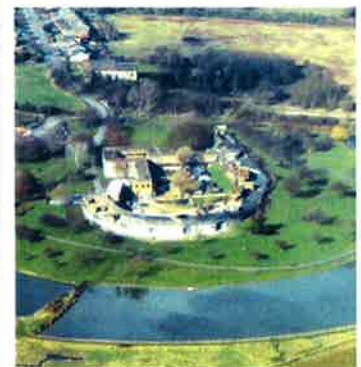




THURROCK  **COUNCIL**

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for
the Thurrock Core Strategy and
Policies for Management of
Development Focused Review**



SA Report Addendum

July 2014

Revision schedule					
Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
1	July 2014	SA Report Addendum published alongside proposed modifications to the Core Strategy NPPF Focussed Review Submission Document	Anthony Whitaker, Assistant Environmental Planner	Alex White, Associate Director	Steve Smith, Technical Director

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 URS is commissioned to undertake an independent Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of the emerging *Thurrock Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development Focused Review – Consistency with National Planning Policy Framework Submission Document* (referred to as the Core Strategy Focused Review from here on in– ‘CSFR’).
- 1.1.2 SA is a legally required¹ process that must be undertaken alongside plan-making with a view to fully considering and communicating likely sustainability effects of a proposed (‘draft plan’) approach and ‘reasonable alternatives’.
- 1.1.3 Thurrock’s Core Strategy sets the strategic policy approach for the Borough and was adopted in 2011, prior to the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012. The CSFR, once adopted, will update the Core Strategy’s policy approach to ensure that it is consistent as far as practicable at this time with the NPPF.
- 1.1.4 Plan-making is currently in the latter stages: the plan has been submitted to the government and a Planning Inspector has been appointed to examine the plan before reporting on its ‘soundness’.
- 1.1.5 Following an Exploratory Meeting held on 22nd November 2013 with the Planning Inspectorate and Examination Hearing Sessions held on 8th April 2014, Thurrock Council is proposing a series of Main Modifications (MM) to the CSFR. A schedule of proposed MMs has been prepared by the Council, and has been published for consultation alongside this Addendum to the original SA Report.
- 1.1.6 The Council has prepared proposed Main Modifications and will request the Inspector to recommend Main Modifications, and without prejudice to his decision, the Inspector will consider the Council’s proposals and any resultant representations before proceeding to issue his report. One effect of these proposed MMs would be to narrow the scope of the CSFR so that it would no longer be a review of the entire adopted plan, as originally intended, but would instead be limited to policy changes that do not need to be supported by an updated evidence base. The Council decided in February 2014 to prepare a new, comprehensive, Local Plan.
- 1.1.7 SA has informed the process of developing MMs. **The aim of this Report** is to present an appraisal of the ‘likely significant effects’ associated with the MMs and any reasonable alternatives, with a view to informing the consultation and subsequent plan finalisation.
- 1.1.8 While this report presents an appraisal of the MMs, it also considers the likely effects of the *CSFR as submitted plus the MMs*. This is important as the Inspector is tasked with drawing conclusions on the soundness of the CSFR as a whole.
- 1.1.9 This Report is known as an SA Report Addendum, as it should be read alongside the 2013 SA Report submitted with the CSFR. This SA Report Addendum, produced by URS, builds on the findings of the 2013 SA Report that was produced in-house by Thurrock Council.

1.2 What about alternatives?

- 1.2.1 Appraisal of ‘reasonable alternatives’ prior to developing a preferred (proposed) approach for consultation is a fundamental tenet of the SA process. The SA Report published alongside the proposed submission version of the CSFR in **May 2013** explains in detail how plan-making was informed by appraisal of reasonable alternatives.

¹ Since provision was made through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 it has been understood that local planning authorities must carry out a process of Sustainability Appraisal alongside plan-making. It is a requirement (currently established in the National Planning Policy Framework, NPPF) that SA is undertaken in-line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which were prepared in order to transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.

1.2.2 The proposed MMs that are a focus of consultation at **the current time** have not, however, been developed subsequent to SA of reasonable alternatives². Rather, it was deemed appropriate to develop the proposed MMs solely on the basis of the detailed discussions that were held during the Exploratory Meeting and Examination in Public Hearing Sessions. This is because the MMs are necessary to ensure that the plan is 'sound' in planning terms and failure to make these changes would result in an unsound plan that could not pass examination and be adopted. For these reasons, the appraisal focuses on an appraisal of the MMs rather than reasonable alternatives.

1.3 Structure of this SA Report Addendum

1.3.1 The following chapter presents an appraisal of the proposed MMs. As discussed above, consideration is also given to the effects of the CSFR as submitted plus the proposed MMs.

