



# **STRATFORD-ON-AVON SITE ALLOCATIONS PLAN (SAP): Preferred Options**

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report  
incorporating  
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)  
NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

**August 2020**

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# **Stratford-on-Avon Site Allocations Plan (SAP): Preferred Options**

## **Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

### **NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY August 2020**

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## Non-Technical Summary (NTS)

### Non-Technical Summary of the Sustainability Report

1. This is the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the Sustainability Appraisal Report documenting the processes of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Stratford-on-Avon Site Allocations Plan (SAP). This summary is an integral part of the Report that accompanies the SAP for public consultation. It provides an outline of the SA process and findings, including how the SA has influenced the development of the plan, and in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the European SEA Directive, and UK regulations and guidance on SA/SEA.

### The Stratford-on-Avon Core Strategy & Site Allocations Plan (SAP)

2. The overarching planning document for the Stratford-on-Avon District is the Core Strategy, adopted in July 2016. This sets out the Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives for the District area for the period 2011-2031. The Core Strategy Vision states that at least 14,600 homes will have been delivered across the District, and that at least 35ha of employment land will have been provided, as well as 19ha to meet the needs of Redditch.
3. The initial intention for the Site Allocations Plan (SAP), as identified by the Council in its original Scoping Document in 2014, was to identify additional sites for housing development that would supplement the strategic sites identified in the Core Strategy. However, sufficient housing provision has been made to date through planning permissions to meet the housing requirement as identified for the current plan period to 2031. Therefore, the focus of the SAP is now on the identification of reserve sites (to equate to up to 20% of overall housing – around 2,920 homes) in accordance with Policy CS.16 in the Core Strategy. Proposed Policy SAP.1 identifies approximately 3,130 homes on reserve housing sites. Such sites will only be released selectively if one or more of the circumstances identified in Part D of that Policy apply.
4. The SAP also identifies Built-Up Area Boundaries (BUABs) for a wide range of settlements in accordance with Policy CS.15 of the adopted Core Strategy. However, BUABs are not identified for those settlements that are covered in Neighbourhood Plans that have been 'made' or reached an advanced stage in their production.
5. In consideration of the time since the original SAP scoping and the changed circumstances, the Council published in February 2018 a Revised Scoping & Initial Options Document for the SAP that comprised four parts as follows:
  - Part 1 Approach to identifying Reserve Housing Sites
  - Part 2 Definition of Settlement (Built-Up Area) Boundaries
  - Part 3 Proposed approach towards Specific Sites

- Part 4 Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding
6. Additional issues emerged that the Council considered appropriate to be included in the SAP as proposed Specific Sites, also subject to public consultation in early and late 2019, and as follows:
- Birthplace/Gateway Cultural Quarter
  - Quinton Rail Technology Centre, Long Marston
  - A46 Safeguarding: A422 Wildmoor, A3400 Bishopton, & A439 Marraway
  - Employment Exception (Enabling) Sites Policy

Circumstances changed such that a further 3 sites were considered appropriate for inclusion in the SAP, and are subject to public consultation in 2020, as follows:

- Meon Vale (Former Engineer Resources Depot), Long Marston
  - Long Marston Airfield
  - Bidford Centre, Bidford-on-Avon
7. Comments made during the consultations, together with updated evidence and ongoing studies, including the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), transport and heritage studies, and the Sustainability Appraisal, informed the further development of the SAP to the Preferred Options stage for this Regulation 18 consultation. It was also appropriate to update the SAP with regard to delivery timescales for reserve housing and policy guidance on zero and low carbon homes.
8. The proposed SAP comprises:
- Introduction
  - Reserve Housing Sites
    - Policy SAP.1 Identifying Reserve Housing Sites
    - Annex I Schedule of Reserve Housing Sites
    - Policy SAP.2 Reserve Sites in Neighbourhood Plans
    - Policy SAP.3 Releasing Reserve Housing Sites
    - Annex 2: Tranches of Sites
    - Policy SAP.4 Releasing Reserve Housing Sites for Purpose D
    - Policy SAP.5 Applications for Reserve Housing Sites
  - Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding
    - Policy SAP.6 Meeting Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Sites
    - Proposals SB1-SB11
  - Built-Up Area Boundaries
    - Policy SP.7 Built-Up Area Boundaries
  - Employment Enabling Sites
    - Policy SAP.8 Sites
  - A46 Safeguarding
    - Policy SAP.9 A46 Safeguarding

