilities, parking enforcement)
- l contribute to road construction/maintenance where appropriate?

12. *Safety*

- nl ensure safety for open space users? (eg. lighting, play equipment checks)
- ncls reduce crime and increase the public's perception of safety? (eg. window locks, well-lit bus stops, increased community activity)

13. Education

- l improve educational facilities in the local area including training and adult education?

14. Participation

- ncls benefit the community as a whole?
- ncls involve building/development users and the local community at an early stage? (local meetings, regular local fora and user groups, publicity, consensus building)
- ncls ensure that the needs of underrepresented groups are fully considered? (consultation)
- ncls allow disadvantaged people to take part on equal terms? (ramped access, Braille, plain language, training, mobility aids, childcare)
- l offer opportunities to heighten environmental awareness and interest by local people? (eg. publicity, public participation schemes)
- l have an exit strategy which transfers ownership to the local community?

15. Leisure, cultural and social activities

- nl make positive provisions for open spaces? (eg. provide parks and village greens, commuted sums for future maintenance)
- nl improve and maintain public access to open space?
- nl improve leisure and recreational facilities? (eg. recreation grounds, children's play areas, playing fields)
- l improve community, cultural, and social facilities? (eg. community centres, works of art)
- nl form strong diverse neighbourhoods which encourage vibrant local communities?
- ncls protect and improve the settings and features of archaeological and historical interest? (eg. conservation areas, listed buildings, features of archaeological significance)

16. Aesthetics

- nls protect designated landscape sites?
- ncls integrate well into its surroundings? (shape, size and materials complement those of existing buildings and surroundings)
- nls include good standards of screening and landscaping? (eg. "soft" boundary treatment such as hedges and shrubs, use of native species, landscape management plans)
- nls take opportunities to improve the street scene or appearance of the area?