1.3.2 Appendix 1 lists each proposed MM, cross-referencing to the location within this report where relevant appraisal findings can be found. NB the majority of the proposed MMs listed in Appendix 1 were 'screened-out' of requiring appraisal because as they were considered unlikely to result in significant effects. This is because the MMs either remove a proposed CSFR change that was deemed to be insignificant in the 2013 SA Report; or constitute a minor change that need not be the focus of appraisal.

² Whilst there has not been a focus on appraising reasonable alternatives, it is worth emphasising that explicit consideration has been given to the merits of the proposed MMs against the baseline, i.e. relative to the 'no modifications' option.

2 APPROACH TO THE APPRAISAL OF THE PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

2.1 The broad approach

- 2.1.1 The aim of this chapter is to present an appraisal of the proposed Main Modifications (MMs) 'as a whole', i.e. the proposed MMs acting in combination with the CSFR 'as submitted'. There are 79 Main Modifications in total, of which seven are referred to in the appraisal. The remaining 72 have been 'screened-out' (see **Appendix 1**).
- 2.1.2 The 2013 SA Report stated that the CSFR changes did not 'materially alter' the outcome of the appraisal in the 2011 SA Report (i.e. the report that accompanied the Core Strategy). It stated that there was one policy change that had the potential to lead to significant effects. This was the change relating to the 20% buffer for housing delivery (a de facto requirement of the NPPF)³ which could result in significant effects by virtue of identifying additional, less sustainable sites for delivery; however "any identified sites would be brought through a Core Strategy Review or Site Allocations Document and [Thurrock Council] would undertake SA accordingly"⁴.
- 2.1.3 It can be concluded that the CSFR (as submitted) had no significant effects as without knowing where specific sites would be allocated in accordance with the 20% buffer, it was not possible to assess the effects of providing a buffer in practice.
- 2.1.4 As explained in Appendix 1, MMs 1 to 30 seek to reverse the proposed changes (i.e. retain the 2011 Core Strategy text) for a number of policies. On the basis that no significant effects were anticipated to occur as part of changes proposed in the CSFR, it can be reasonably assumed that there will be no significant effects in reverting these changes back to the original policy approach.
- 2.1.5 The SA Report Addendum therefore focusses on MMs 31 to 79 as these proposed changes have been made subsequent to the 2013 SA Report and could potentially have significant effects may be likely to have. As stated in para 2.1.1 only seven of these Main Modifications have been 'screened in' as requiring appraisal.
- 2.1.6 As discussed above, it is appropriate to give stand-alone consideration to the interrelationships and 'in-combination effects' of implementing the MMs alongside the rest of the CSFR as previously submitted. This is on the assumption that the remainder of the plan (that is not the focus of Main Modifications) is sound and can be adopted.

2.2 The SA scope

- 2.2.1 The appraisal 'framework' is the same as that which was used to undertake the appraisal of the proposed submission plan (and alternatives) in 2013, prior to publication of the CSFR SA Report.
- 2.2.2 Essentially, the appraisal framework consists of **16 SA 'objectives'**, which were identified through an earlier 'scoping' process (which included consultation)⁵. As part of the scoping process, a host of more detailed contextual and baseline sustainability 'issues' were also identified so that they might be taken into account as part of appraisal work. A review of context/baseline issues can be found within sections 5, 6 and 7 of the 2013 SA Report.

³ NPPF Paragraph 47: "To boost significantly the supply of housing, local planning authorities should... identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. **Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing**, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land" (NPPF, our emphasis)

⁴ The intention of the Council is now to progress a new Local Plan incorporating site allocations.

⁵ The broad SA scope for the Thurrock Core Strategy was first established in 2005 through consultation on a Scoping Report. The Scope has been updated since in 2008 as part of the SA of the Preferred Options Core Strategy; in 2010 as part of the Proposed Submission Core Strategy; and in the 2013 Scoping Report Update.

2.2.3 A Scoping Report Update was produced in January 2013 prior to consultation on the 2013 SA Report. This update report took into account new evidence and information and also rationalised the SA Framework into a smaller number of objectives and issues. It should be noted that whilst a new SA Framework was produced this was not used to structure the assessment in the 2013 SA Report. Instead the SA Report built on the findings of the 2012 Interim SA Report and used the previous SA Framework to ensure consistency. The SA Report Addendum therefore continues to use this framework⁶ however; like the 2013 SA Report, it does take into account updated information presented in the 2013 Scoping Report Update.

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 In line with the SEA Regulations⁷, the appraisal 'identifies describes and evaluates likely significant effects' drawing on the framework of 16 SA objectives established through scoping. However, some objectives were 'screened out' and not used to structure to the appraisal as they were not considered relevant to appraising the MMs. The appraisal also takes account of other sustainability issues (identified through scoping) as appropriate. Consideration is also given to the criteria for determining the likely significant of effects on the environment e.g. the potential for long term effects, as listed in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations.