- Specific Site Proposals
  - Proposal SUA.2 South of Alcester Road, Stratford upon Avon
  - Proposal SUA.4 Atherstone Airfield
  - Proposal SUA.5 East of Shipston Road, Stratford upon Avon
  - Proposal SUA.6 Stratford-upon-Avon Gateway
  - Proposal SUA.7 Rother Street/Grove Road/Greenhill Street, Stratford-upon-Avon
  - Proposal SUA.8 Land at Stratford-upon-Avon College, Alcester Road, Stratford-upon-Avon
  - Proposal BID.1 Bidford Centre, Bidford-on-Avon
  - Proposal STUD.1 Studley Centre
  - Proposal STUD.2 High Street, Studley
  - Proposal RURAL.1 Napton Brickworks
  - Proposal RURAL.2 University of Warwick Wellesbourne Campus
  - Proposal RURAL.3 Quinton Rail Technology Centre, Long Marston
  - PROPOSAL RURAL.4 Meon Vale (Former Engineers Resources Depot), Long Marston
  - PROPOSAL RURAL.5 Long Marston Airfield

## **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Sustainability Appraisal (SA)**

9. The purpose of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is to promote sustainable development through the integration of environmental, social and economic considerations in the preparation of Local Plans, and when compared with reasonable alternatives. This requirement for SA is in accordance with planning legislation and paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Local Plans must also be subject to Regulations for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Government advises that an integrated approach is taken so that the SA process incorporates the requirements for SEA – and to the same level of detail.
10. Stratford-on-Avon District Council commissioned independent specialist consultants, Enfusion, to progress the appraisal work in 2014. SA is an iterative and ongoing process that informs plan-making by assessing developing elements of the plan, evaluating and describing the likely significant effects of implementing the plan, and suggesting possibilities for mitigating significant negative effects and enhancing positive effects. UK Guidance suggests a staged approach to SA/SEA. Initially the scope of the SA is determined by establishing the baseline conditions and context of the area, by considering other relevant plans and objectives, and by identifying issues, problems and opportunities. From this scope, a SA Framework of objectives for sustainable development in the Stratford-on-Avon District area was prepared, and this forms the basis against which the SAP is assessed and using the same evidence base as the plan-making process.

## **Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

11. The Council is also required to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Stratford-on-Avon Development Plan, including the Site Allocations Plan. The aim of the HRA process is to assess the potential effects arising from a plan against the nature conservation objectives of any relevant site designated for its nature conservation importance. The Core Strategy has been shown to not have any adverse effects, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, on the designated sites (which are located more than 10 km distance) outside the District's boundary, and this includes Policy CS.16 on Reserve Housing Sites. There are also strong mitigation measures provided by Core Strategy CS.6 Natural Environment. Therefore, it is not necessary to consider HRA any further in relation to the SAP.

## **Sustainability Characteristics of the Stratford-on-Avon area and likely evolution without the SAP**

12. The Stratford-on-Avon District is the largest district in Warwickshire; however, the population density is low. There are over 200 villages and hamlets within the district. The West Midlands Green Belt is partially located in the north-western part, with the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB) extending into the south of the District. There are several large settlements dispersed, including Stratford-upon-Avon, Alcester, Shipston-on-Stour and Southam. The District has a diverse historic environment, largely focused around the historic settlements, including Stratford-upon-Avon which is a key tourist destination due to its Shakespeare heritage. There are no internationally designated biodiversity sites in the District, but nationally designated SSSIs and locally designated sites are widely dispersed. The River Avon runs through the area, and fluvial flood risk is present in many places. Stratford-upon-Avon and Studley are designated as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA), and there are congestion hotspots throughout the District.
13. There is an ageing population in the District, however health is generally good, although there are notable divides within communities in relation to various quality of life indicators. There is a high level of both in- and out-commuting, but low levels of unemployment in the District. The transport network has good connections to Birmingham to the north and to many towns close to the District's boundary, with sustainable transport ranging from cycle paths to rail services. However, the remoteness of some settlements makes access to services/facilities an issue. There is an identified shortfall of housing in the District, and market housing is the least affordable in Warwickshire. A particular issue for provision of affordable housing in the rural areas has emerged during the preparation of the SAP.
14. Without the SAP, there would be no positive planning to enable optimising the benefits from good quality housing and employment land – and there could be adverse effects that might be cumulative on the important historic environment and landscape of the plan area.

