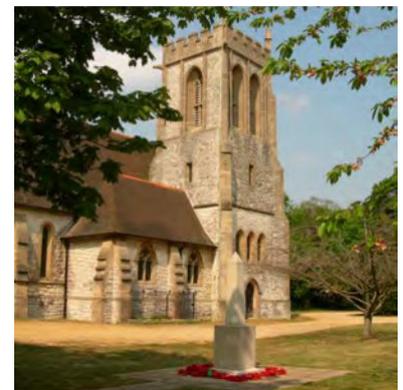




Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Eastleigh Local Plan



**SA Report Update
Non-technical Summary**

July 2014

Revision schedule					
Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
1	July 2014	Non-technical Summary of the SA Report Update submitted (to Government) alongside the Eastleigh Local Plan	Mark Fessey, Principal Consultant	Steve Smith, Technical Director	Steve Smith, Technical Director

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INTRODUCTION

URS and Eastleigh Borough Council are working together to undertake Sustainability Appraisal in support of the Eastleigh Local Plan. The Local Plan, once adopted, will present a spatial strategy for the borough up to 2029. It will determine the distribution of various kinds of development around the borough and will provide a policy framework that will ultimately provide the basis for a wide range of planning decisions in the future.

SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of a draft plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and maximising the positives. SA of the Eastleigh Local Plan is a legal requirement stemming from the EU 'Strategic Environmental Assessment' (SEA) Directive.

This is the **non-technical summary** of the SA Report Update being submitted (to Government) alongside the Eastleigh Local Plan. This summary should be read alongside the main SA Report Update document.

Structure of the SA Report Update / this non-technical summary

The SA Report Update (and this non-technical summary) sets out to answer four questions:

1. What's the scope of the SA?
2. What has plan-making / SA involved up to this point?
3. What are the appraisal findings and recommendations at this current stage?
4. What are the next steps?

WHAT'S THE SCOPE OF THE SA?

An important first step in the SA process involves establishing the 'scope', i.e. those sustainability issues and objectives which should be a focus of the SA, and those that should not. In order to establish the scope there is a need to answer a series of questions including:

- What's the sustainability 'context'?
 - Answering this question primarily involves reviewing Government's National Planning Policy Framework; however, it is also important to 'cast the net wider' and consider contextual messages established through other plans, policies, strategies and initiatives.
- What's the sustainability 'baseline'?
 - Answering this question involves reviewing available data to establish an understanding of the current and likely future state of the environment / socio-economy locally.

The following is a brief summary of some of the sustainability baseline characteristics described within the SA Report. It is important to emphasise that the following list is not comprehensive.

Environmental baseline

- Approximately 7% of the borough's land area is subject to statutory nature conservation designations with a further 10% identified as non-statutory 'sites of importance for nature conservation' (SINCs). Extensive areas of European significance are found around the coast and rivers Itchen and Hamble.
- Historic assets include 8 conservation areas, 214 listed buildings and 12 scheduled monuments. There is one registered park and garden (at the Royal Victoria Country Park in Netley), and several parks and gardens of local interest defined by Hampshire County Council.
- The borough suffers poor air quality in places primarily because of traffic congestion, and because of the large industrial areas and related HGV traffic. Four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are defined.
- Eastleigh Borough has been ranked as one of the least tranquil areas in Hampshire outside the cities, due to road traffic, rail and aeroplanes.

Communities baseline

- The borough's population has doubled in the last 50 years, with significant change between the 2001 and 2011 censuses. The population is predicted to increase significantly over coming years with the highest rates of increase being amongst the older age groups.
- Affordability of housing is a significant issue in the area. House prices are quite high relative to neighbouring Southampton, though not as high as in Winchester, Fareham or Test Valley.
- Indicators of health and well-being are favourable in Eastleigh compared to the average for England; however, there remain some health inequalities within the borough linked to deprivation. Pockets of relative deprivation are found at Eastleigh South, Eastleigh Central, Bursledon and Old Netley (Pilands Wood), Bishopstoke West and Netley Abbey.
- The Borough Council actively pursues a Cultural Strategy and there are many existing assets; however, the south of the borough is not well-served by arts and cultural facilities.