2.3.2 The appraisal of the MMs identifies the likely effects. Where effects are predicted this is done with an accompanying explanation of the assumptions made. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on the merits of the MMs in more general terms.

2.3.3 The appraisal follows the same format as the 2011 SA Report. It is presented as a narrative that identifies significant effects (positive or negative) where these are anticipated. Attention is also drawn to positive or negative effects that are more minor, but merit discussion nonetheless.

2.3.4 The appraisal is structured under 16 SA objective headings. Further appraisal structure is also provided by:

- listing the relevant Main Modifications;
- providing a brief recap on the key issues;
- describing how the MMs interact with the key issues and the baseline; and
- appraising the plan and identifying the likely significant effects, considering:
 - the MMs individually; and
 - the CSFR plus the proposed MMs 'as a whole'.

⁶ As set out in the 2005 SA Scoping Report and used in the 2011 SA Report, 2012 Interim SA Report and 2013 SA Report.

⁷ The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

3 APPRAISAL FINDINGS AT THIS CURRENT STAGE

3.1 SA Objective 1 – to attain sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth:

3.1.1 No relevant Main Modifications (MMs) therefore this objective has been screened out of the assessment.

Likely significant effects

3.1.2 No significant effects.

3.2 SA Objective 2 – To increase economic diversity and increase the proportion of skills represented:

3.2.1 No relevant MMs therefore this objective has been screened out of the assessment.

Likely significant effects

3.2.2 No significant effects.

3.3 SA Objective 3 – To encourage investment and to ensure that current and future residents want to live and work within the Borough:

3.3.1 No relevant MMs therefore this objective has been screened out of the assessment.

Likely significant effects

3.3.2 No significant effects.

3.4 SA Objective 4 – To deliver sustainable patterns of location of development including employment and housing:

3.4.1 Relevant MMs:

- MM58 – Policy PMD2 Design and Layout
- MM69 – supporting text for PMD10 Transport Assessments

3.4.2 The key sustainability issues are to minimise flood risk; minimise development of greenfield land; improve management of the impacts of access and recreation; provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate wildlife and wild places; encourage more shops and better services in town centres; encourage more people to live in town centres;; improve access to green space; improve the quality and quantity of publicly accessible greenspace; encourage a feeling of community spirit; enhance historic character, streetscape and townscape to strengthen sense of place; and encourage alternative uses to the car.

3.4.3 MM58 updates policy PMD2 to assess development proposals against *Building for Life 12*; the update to *Building for Life*. The approach now involves asking 12 questions for development focused on urban design, connectivity to services and public transport, access, integrating with the site's context, creating safe pedestrian and cycle friendly environments and open space. The approach is designed to be an improvement on the previous *Building for Life* and involves early and effective engagement between the Council and applicants to influence design at an early stage.

3.4.4 MM69 provides further detail around mitigation measures for policy PMD10 Transport Assessments. It does not change the policy; however, it offers further guidance for applicants.

Likely significant effects

- 3.4.5 Assuming that *Building for Life 12* represents an improvement over-and-above *Building for Life*, MM58 would likely lead to minor positive effects in terms of delivering sustainable patterns of development through providing housing that is well-integrated with existing local shops and services; encourages and improves access to green spaces; helps to create a 'sense of place' and deliver community infrastructure to generate a community spirit; takes into account local context, townscape and character; and prioritises walking, cycling and public transport. It should be noted that the *Building for Life* did apply in the previous version of policy PMD2 which took into account all of the above; so therefore MM58 would only likely result in **positive** (but not significant) effects in relation to the Core Strategy.
- 3.4.6 MM69 does not affect the policy approach to PMD10 Transport Assessments, i.e. the requirements and the criteria for the policy remain the same. MM69 does, however, provide suggestions as to what adequate mitigation might be and therefore can be said to improve the effectiveness of the policy through encouraging applicants to consider the provision of "*sustainable transport modes and safe and suitable access*" as part of development proposals. This clarification of mitigation measures is likely to result in a minor **positive** effect as, whilst it does not alter the policy approach; it encourages consideration of mitigation measures earlier on in the design of developments.
- 3.4.7 Taken as a whole, the MM58 and MM69 are likely to result in minor **positive** effects in relation to this objective. Both MMs are seen as improvements; however they are not (either alone or in combination) likely to generate significant effects.

3.5 SA Objective 5 – To make the best use of land in the Borough, including reuse of previously developed land:

3.5.1 Relevant MMs:

- MM58 – Policy PMD2 Design and Layout

3.5.2 The key sustainability issues are to develop land with the least environmental or amenity value; reduce the number and amount of vacant buildings and derelict land; create attractive environments in built-up areas; and create high quality design.