## Key Sustainability Issues, Problems and Opportunities

15. The key sustainability issues and opportunities are summarised in the table below:

| Key Sustainability Issues for the Stratford-on-Avon District  |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Congestion:</b> The District's road network is becoming increasingly congested, particularly along radial and sub-radial routes. This has the potential for adverse effects on human health, safety and the economy. It can make commuter journeys more stressful and delay buses which are then unable to offer a viable alternative to the car for some journeys. Congestion can make deliveries less reliable and deter investment in the area.</li> <li>■ <b>Travel Methods:</b> Ensuring the viability and vitality of alternative modes of transport provides choice, helps to reduce congestion and can contribute to healthier lifestyles.</li> <li>■ <b>Health:</b> Whilst health levels are generally high, inequalities exist between the most and least deprived areas. Planning should aim to contribute to the health priorities for the area, in particular tackling obesity.</li> <li>■ <b>Population:</b> Stratford-on-Avon is experiencing an ageing population, which will have implications for health service provisions and accessibility to services, facilities and amenities. The District is likely to experience an increasing proportion of the population with dementia, and an increasing dependency ratio.</li> <li>■ <b>Housing:</b> Market housing in the District is the least affordable in Warwickshire. There is also a considerable under-provision of affordable homes compared with the level of need and especially in the rural areas.</li> <li>■ <b>Quality of Life:</b> The development of a high quality and multifunctional green infrastructure network in the District will be a key contributor to quality of life for residents.</li> <li>■ <b>Out-commuting:</b> Whilst the District has low unemployment and a higher proportion of the workforce working in higher paid professions, many of these jobs are located outside of the District, contributing to a high degree of out-commuting.</li> <li>■ <b>In-commuting:</b> A high degree of in-commuting is experienced in the District of people in lower paid jobs who are unable to afford local housing.</li> <li>■ <b>Access to Work:</b> There is a considerable mismatch between the average earnings of local residents and house prices.</li> <li>■ <b>Communications Infrastructure:</b> The quality of broadband provision in rural areas of the District varies. There is significant scope to improve coverage and connection speeds.</li> <li>■ <b>Tourism:</b> This is a key sector within the District that is important for the local economy.</li> <li>■ <b>Nationally Designated Nature Conservation Sites:</b> This includes 37 SSSIs.</li> <li>■ <b>Potential Biodiversity Loss:</b> There is the potential for biodiversity loss and habitat fragmentation as a result of growth pressures and development (e.g. increased recreational uses).</li> <li>■ <b>Open Space and Green Infrastructure:</b> There is a need for increased</li> </ul> |

- support and understanding of the role of GI in development.
- **Protecting Watercourses:** All the main rivers in the District are prone to flood risk. Fluvial flood risk is a significant issue for the District, and the risk has the potential to increase as a result of climate change.
  - **Protecting Ground Water:** This includes mitigating surface water flood risk, and avoiding ground water pollution, especially in the identified Source Protection Zones.
  - **Improving Watercourses:** The Water Framework Directive target is for all watercourses to reach 'good' quality status by 2021.
  - **Agricultural Land Quality:** It is important to protect and conserve the best and most versatile agricultural land.
  - **Improving Air Quality Management Areas:** These cover the whole town of Stratford-upon-Avon and the centre of Studley.
  - **Congestion and Transport Emissions:** Transport is the highest emitting sector in Stratford-on-Avon and growth needs to support a reduction in emissions targets, for example in promoting alternatives to the private car, and mixed use development.
  - **Quality Design & Retaining Distinctiveness:** Development requires design that is sensitive to the receiving environment and protects the integrity of areas, especially in designated areas like the Cotswolds AONB. There is a potential for development to detract from the style and distinctiveness of some rural areas with the closure of local quarries, and the lack of availability of the existing local stone.
  - **Conservation & Enhancement of Cultural Heritage Assets:** This includes the appropriate site assessments where necessary, e.g. an archaeological assessment in areas where the local archaeology is unknown and extends to non-designated assets.
  - **Increasing Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Production and Use:** Significant opportunities exist in the District for increasing the capacity and type of renewable energy sources.
  - **Fuel and Water Poverty:** The District has the fourth highest level of fuel poor households in the region. The number of water poor households is likely to increase as water bills rise.