Economic baseline

- Unemployment is low in the borough and economic activity rates are high (81.9% compared with 79.3% for the South East and 76.7% for the UK). However, local earnings are relatively low, suggesting that the borough's high-earners are working elsewhere.
- There was a reduction in employment floorspace between 2000 and 2013 with the completion of residential and other developments on former employment sites, which more than offset an increase in office floorspace over the same time period. However there was not an equivalent reduction in jobs.
- During peak times many of the borough's roads are congested including both motorways and roads connecting to them. The mainline railway from London Waterloo to Weymouth runs through the borough with stations at Eastleigh and Southampton Airport Parkway. The Fareham lines runs from Eastleigh and the Southampton – Portsmouth line crosses the south of the borough with stations at Bursledon, Hamble and Netley. Southampton Airport lies within the borough and is linked to the road network at junction 5 of the M27 and to the rail network at Southampton Airport Parkway station. Rail connections to the airport from the east are poor, however.

The SA 'framework'

Drawing on the findings of the context / baseline review, a list of 13 'sustainability objectives' was identified. These objectives – and the associated criteria - provide a methodological 'framework' for the SA.

The SA Framework

SA Objective	Appraisal criteria <i>Will the policy approach under consideration...</i>
Community	
1. Provide sufficient housing to meet identified local needs, including affordability and special needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to meeting the objectively assessed housing need/the housing requirement identified in the Local Plan, including an appropriate mix of housing? • Meet need within the local area as well as the wider housing market? • Help to deliver affordable housing to meet Eastleigh's identified housing needs?
2. Safeguard and improve community health, safety and well being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve opportunities for people to participate in cultural, leisure and recreation activities? • Promote healthy lifestyles, safety and well-being? • Provide good access to existing services, open space, facilities and community infrastructure? • Reduce crime, deprivation and promote social inclusion in the borough?

Economic	
3. Develop a dynamic and diverse economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver new diverse and knowledge- based employment opportunities? • Support or encourage new business sectors and contribute to GVA in South Hampshire? • Encourage and support business start-ups and assist the development of SMEs? • Provide good access to a range of employment areas? • Enhance the vitality and viability of Eastleigh town centre and other district and local centres? • Help to develop and maintain a skilled workforce to support long- term competitiveness? • Ensure a wide cross section of the community benefits from economic prosperity?
4. Reduce road traffic and congestion through reducing the need to travel by car/lorry and improving sustainable travel choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the capacity of the transport network? • Provide opportunities to encourage sustainable travel choice? • Improve road safety?
Environment	
5. Protect and conserve natural resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have potential impact on natural resources? • Lead to the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land? • Lead to the more efficient use of land, for example by utilising brownfield sites?
6. Reduce air, soil, water, light and noise pollution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce air quality? • Impact on soil pollution? • Help to remediate land affected by contamination? • Have an impact on water pollution? • Have an impact on light pollution? • Have an impact on noise pollution?
7. Plan for the anticipated levels of climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an impact on green infrastructure (including extent and quality of open space and linear routes for recreation)? • Increase or reduce the number of new properties at risk of flooding? • Manage development in areas affected by coastal change?
8. Minimise Eastleigh’s contribution to climate change by reducing the borough’s carbon footprint and minimising other greenhouse gas emissions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a reduction in carbon emissions?
9. Reduce waste generation and disposal, encourage waste prevention and reuse and achieve the sustainable management of waste.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide, or be accessible to, facilities for the separation and recycling of waste?
10. Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity, improving its quality and range.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an impact on biodiversity and geodiversity? • Provide new creation, restoration and/or enhancement opportunities for habitats and species? • Prejudice future biodiversity restoration?

11. Enhance the Borough's multifunctional green infrastructure networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help to reduce deficiencies in open space provision? • Deliver good access to existing and/or create new Green Infrastructure?
12. Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening distinctiveness and its special qualities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an impact on landscape? • Achieve high quality and sustainable design for buildings, spaces and the public realm sensitive to the locality?
13. Protect and enhance and manage buildings, monuments, features, sites, places, areas and landscapes of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on the historic environment and features and areas of archaeological importance? • Conserve and enhance heritage assets? • Increase access to heritage assets?