3.5.3 MM58 updates policy PMD2 to assess development proposals against *Building for Life 12*; the update to *Building for Life*. The approach now involves asking 12 questions for development about urban design, connectivity to services and public transport, access, integrating with the site's context, creating safe pedestrian and cycle friendly environments and open space provision. The approach is designed to be an improvement on the previous *Building for Life* and involves early and effective engagement between the Council and applicants to influence design at an early stage.

Likely significant effects

- 3.5.4 *Building for Life 12* specifically takes into account the site's context; seeks to improve access to open and green space; and also seeks to integrate with the existing built environment and deliver high quality design as part of development proposals.
- 3.5.5 The previous *Building for Life* used 20 criteria instead of the 12 in *Building for Life 12*; however, there is a great degree of overlap between the two. Assuming that *Building for Life 12* is an improvement over-and-above *Building for Life* (as per the Core Strategy approach in policy PMD2) then there would likely be **positive** effects in terms of design in the built environment and townscape. It would not, however, lead to a significant positive effect due to the strong existing policy approach in the Core Strategy through utilising *Building for Life*. There would not be a significant improvement to the CSFR as a result of MM58 as *Building for Life* and *Building for Life 12* are relatively similar in their approach.

3.6 SA Objective 6 – To protect and enhance Thurrock’s biodiversity and geodiversity, including all designated sites:

3.6.1 Relevant MMs:

- MM36 – supporting text for CSSP5 Green Grid
- MM38 – CSSP5 Green Grid

3.6.2 The key sustainability issues are to protect brownfield biodiversity; maintain and enhance BAP Habitats and species in-line with Borough and national targets; protect and enhance habitats and wildlife taking account of climate change; restore the full range of characteristic habitats and species to viable levels; protect and enhance important coastal assets; protect the Borough’s mineral resources; and to conserve and enhance significant geological sites.

3.6.3 MM36 alters the supporting text to policy CSSP5 Green Grid. The supporting text now states that *“the Council will plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity, heritage assets and green infrastructure as appropriate”* (our emphasis added).

3.6.4 MM38 amends the text in CSSP5 criterion i) which removes the requirement for *all* proposals to contribute towards the protection, management and enhancement of the Green Grid. All proposals will need to take account of the objectives of the Green Grid however.

Likely significant effects

3.6.5 MM36 is considered to weaken the approach to green infrastructure and biodiversity through introducing the words ‘as appropriate’ which introduces flexibility for the Council and developers over planning positively for the Green Grid. This would likely result in fewer proposals resulting in the creation, protection, enhancement or management of green infrastructure and biodiversity in comparison to the CSFR ‘as submitted’ (where *all* proposals were required to contribute). It should be noted that the increased flexibility in the policy might have the benefit of making development more viable which could deliver more development with more potential for Green Grid enhancement; however, the removal of the requirement for *all* proposals to contribute would lead to uncertainty regarding the amount of investment in the Green Grid. On balance, this is considered to result in a minor **negative** effect in terms of biodiversity and green infrastructure.

3.6.6 Similar to MM36 above, MM38 introduces flexibility into the policy for CSSP5 (Green Grid). The policy no longer requires all proposals to contribute towards green infrastructure and biodiversity. The effect of this would likely be less investment in biodiversity and green infrastructure networks relative to the CSFR as submitted, resulting in a minor **negative** effect.

3.6.7 In combination the two MMs would likely result in a minor negative effect relative to the CSFR as submitted; however they would still result in a net gain in biodiversity and green infrastructure and thus lead to a positive effect for biodiversity and green infrastructure. The flexibility added to policy CSSP5 is likely to result in less investment in green infrastructure and biodiversity and therefore a minor **negative** effect relative to the CSFR as submitted; however it is not likely to be significant.

3.7 SA Objective 7 – To protect and enhance the environment through reducing the emissions of pollutants:

3.7.1 Relevant MMs:

- MM57 – PMD1 Minimising pollution and impacts on amenity, health, safety and the natural environment.

- 3.7.2 The key sustainability issues are to reduce any sources of pollution particularly from HGVs; improve the water quality of rivers and groundwater supplies; maintain 'good' water quality whilst accommodating new development discharge; achieve good air quality, especially in urban areas; and to reduce noise.
- 3.7.3 MM57 alters PMD1 to better state how the Council will respond when assessments demonstrate potential harm and to remove the indication that the only response by the Council when assessments are not forthcoming would be a refusal of permission. The policy is also altered to increase flexibility over the co-location of 'sensitive uses' adjacent to business uses in exceptional circumstances.