### How has the SAP been assessed?

16. A SA Framework was compiled, including SA Objectives and decision-aiding questions/criteria that aim to resolve the issues and problems identified for development planning in the District. This SA Framework, together with the baseline information, comprises the basis for assessment. The Framework was the same as that used for the SA of the Core Strategy, updated and including detailed thresholds of significance that are appropriate for assessing site options. The SA Objectives are as follows:

| Number | SA Objective   |
|--------|--|
| 1      | Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance   |
| 2      | Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening |

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
|           | distinctiveness and its special qualities  |
| <b>3</b>  | Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity  |
| <b>4</b>  | Reduce the risk of flooding  |
| <b>5</b>  | Minimise the district's contribution to climate change   |
| <b>6</b>  | Plan for the anticipated levels of climate change  |
| <b>7</b>  | Protect and conserve natural resources   |
| <b>8</b>  | Reduce air, soil and water pollution   |
| <b>9</b>  | Reduce waste generation and disposal, and promote the waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse, recycle/compost, energy recovery and disposal                              |
| <b>10</b> | Improve the efficiency of transport networks by increasing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and by promoting policies which reduce the need to travel |
| <b>11</b> | Reduce barriers for those living in rural areas  |
| <b>12</b> | Protect the integrity of the district's countryside  |
| <b>13</b> | Provide environmentally sound and good quality affordable housing for all: 13A Total Housing Capacity; 13B Affordable Housing Capacity                             |
| <b>14</b> | Safeguard and improve community health, safety and wellbeing   |
| <b>15</b> | Develop a dynamic, diverse and knowledge-based economy that excels in innovation with higher value, lower impact activities  |

17. Each element of the developing SAP was subject to Sustainability Appraisal. Using the SA Framework, the baseline information available, and professional opinion, the likely effects were assessed. The SA considered the nature of the likely sustainability effects (including positive/negative, duration (short, medium or long term), permanent/ temporary, secondary, cumulative and synergistic), and according to categories of significance as set out in the following table:

| Key: Categories of Significance |                |  |
|---------------------------------|----------------|--|
| Symbol                          | Meaning        | Sustainability Effect  |
| - -                             | Major Negative | Problematical, improbable because of known sustainability issues; mitigation likely to be difficult and/or expensive |
| -                               | Minor negative | Potential sustainability issues: mitigation and/or negotiation possible  |
| +                               | Minor positive | No sustainability constraints and development acceptable   |
| ++                              | Major Positive | Development encouraged as would resolve existing sustainability problem  |
| ?                               | Uncertain      | Uncertain or Unknown Effects   |
| 0                               | Neutral        | Neutral effect   |

### What reasonable alternatives have been considered & addressed?

18. The requirement, context, and principles for many of the components of the SAP are set out in Core Strategy Policies CS.15 and CS.16.D, such that options are limited at this subsidiary level of planning. However, the revised scope of the SAP included certain options and questions for consultation – and these have been considered through the SA. At the revised scoping stage, the SA

considered three strategic options for defining **Built Up Area Boundaries (BUABs)** – tight; loose; no boundary. The SA considered the proposals for Specific Sites, and the Policy on Self-Build & Custom Housebuilding with some specific site options identified.