WHAT HAS PLAN-MAKING / SA INVOLVED UP TO THIS POINT?

It is a legislative requirement that every SA Report includes an explanation of how/why the preferred (i.e. draft plan) approach was selected/developed in-light of earlier appraisal of 'reasonable alternatives'. As such, an interim stage of SA (i.e. a stage prior to appraisal of the draft plan / preparation of the SA Report) must involve appraisal of reasonable alternatives.

Appraisal of alternative spatial strategies

Work at the interim appraisal stage focused largely on the appraisal of six alternative 'spatial strategies'. Some aspects of the spatial strategy were held constant across all of the alternatives on the basis that these aspects are broadly supported (and/or justified on the basis of evidence, including the appraisal of site options). The alternatives *varied* in terms of the approach to delivering 1,880 dwellings on greenfield land and at least of 10,300m² of employment floorspace.

The following alternatives were a focus of appraisal:

- a) A **major urban extension at land west of Bursledon** (1,880 dwellings and 25,000m² of employment floorspace)
- b) A **major urban extension at land west and south of Horton Heath** (1,880 dwellings and 25,000m² of employment floorspace)
- c) A **major urban extension at land north of Hedge End** (1,880 dwellings and 25,000m² of employment floorspace)
- d) **Smaller urban extensions** at land south of Bishopstoke (650 dwellings), north of Fair Oak (330 dwellings), west of Horton Heath (700 dwellings and 25,000m² of employment floorspace), and south of Maddoxford Lane, Boorley Green (200 dwellings)
- e) **Smaller urban extensions** at land north of Fair Oak (330 dwellings), west of Horton Heath (750 dwellings and 25,000m² of employment floorspace) and west of Woodhouse Lane, Hedge End (800 dwellings)
- f) A **major urban extension** at land west of Horton Heath (1,350 dwellings and 25,000m² of employment floorspace) and **smaller urban extensions** at land south of Maddoxford Lane (200 dwellings) and north of Fair Oak (330 dwellings).

Appraisal findings are presented within the main body of the SA Report Update. The text below summarises the Council's response to appraisal findings, i.e. the Council's reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of the appraisal.

The Council's reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal

The Council concluded that:

- Option A (Major urban extension west of Bursledon) would prejudice the separate identity of Bursledon, and development would be difficult to integrate with the rest of Bursledon. It would also likely have significant traffic impacts on already congested roads, with implications for the Hamble Lane Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).
- Option B (Major urban extension west of Horton Heath) would lead to unacceptable encroachment into the Horton Heath/Hedge End gap and the countryside to the west; however, this option would enable the provision of community benefits and a new road link between Burnett's Lane and Bubb Lane relieving traffic pressure on rural roads.
- Option C (Major urban extension north of Hedge End) would involve encroachment into an identified countryside gap and, in the Council's view, would represent further urban sprawl north of Hedge End (inadequately related to the existing settlement, and prejudicing the separation of Hedge End from Horton Heath and Boorley Green). Following the Grange Park developments in the 1980s, the Council concluded that Hedge End should not extend further north, and that the railway forms an appropriate northern boundary for the town.
- Option D (Smaller urban extensions 1) would perpetuate problems around peak hour traffic congestion. In relation to Land south of Bishopstoke, related junction improvements on Bishopstoke Road would ease traffic flows, but this effect would be off-set by the increases in flows that would result from development.
- Option E (Smaller urban extensions 2) is similar to the Council's preferred option in the pre-submission Local Plan published in 2012. Inclusion of the land west of Woodhouse Lane brings community benefits in the form of locally needed playing fields, and locates new development within easy reach of the railway station. Inclusion of the land west of Horton Heath would enable the provision of additional employment and community facilities that do not currently exist in the settlement, and help to resolve pressure on schools in Fair Oak.
- Option F (Major urban extension west of Horton Heath plus smaller urban extensions) does not take advantage of the availability of land at Woodhouse Lane, which would provide new playing fields and additional housing in close reach of the railway station.