Likely significant effects

- 3.7.4 MM57 alters PMD1 to reduce the strength of the policy through changing the word 'will' to 'may' in the context of refusing planning permission if an assessment is not provided when there is a risk of development leading to pollution impacts. This increased flexibility is considered to increase the potential for pollution to occur and hence result in minor **negative** effects; however this is not likely to be significant as it does not fundamentally alter the policy approach to pollution from new development – it affects the certainty over implementation.
- 3.7.5 Furthermore, the policy allows greater flexibility over co-location of sensitive uses adjacent to business uses (in exceptional circumstances). There is a high level of uncertainty, however this could increase people's exposure to pollution (notably noise, light and air pollution) where sensitive uses such as residential, schools or hospitals are adjacent to industrial uses; as well as potential health impacts for people that work, visit or reside in 'sensitive use' buildings adjacent to business uses (see SA Objective 15 – health). It should be noted that this approach would not, however, likely increase pollution by itself and therefore not lead to any significant effects in terms of pollution. National-level protection would apply in the form of NPPF policy on noise and other pollution impacts; the Noise Policy Statement for England and the Environmental Protection Act 1990 which would prevent significant effects from occurring.

3.8 SA Objective 8 – Protect and enhance landscape character, local distinctiveness and historic built heritage:

- 3.8.1 Relevant MMs:
- MM36 – supporting text for CSSP5 Green Grid
 - MM62 – PMD4 Historic Environment
- 3.8.2 The key sustainability issues are to recognise and protect historic landscape character; maintain and enhance built and historic character; protect designated and undesignated historic sites and areas of significance; and conserve and enhance regional diversity and local distinctiveness.
- 3.8.3 MM36 concerns the supporting text for policy CSSP5 Green Grid. The text now includes reference to the need to 'plan positively' for heritage assets; however the MM also modifies the text to include the qualifier 'as appropriate'.
- 3.8.4 MM62 relates to PMD4 Historic Environment. The MM states that, in determining planning applications concerning heritage assets, the Council will expect "*that the relevant historic environment record will be consulted and the heritage asset(s) assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary*".

Likely significant effects

3.8.5 MM36 is likely to lead to positive effects in terms of the historic environment (both designated and not) by planning positively for heritage assets. The approach is, however, weakened by the introduction of the qualifier 'as appropriate'; hence removing the blanket requirement for *all* proposals to plan positively for heritage assets in the Green Grid, which could lead to **negative** effects. The approach is also considered to result in minor **positive** effects through widening the policy approach to include heritage assets in CSSP5; so the MM is 'mixed' in terms of its effect.

3.8.6 MM62 is likely to result in a greater amount of information and expertise in applications for development involving heritage assets. This should result in minor **positive** effects through more-informed (and potentially better) decision-making with respect to heritage assets and seek to conserve and enhance heritage assets, historic character and local distinctiveness.

3.9 SA Objective 9 – Ensure that water consumption and water sources can accommodate future development:

3.9.1 No relevant MMs therefore this objective has been screened out of the assessment.

Likely significant effects

3.9.2 No significant effects.

3.10 SA Objective 10 – To reduce consumption of non-renewable energy sources and to use the available natural resources in the most efficient and sustainable manner:

3.10.1 Relevant MMs:

- MM50 – CSTP26 Renewable/low carbon energy

3.10.2 The key sustainability issues are to minimise the need for energy; increase energy efficiency; increase the renewable share of energy; reduce need for car and road-based freight transport; minimise the demand for raw materials; reduce water use and maintain water security despite climate change; limit water consumption to levels supportable by natural processes and storage systems, taking into account the impact of climate change; maintain the water environment whilst meeting demand from development; encourage farming practices sensitive to the character of the countryside and maintain soil quality; reduce minerals and resources extracted and imported; use materials from sustainable sources; encourage local production to be consumed in the Borough; and increase farmers' markets and local trading schemes.

3.10.3 MM50 introduces increased flexibility for the requirements for renewable or low carbon energy in order to be less prescriptive about the locations where the Council will promote centralised renewable or low carbon energy schemes and district energy networks.

Likely significant effects

3.10.4 By increasing flexibility over the requirements for renewable energy or low carbon energy there is the potential for less or no renewable or low carbon energy to come forward at Tilbury or London Gateway. This may lead to negative effects in terms of low carbon and renewable energy at two major development locations in the Borough should development come forward with less or without renewable or low carbon energy as part of the proposals. This could lead to a minor **negative** effect as it could result in relatively less renewable or low carbon energy coming forward; however the policy would still deliver an increase in renewable or low carbon energy across the Borough. Furthermore, other regulatory regimes require decarbonisation and encourage generation of renewable energy.

3.11 SA Objective 11 – To achieve a more equitable sharing of the benefits of prosperity across all sectors of society:

3.11.1 No relevant MMs therefore this objective has been screened out of the assessment.

Likely significant effects

3.11.2 No significant effects.

3.12 SA Objective 12 – Ensure fairer access to services, focusing on the most deprived areas:

3.12.1 Relevant MMs:

- MM57 – Policy PMD1 Minimising pollution
- MM58 – Policy PMD2 Design and Layout

3.12.2 The key sustainability issues are to provide more equal access to opportunities; contribute to local regeneration and help deprived areas; increase access to leisure facilities including woodland and parks; improve the quality and quantity of publicly accessible greenspace; provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate wildlife and wild places; retain village services; encourage entrepreneurial activity in disadvantaged areas; and encourage community involvement in service design and provision.