19. Options for **Scale of Reserve Housing**: The SA investigated 2 alternatives for the scale of reserve housing, as follows:
  - Scenario X with 2,920 dwellings - calculated as 20% of the total housing requirement to 2031 as set out in the adopted Core Strategy Policy CS.16
  - Scenario Y with 2,352 dwellings - calculated as 20% of Local Housing Need as identified through the standard method
  
20. Options for **Site Specific Proposals**: As certain sites became available and were considered to be suitable and deliverable, they were progressed as Proposals.
  
21. Options for **Large Rural Sites** – the Council considered the suitability and availability of large rural sites in the District through a systematic assessment using key factors relevant to each site and including deliverability within the next 5 years. Two sites were identified as being suitable and deliverable.
  
22. Options for **Identifying Reserve Housing**: The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process investigated site options that could provide reserve housing in the District – Red, Amber, Green - according to constraints and opportunities. There were no Green sites identified. All Amber sites were considered to be reasonable alternatives. As the potential development capacity of these Amber sites is in excess of the reserve housing needed, 8 Scenarios were explored to identify a strategic approach to identifying, distributing, and releasing Amber sites. The Base Scenario comprised all other Site Proposals in the SAP. The scenarios tested are as follows:

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Scenario A                      | Do Nothing  |
| Scenario B<br>(5,113 dwellings) | Cumulative: Base Scenario and include all Amber SHLAA Sites   |
| Scenario C<br>(2,859 dwellings) | Base Scenario and exclude Amber Sites in Local Service Villages (LSVs) & Large Rural Sites (LRSs)   |
| Scenario D<br>(3,658 dwellings) | Base Scenario and exclude Amber Sites with capacity under 30 dwellings  |
| Scenario E<br>(2,285 dwellings) | Base Scenario and exclude Amber Sites with capacity under 100 dwellings   |
| Scenario F<br>(2,421 dwellings) | Base scenario and exclude Amber sites that are in settlements covered by made Neighbourhood Development Plans or Examiner's Report recommends proceed to Referendum |
| Scenario G<br>(3,833 dwellings) | Base Scenario and exclude Amber sites in LSVs that have exceeded dwelling provision in Policy CS.16 based on all commitments & completions                          |

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Scenario H<br>(2,920 dwellings) | Base Scenario plus Amber Sites apportioned according to the % distribution of the Core Strategy requirement – Main Town; Main Rural Centres; & Local Service Villages |
|---------------------------------|---|

23. All reserve housing site options that are considered to be reasonable alternatives, i.e. Amber, were subject to SA using the full SA Framework, including grouping options within settlements so that inter-relationships and the potential likely significant cumulative effects could be more clearly identified. The high-level scenarios A-H were refined in order to develop a meaningful tranche of scenarios that included some spatial specificity. The implications for each of the next stage of scenarios were tested taking into consideration the findings of the SAs of the Amber sites. The Scenarios 1-5 are, as follows:

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Scenario 1<br>(5,113 dwellings)  | Cumulative: Base Scenario of all other Site Proposals - plus all Amber sites  |
| Scenario 2a<br>(4,485 dwellings) | Base Scenario of all other Site Proposals - plus all Amber sites but exclude sites in LSV Category 4.   |
| Scenario 2b<br>(4,339 dwellings) | Base Scenario of all other Site Proposals - plus all Amber sites but exclude sites in LSV Category 3 & 4.   |
| Scenario 2c<br>(3,805 dwellings) | Base Scenario of all other Site Proposals - plus all Amber sites but exclude sites in LSV Category 2, 3 & 4   |
| Scenario 2d<br>(2,859 dwellings) | Base Scenario of all other Site Proposals - plus all Amber sites but exclude Large Rural Sites <sup>1♦</sup> & sites in LSV Category 1, 2, 3 & 4  |
| Scenario 3a<br>(3,659 dwellings) | Base Scenario of all other Site Proposals - plus all Amber sites but exclude sites with capacity <30 dwellings  |
| Scenario 3b<br>(2,285 dwellings) | Base Scenario of all other Site Proposals - plus all Amber sites but exclude sites with capacity <100 dwellings   |
| Scenario 4<br>(2,421 dwellings)  | Base Scenario plus all Amber sites but do not include sites that are in made Neighbourhood Development Plans or those that are recommended to proceed to Referendum & that already have identified reserve sites. |
| Scenario 5<br>(3,396 dwellings)  | Base Scenario plus all Amber sites but do not include sites in LSVs that have exceeded dwelling provision in Core Strategy Policy CS.16   |