All the options appraised have positives and negatives, and all might be described as sustainable to some degree. All are likely to have impacts on traffic movement, although Options A and D would probably aggravate existing traffic congestion to a greater extent.

In debating and selecting the preferred spatial strategy, the following considerations, which are largely based on the Council's vision and objectives for the borough, came to the fore as fundamental to making a choice:

- The town of Eastleigh should remain a major focus for development as it contains the widest range of employment opportunities, community facilities and transport infrastructure in the borough, and in order to support the town centre.
- The Botley/ Boorley Green/ Hedge End area should also remain a focus for development given its proximity to the employment opportunities, district centre and other facilities in Hedge End.
- There should be no significant additional development in the Hamble peninsula, because of transport constraints and the vulnerability of the gaps between settlements in this area and Southampton, the outer borders of which are clearly visible from many parts of the peninsula.
- The separate identity of settlements and local communities should be safeguarded by ensuring the retention of undeveloped countryside gaps between them.

The Council has chosen to develop a preferred approach on the basis of **Option E**.

Indeed, the Council's preferred approach *is* Option E, with the exception that the decision has been taken to increase the scale of growth west of Horton Heath by 200 dwellings over and above the level tested through Option E. This decision reflects joint working and consultation with Hampshire County Council regarding schools provision in the borough. A new secondary school was identified to be included as part of development west of Horton Heath, the siting of which would displace some of the housing provision. As such, work was undertaken to identify land to 'make-up' the 'loss' and, in rationalising boundaries to the topography and geographical features of the site, land to increase the capacity of the site by 200 additional dwellings was identified. '

Option E is the Council's preferred approach because:

- In combination with the sites at Boorley Green and Botley it focuses the additional development in areas at or within easy reach of Hedge End, the borough's second largest settlement.
- It helps to provide community facilities needed by existing communities in the Fair Oak/ Horton Heath and Hedge End areas, in particular new schools, allotments and playing fields.
- It provides a new employment site at Horton Heath focused on the Chalcroft Distribution Park, and enables the intensification of employment uses within the distribution park, enhancing the provision for employment in the Fair Oak/ Horton Heath area as well as contributing to economic growth in the borough and the sub-region.
- It provides locally needed transport infrastructure including:
 - a solution to a long-standing issue of vehicular access to the Chalcroft Distribution Park in the form of a road link between Burnett's Lane and Bubb Lane, with significant related economic benefits;
 - the potential to improve transport links between Horton Heath and junction 7 of the M27;
 - the potential for contributions towards the improvement of transport (including bus) links around the east and south of Hedge End;
 - the safeguarding of a route for a bypass for Botley which resolves long-standing issues of traffic impacts on the historic village centre; and
 - the potential to enhance footpath and cycleway networks and links to public transport facilities.
- It utilises existing buildings of local heritage interest at Chalcroft Farm, enabling their refurbishment and the provision of a distinctive focus for business, leisure and residential uses.
- While it inevitably involves some incursion into existing gaps between settlements, for the most part it retains the individual identities of the borough's communities.
- Its landscape impacts are localised.
- Development on the major sites identified will have limited impacts on biodiversity interests and no immediate impacts on European nature conservation sites, although some indirect impacts might be anticipated.

WHAT ARE THE APPRAISAL FINDINGS AT THIS CURRENT STAGE?

Part 3 of the SA Report Update answers the question 'What are appraisal findings at this current stage?' by presenting an appraisal of the Plan, as submitted. The appraisal is presented under the 13 SA objective headings established through scoping.