3.12.3 MM57 alters PMD1 to increase flexibility over the co-location of 'sensitive uses' adjacent to business uses in exceptional circumstances.

3.12.4 MM58 updates policy PMD2 to assess development proposals against *Building for Life 12*; the update to *Building for Life*. The approach now involves asking 12 questions for development about urban design, connectivity to services and public transport, access, integrating with the site's context, creating safe pedestrian and cycle friendly environments and open space. The approach is designed to be an improvement on the previous *Building for Life* and involves early and effective engagement between the Council and applicants to influence design at an early stage.

Likely significant effects

3.12.5 MM57 alters PMD1 to allow greater flexibility over co-location of sensitive uses adjacent to business uses (in exceptional circumstances). MM58 has the potential to lead to negative health effects which are considered under SA Objective 15. Despite this, increased flexibility over allowing 'sensitive uses' adjacent to business uses has the potential to benefit people through increased access to employment opportunities, shops and services. Due to the fact that this flexibility would only be exercised in exceptional circumstances, it is predicted to only result in a minor **positive** effect in terms of increased access to services and addressing deprivation.

3.12.6 MM58 updates policy PMD2 to reference the newer *Building for Life 12*. Assuming that *Building for Life 12* is a more effective mechanism for ensuring improved access to services, employment, open space and biodiversity and delivering sustainable communities, it can reasonably be assumed that there would be a positive effect in terms of these issues. It would only likely be a minor **positive** effect as *Building for Life* covered all of these issues in a similar way.

3.12.7 In combination; the MMs are likely to lead to **positive** (but not significant) effects to the CSFR in terms of increasing access to services.

3.13 SA Objective 13 – To provide housing to all those in the Borough in need:

3.13.1 Relevant MMs:

- MM58 – Policy PMD2 Design and Layout

3.13.2 The key sustainability issues are to increase access to decent and affordable housing.

3.13.3 MM58 updates policy PMD2 to assess development proposals against *Building for Life 12*; the update to *Building for Life*. The approach now involves asking 12 questions for development about urban design, connectivity to services and public transport, access, integrating with the site's context, creating safe pedestrian and cycle friendly environments and open space. The approach is designed to be an improvement on the previous *Building for Life* and involves early and effective engagement between the Council and applicants to influence design at an early stage.

Likely significant effects

3.13.4 *Building for Life 12* asks 12 questions of development proposals in order to try to raise standards for new communities. These relate to urban design, place-making and the location of housing in terms of existing infrastructure and facilities such as shops, services, employment and transport links. For housing, question 4 asks “does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?” whilst questions 9 to 12 focus on the street environment and the design and space layout of the home.

3.13.5 Assuming that *Building for Life 12* is an improvement to the previous *Building for Life* approach then it would likely result in **positive** effects. The effects are not likely to be significant as *Building for Life* already took into account a number of these issues in design of new housing and communities.

3.14 SA Objective 14 – To reduce the fear of crime:

3.14.1 No relevant MMs therefore this objective has been screened out of the assessment.

Likely significant effects

3.14.2 No significant effects.

3.15 SA Objective 15 – To reduce inequalities in health and ensure all current and future residents have access to health facilities:

3.15.1 Relevant MMs:

- MM57 – Policy PMD1 Minimising pollution
- MM58 – Policy PMD2 Design and Layout
- MM69 – supporting text for PMD10 Transport Assessments

3.15.2 The key sustainability issues are to promote healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities.

3.15.3 MM57 alters PMD1 to better state how the Council will respond when assessments demonstrate potential harm; and to remove the indication that the only response by the Council when assessments are not forthcoming would be a refusal of permission. The policy is also altered to increase flexibility over the co-location of ‘sensitive uses’ adjacent to business uses in exceptional circumstances.

3.15.4 MM58 updates policy PMD2 to assess development proposals against *Building for Life 12*; the update to *Building for Life*. The approach now involves asking 12 questions for development about urban design, connectivity to services and public transport, access, integrating with the site's context, creating safe pedestrian and cycle friendly environments and open space. The approach is designed to be an improvement on the previous *Building for Life* and involves early and effective engagement between the Council and applicants to influence design at an early stage.