24. The Council considered the evidence, consultation comments and the SA findings and developed a preferred approach to identifying reserve housing sites that lists the most suitable Amber sites to meet with the 4 purposes as set out in Policy CS.16. This proposed approach progresses Scenarios 2-5 in part by selecting the most sustainable Amber sites in each of these scenarios that are then aligned with the approach in Scenario H - apportioning sites in accordance with the % for housing in each settlement category as set out in the Core Strategy Policy CS.15. In this way, the Council has allowed for

<sup>1♦</sup> Large Rural Sites (LRSs) = North of former Harbury Cement works; Adjacent to former Long Marston Depot

positive effects to be delivered for all categories of settlement and the rural areas, whilst reducing negative effects by spreading the new development across the scenarios.

25. Scenario 4 has been progressed and the Council has not included any Amber sites within made/at referendum Neighbourhood Plan areas. The principle of new development has been investigated and tested through independent examination by a Planning Inspector. The made Neighbourhood Plans are part of the Development Plan for the Stratford-on-Avon District, alongside the Local Plan.
26. The Council sought to find the required numbers of reserve housing sites that best promoted sustainable development and minimised potential negative effects, particularly on the historic and natural environment that is such a strong feature of the District. It may be noted that “doing nothing” is not a reasonable alternative for the Plan since the Council has a duty to plan positively for objectively identified needs for housing and employment land.
27. Options for **Self-Build & Custom Housebuilding** – the SA tested 5 scenarios SB1-SB5 that aligned with the approaches investigated through Scenarios 1-5 for reserve housing sites.

### **What are the likely significant effects of the Preferred Options SAP?**

28. Overall, the SAP will have positive effects for implementation of the Core Strategy requirements with reference to the provision of reserve housing sites in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS.16.D. The opportunity has been taken to update specific site proposals in the Core Strategy to address changing circumstances, and also include new requirements for self-build and custom housebuilding, address employment enabling sites, and safeguard land for A46 improvements in the future.
29. The SA found likely neutral effects for many SA objectives as sites have been selected to avoid or minimise potential negative effects and other Core Strategy Policies provide mitigation measures. With regard to soils, the SA found both positive effects, for locations on previously developed land, and negative effects, for locations with some best and most versatile agricultural land.
30. Sites have been selected to avoid internationally or nationally designated biodiversity and geodiversity – indicating at least neutral effects. Where locally important assets have been identified, site-specific requirements have been included in the Policies and Proposals – this together with the national requirement for biodiversity gain from all new development, will ensure minor positive effects. Sites have been selected to avoid potential impacts on the rich historic environment of the District, and site-specific requirements to mitigate any likely adverse effects have been included in Proposals.
31. Congestion, aiming to reduce the use of or reliance on private vehicles and encourage more sustainable transport are key issues for development

planning in the District, particularly for Stratford-upon-Avon and the other large settlements in the Districts. Air quality and climate change objectives are closely linked with transport factors. Overall, the SA found potential minor positive effects for these Sites as such development can help to resolve these existing sustainability issues. For the Reserve Housing Sites that are dispersed through the District overall, the SA found potential neutral effects, including cumulative effects.

32. With regard to landscape, for the Specific Site Proposals, site specific requirements are included to ensure that any potential negative effects are mitigated and that opportunities for enhancements are implemented; the SA found likely minor positive effects overall. For the Reserve Housing Sites, a range of effects were found from minor positive, through neutral, to potential minor and major negative. The SA found likely negative cumulative effects for certain settlements that had a high concentration of sites with major negative effects for landscape, and thence the possibility for cumulative effects for the District as a whole. Some uncertainty remains at this stage as the effectiveness of mitigation measures at the detailed design stage are not known.
33. Overall, the SA found major positive effects for objectives on housing and employment; good quality housing and access to employment will also have positive effects for health and well-being.