Summary findings of the draft plan appraisal

SA Objective	Summary appraisal findings
Community	
1. Provide sufficient housing to meet identified local needs, including affordability and special needs	The Plan performs well in terms of this objective. Making provision to meet identified needs within the borough and the wider sub-region following co-operation with neighbouring authorities in the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire area. Provisions for affordable housing will not meet the full identified need but represent the maximum that it is likely to be possible to secure given viability considerations.
2. Safeguard and improve health, safety and well being	The Plan performs reasonably well against in terms of this SA objective, serving to reinforce other Council strategies.
Economic	
3. Develop a dynamic and diverse economy.	<p>The Plan performs well against this objective with provision of additional employment opportunities and a flexible approach to the encouragement of new enterprises that support other economic development initiatives being pursued by the Council, PUSH and the Solent LEP.</p> <p>Transport networks in the borough and the surrounding sub-region are under pressure, but the plan is set to include sufficient provision to enable access to employment opportunities within and beyond the borough and support other initiatives being pursued by the Council, the highway authority (HCC) and in the wider sub-region to encourage use of sustainable transport modes.</p> <p>The Plan will include sufficient policies to ensure the continued viability and enhancement of Eastleigh town centre as well as district and local centres.</p> <p>The Plan will include measures to support workforce training and enhancement of job opportunities in line with initiatives being pursued by PUSH and the Solent LEP.</p> <p>In combination these measures should support the local economy sufficiently to ensure that all sectors of the community benefit from enhanced employment and training opportunities.</p>
4. Reduce road traffic and congestion through reducing the need to travel by car/lorry and improving choice.	The Plan includes a number of measures to improve the capacity of the transport network. Given wider pressures on transport networks throughout the sub-region these will not entirely resolve existing or anticipated congestion issues, but should prevent them from getting worse. The plan will support Council and Highways Authority-led initiatives to encourage use of sustainable transport modes and improve road safety.
Environment	
5. Protect and conserve natural resources.	<p>Natural resources within Eastleigh Borough are defined as water, minerals, land and soil.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan includes design measures to reduce water consumption in new development. • It also supports the requirements of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan in seeking to avoid sterilisation of mineral resources. • The plan is to focus as much development as possible within the urban areas; however, development requirements are such that there is an inevitable need to allocate green field land. Whilst the objective to conserve and protect green field land will not be met in full, the Plan does include policies that require a minimum density requirement. These policies will go some way to ensuring that the green field losses are kept to a minimum. • High grade agricultural land is quite prevalent within the borough, and the green field allocations will mean some loss.
6. Reduce air, soil,	Traffic is the primary source of air pollution in the borough. The Plan sets out

<p>water, light and noise pollution.</p>	<p>measures to improve transport network capacity and improve uptake of sustainable transport modes (see discussion under objective 4).</p> <p>The Plan contains policies to prevent development that would cause pollution that in turn impacts on the environment or amenity. Furthermore, site specific policies, where relevant, contain specific requirements relating to pollution, for example remedial works for contaminated land.</p> <p>In combination, these measures should help to avoid or mitigate pollution impacts associated with new development.</p>
<p>7. Plan for the anticipated levels of climate change</p>	<p>The Plan performs reasonably well against this objective. It includes policies which restrict development at sensitive locations such as those at risk of flooding or by the coast, and require development of a district-wide multifunctional green infrastructure network. Specific requirements within relevant site allocation policies seek to avoid areas at risk of flooding and ensure that developers contribute toward coastal protection works.</p>
<p>8. Minimise Eastleigh's contribution to climate change by reducing the borough's carbon footprint and minimising other greenhouse gas emissions.</p>	<p>The Plan performs reasonably well against this objective. The development strategy seeks to locate new development primarily in or adjacent to existing settlements which may help to reduce travel distances, reduce car dependency and support sustainable travel choices which in turn help to reduce carbon emissions associated with traffic.</p> <p>Policies set requirements for environmentally sustainable construction to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM standards, and to encourage development of zero and low carbon energy infrastructure.</p>
<p>9. Reduce waste generation and disposal, encourage waste prevention and reuse and achieve sustainable waste management</p>	<p>Hampshire County Council as the Minerals and Waste Authority has responsibility for waste facilities sites.</p> <p>The Plan does contain criteria for the provision of suitable waste management facilities in the design of new homes. Site allocation policies also allow for waste management uses and renewable energy at Eastleigh Riverside.</p>
<p>10. Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity, improving its quality and range.</p>	<p>Overall, the Plan accords with this objective. None of the site allocations will have a direct impact on European conservation designation; however, the HRA indicates that the development strategy may result in indirect impacts. As such, policies require mitigation and enhancement measures designed to offset impacts.</p> <p>There are some reservations regarding impacts on local conservation interests. Some site specific policies perform less well against the objective as they involve loss of woodland/trees. Wherever possible, measures for replacement and enhancement are required.</p> <p>The Plan includes a strategic policy which sets out the provision of a strategic multifunctional green infrastructure network; and none of the proposals have the potential to prejudice future biodiversity restoration.</p>
<p>11. Enhance the Borough's multifunctional green infrastructure</p>	<p>The Plan performs well against this objective. A strategic policy requires the provision of a strategic multifunctional green infrastructure network. Furthermore, standards are set for the quantum and type of open space to be provided as part of new development.</p>
<p>12. Protect, enhance and manage the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening distinctiveness and special qualities.</p>	<p>It is inevitable that greenfield developments will have an impact on landscape, and to this extent the Plan does not accord with this SA objective. However, the choice of locations for development and the detailed site requirements reflect a desire to limit and mitigate landscape impacts as far as possible.</p> <p>Policies establish requirements for the sustainable design of buildings, spaces and the public realm, and in this respect the Plan performs well.</p>