- 3.15.5 MM69 provides further detail around mitigation measures for policy PMD10 Transport Assessments. It does not change the policy; however, it offers further guidance for applicants.
- Likely significant effects
- 3.15.6 MM57 alters PMD1 to reduce the strength of the policy through changing the word 'will' to 'may' in the context of refusing planning permission if an assessment is not provided when there is a risk of development leading to pollution impacts. This increased flexibility is considered to increase the potential for **negative** health effects to occur due to pollution or amenity impacts.
- 3.15.7 Furthermore, the policy allows greater flexibility over co-location of sensitive uses adjacent to business uses (in exceptional circumstances). This could increase exposure to pollution and potential health impacts for people that work, visit or reside in 'sensitive use' buildings adjacent to business uses; leading to a likely **negative** effect. There is, however, the potential for people to benefit from increased access to employment opportunities, shops and services which may have a minor **positive** effect in terms of health.
- 3.15.8 Noise is a 'material consideration' in the National Planning Policy Framework and planning decisions should aim to "avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of environment as a result of new development". The NPPF also states that planning policies and decisions should keep noise and other adverse impacts to a minimum through mitigation and the use of conditions. The NPPF should act to prevent a significant negative pollution or amenity effect from occurring; however, minor negative effects may occur in terms of health as a result of new development.
- 3.15.9 A key focus of *Building for Life 12*, introduced to policy PMD2 through MM58, is to plan for new communities that the development is close to "community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs or cafes" and promote walking and cycling. Assuming that *Building for Life 12* is an improvement on *Building for Life*, this approach to development should lead to minor **positive** effects for health through encouraging active travel; however, it is only likely to be minor as the previous *Building for Life* took a similar approach.
- 3.15.10 MM69 does not affect the policy approach to PMD10 Transport Assessments; i.e. the requirements and the criteria for the policy remain the same. MM69 does, however, provide suggestions as to what adequate mitigation might be; and therefore can be said to improve the effectiveness of the policy through encouraging applicants to consider the provision of "sustainable transport modes and safe and suitable access" as part of development proposals. This clarification of mitigation measures is likely to result in a minor **positive** effect as it does not alter the policy and merely encourages consideration of mitigation measures earlier on in the design of developments.
- 3.15.11 In combination, the above MMs are not likely to lead to significant effects. The MMs act in both a positive and negative manner through potentially increasing exposure to pollution; however through seeking to increase accessibility to shops, services and employment they should also encourage active travel and recreation.
- 3.16 SA Objective 16 – To reduce the amount of waste produced and the amount of waste being imported:**
- 3.16.1 No relevant MMs therefore this objective has been screened out of the assessment.
- Likely significant effects
- 3.16.2 No significant effects.

3.17 Appraisal Summary

- 3.17.1 The 2013 SA Report stated that there would be no significant effects (either positive or negative) as a result of the changes proposed in the CSFR. The 2013 SA Report did point to the *potential* for significant effects due to reference to the required 20% buffer and therefore less-preferable sites potentially being allocated for development. The 20% buffer policy has subsequently been deleted and will instead be progressed through the emerging Thurrock Local Plan; and will be covered through the accompanying SA of that document. MMs 1 to 30 effectively delete proposed amendments to the CSFR that do not have the required evidence to support or justify the proposed approach. As the proposed changes to the Core Strategy in the CSFR were predicted to result in no significant effects, it can therefore be stated that the deleted policies in the CSFR would also have no significant effects (as the Core Strategy policy would continue to apply for the affected policies – it would be ‘business-as-usual’).
- 3.17.2 The appraisal has focussed on MMs 31 to 79 as set out in the Schedule of Proposed Modifications. The broad approach in the MMs has been to introduce flexibility to policies and provide clarification of intent. The MMs do not fundamentally alter the policies or change their approach.
- 3.17.3 The proposed MMs in themselves are not likely to lead to significant effects; however, **positive** effects have been identified for delivering sustainable patterns of development including in relation to employment and housing; making the best use of land in the Borough, including reuse of previously developed land; protecting and enhancing landscape character, local distinctiveness and historic built heritage; ensuring fairer access to services, focusing on the most deprived areas; and providing housing to all those in the Borough in need.
- 3.17.4 Minor **negative** effects have been identified for protecting Thurrock’s biodiversity and geodiversity, including all designated sites; protecting and enhancing the environment through reducing the emissions of pollutants; and reducing consumption of non-renewable energy sources and using available natural resources in the most efficient and sustainable manner.
- 3.17.5 Both **positive** and **negative** effects were identified in relation to reducing inequalities in health and ensuring all current and future residents have access to health facilities. The main issue behind this is the increased flexibility over locating ‘sensitive uses’ adjacent to business uses which has the potential for negative amenity or pollution impacts (affecting health) but also improved access to employment opportunities and health facilities. The potential negative amenity or pollution effects (in terms of light, noise or air pollution) are not likely to be significant due to other protection offered by, for example, the NPPF, the Noise Policy Statement for England and the Environmental Protection Act 1990 that seek to avoid significant adverse impacts and mitigate and reduce to a minimum other adverse impacts.
- 3.17.6 In summary, the CSFR *as submitted* has no significant effects over-and-above those identified for the 2011 Core Strategy. The CSFR *as submitted plus proposed modifications* is **not likely to lead to significant effects** either.