### How could negative effects be mitigated?

34. The potential for any negative effects is mitigated through Core Strategy Policies, site-specific requirements where necessary, and the proposed approach to identifying, releasing and managing reserve housing sites. The Council has sought to avoid important environmental assets and their settings and also to identify opportunities for enhancement.
35. A summary of the negative and positive effects found by the SA for implementing the draft SAP is as follows:

| SA Objective | SAP.1 -5 Reserve Housing Sites | SAP.6 Self-Build & Custom Housebuilding | SAP.7 Built-Up Area Boundaries (BUABs) | SAP.8 Employment Enabling Sites | SAP.9 A46 Safeguarding | Site Specific Proposals |
|--------------|--------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Heritage  | 0?                             | 0                                       | 0                                      | 0                               | 0                      | 0                       |
| 2. Landscape | --?                            | 0                                       | +                                      | 0                               | 0                      | +                       |

|   |    |   |    |    |    |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|----|---|----|----|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. Biodiversity & Geodiversity                                    | +  | + | +  | +  | +  | +  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. Flooding   | 0  | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5. Climate Change: Traffic  | 0  | + | +  | +  | ++ | +  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 6. C Change: Green Infrastructure                                 | +  | 0 | +  | 0  | 0  | +  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7. Natural resources – Minerals; Agricultural Land                | 0  | + | 0  | +  | 0  | +  | 0 | - | 0 | + | 0 | + |
| 8. Pollution – Air Quality; Water Quality                         | 0  | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9. Waste  | 0  | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 10. Accessibility to services & facilities; sustainable transport | 0  | 0 | ++ | +  | -  | +  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 11. Reduce barriers for rural communities                         | +  | + | 0  | 0  | +  | +  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 12. Settlement Identity   | +  | 0 | +  | 0  | 0  | +  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 13. Housing   | ++ | + | +  | 0  | 0  | ++ |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 14. Communities & Health  | +  | + | +  | ++ | +  | +  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 15. Economy & Employment  | +  | 0 | +  | ++ | 0  | ++ |   |   |   |   |   |   |

### Were there any difficulties encountered?

36. There were no significant technical difficulties encountered during the preparation of this SA. There are inherent difficulties in predicting the likely future baseline and assumptions were made using professional judgment.

### How has the SA influenced the Preferred Options SAP?

37. The SA investigated early strategic level options for defining settlement boundaries (BUABs), helping to identify and refine these alternatives. The SA tested the Specific Site Proposals and other Policies - where relevant, the SA made suggestions for possibilities to mitigate any significant negative effects identified. The SA helped identify and then assessed a complex tiering of Scenarios A-H and 1-5 to inform the development of a strategy for identifying and releasing Reserve Housing Sites. The SA findings informed the decision-making towards developing the preferred approach and the refinement of Policies SAP.1-SAP.5. The SA drew particular attention to the likely negative cumulative effects on landscape at certain settlements. The SA made suggestions regarding the inter-relationships between sustainable transport and green infrastructure networks with possibilities for synergies and enhancements.

## **Consultation**

38. Comments made on earlier SA Reports have been taken into consideration in preparing this Preferred Options SA Report. Comments made on this SA Report (August 2020) will be taken into account in the preparation of the next draft of the SAP and its accompanying SA Report – the Pre-Submission stage.

## **Monitoring Proposals**

39. The SEA Directive and Regulations require that the significant effects (positive and negative) of implementing the plan should be monitored to identify at an early stage any unforeseen effects and to be able to take appropriate remedial action. Government guidance on SA/SEA advises that existing monitoring arrangements should be used where possible to avoid duplication. Government requires local planning authorities to produce Authority Monitoring Reports (MRs), and the Stratford-on-Avon District Council Monitoring Report (produced annually) is considered sufficient to ensure appropriate monitoring takes place.

## **Next Steps**

40. This SA Report accompanies the Preferred Options SAP on Regulation 18 consultation commencing in the autumn of 2020. Any comments on this SA Report should be made during this statutory consultation stage in accordance with guidance provided by the District Council.