13. Protect and enhance buildings, monuments, sites, areas and landscapes of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance.	The Plan performs reasonably well against this SA objective. Borough-wide policies and site allocation policies contain provisions for the protection and enhancement of heritage assets. It is, however, acknowledged there will be some impact to the historic parkland associated with development in policy E1.
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Conclusions

The plan is set to deliver 10,140 homes and 133,000m² of new employment development over the plan period. These levels reflect the PUSH South Hampshire Strategy 2012 and the objectives for growth of the PUSH Economic Development Strategy 2010 and the Solent LEP. There are clear benefits of growth at this scale for the community and economy through the provision homes, employment land and associated transport infrastructure and community facilities. This is a relatively ambitious growth strategy, and so environmental impacts are to some extent unavoidable. It is inevitable that greenfield developments will have environmental impacts; however, it would not be possible to progress a local plan without such allocations. Alternative approaches have been considered and been found to perform less well. Mitigation measures are set to be put in place through development management and site allocation policies; however, even taking these policies into account the appraisal has highlighted localised instances of significant negative environmental effects. Landscape and traffic congestion related impacts are of greatest concern. Having said this, there will also be some positive environmental effects that result from the development strategy. In particular, policies are in place to ensure benefits are realised in terms of green infrastructure, climate change adaptation and sustainable design.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Examination of the Plan will be overseen by a Government appointed Planning Inspector, who will consider the Plan, the SA Report, evidence-base studies and representations received before then either reporting back on the Plan's soundness or identifying the need for modifications. Once found to be 'sound' the Plan will be formally adopted by the Council. At the time of Adoption a Statement will be published that sets out (amongst other things) 'measures decided concerning monitoring'.

Monitoring

The Borough Council will continue to work with Hampshire County Council and other partners to monitor key aspects of the policies and strategy set out in the Plan to ensure that the plan objectives are delivered. The results of monitoring will be published on the Council's website and within a monitoring report annually. In light of SA findings, key monitoring indicators include:

- % of completed dwellings achieving appropriate level of Code for Sustainable Homes (or equivalent)
- % of completed larger development achieving BREEAM Communities excellent certification
- Status of AQMA's (number, area, pollution levels)
- Amount of employment floorspace lost to other uses; % within the urban edge / on PDL
- Indices of multiple deprivation and crime statistics
- Proportion of non-retail frontage in defined town / district / local centres
- Number of vehicle movements per capita
- Number of cycle movements per capita
- Net additional dwellings on strategic sites as percentage of overall housing completions
- Net additional gypsy and traveller pitches
- Densities of completed developments
- Gross affordable housing completions; and % affordable housing on sites of 15 or more dwellings
- Amount of new sport and recreation facilities available for general public
- GI provided/lost; and new public open space created.