APPENDIX 1 – COMPLETE LIST OF PROPOSED MAIN MODIFICATIONS

Main Modifications 1 to 30 delete proposed policy amendments in the Core Strategy Focussed Review. These amendments were intended to bring the 2011 Core Strategy into line with the NPPF.

The effect of deleting modifications 1 to 30 is that they revert policies CSSP1, CSSP2, CSSP4, CSTP1, CSTP2, CSTP3, CSTP4, and CSTP6 back to their original text (in the 2011 Core Strategy).

On the basis that no significant effects were appraised⁸ in the 2013 CSFR SA Report; Main Modifications 1 to 30 have been subsequently 'screened out' of the SA Addendum and only Main Modifications 31 to 79 have been considered. For completeness all 79 Main Modifications are shown in the table below.

Reference	Policy / Section	Where is this proposed modification referenced in the appraisal?
MM1	Para 2.4 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM2	Para 2.8 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM3	Para 4.2 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM4	Para 4.3 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM5	Para 4.6 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM6	Policy CSSP1 Withdrawal of policy change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM7	Para 4.7 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM8	Policy CSSP2 Withdrawal of policy change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM9	Para 4.23 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM10	Para 4.25 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM11	Para 4.27 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM12	Para 4.28 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM13	Para 4.29 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM14	Policy CSSP4 Withdrawal of policy change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy

⁸ Potential significant effects depending on the sites identified in the buffer – to be identified as part of a Core Strategy Review or Site Allocations document

Reference	Policy / Section	Where is this proposed modification referenced in the appraisal?
		text.
MM15	Para 5.3 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM16	Para 5.12 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM17	Policy CSTP1 Withdrawal of policy change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM18	Para 5.21 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM19	Para 5.22 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM20	Para 5.23 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM21	Policy CSTP2 Withdrawal of policy change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM22	Para 5.25 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM23	Para 5.27 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM24	Para 5.27a Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM25	Policy CSTP3 Withdrawal of policy change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM26	Para 5.30 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM27	Para 5.31 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM28	CSTP4 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM29	Para 5.47 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM30	Policy CSTP6 Withdrawal of text change	Screened-out: no change to 2011 Core Strategy text.
MM31	Introduction explaining the nature of the Focussed Review.	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM32	OSPD1	Screened-out: no substantive implications.

Reference	Policy / Section	Where is this proposed modification referenced in the appraisal?
MM33	OSPD1	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM34	OSPD1	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM35	Para 4.32	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM36	Para 4.33	SA Objective 6 (biodiversity) and 8 (landscape and built environment)
MM37	Para 4.35	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM38	CSSP5	SA Objective 6 (biodiversity)
MM39	CSSP5	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM40	CSTP8	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM41	Para 5.94	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM42	Para 5.95	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM43	Para 5.97	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM44	Para 5.101	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM45	Para 5.110	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM46	CSTP23	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM47	Para 5.155	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM48	CSTP25	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM49	Para 5.161	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM50	CSTP26	SA Objective 10 (energy)
MM51	CSTP27	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM52	Para 5.182	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM53	Para 5.183	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM54	CSTP28	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM55	CSTP31	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM56	CSTP32	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM57	PMD1	SA Objective 7 (pollution); 12 (access to services) and 15 (health)
MM58	PMD2	SA Objective 4 (sustainable patterns of development); 5 (best use of land); 12 (access to services); 13 (housing) and 15 (health).

Reference	Policy / Section	Where is this proposed modification referenced in the appraisal?
MM59	PMD4	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM60	PMD4	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM61	PMD4	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM62	PMD4	SA Objective 8 (landscape and historic environment)
MM63	Para 6.33	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM64	PMD6	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM65	PMD6	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM66	PMD6	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM67	PMD7	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM68	Para 6.42	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM69	Para 6.50	SA Objective 4 (sustainable patterns of development) and 15 (health)
MM70	PMD10	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM71	Para 6.61	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM72	PMD12	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM73	Para 6.74	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM74	Para 6.76	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM75	Para 6.78	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM76	Para 6.80	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM77	PMD15	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM78	Para 6.87	Screened-out: no substantive implications.
MM79	PMD16	Screened-out: no substantive implications.

APPENDIX 2 – HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT (HRA)



9 July 2014

Paul Clark
Principal Planner
Thurrock Council
Civic Offices
New Road
Grays
Essex
RM17 6SL

Our Ref:
Your Ref:

Dear Paul

Need for Habitat Regulations Assessment of the Proposed Main Modifications to the Thurrock Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development: Focused Review

Having reviewed the Proposed Main Modifications that were sent to me on 23/06/14 I can confirm that in my view none of the modifications would result in a change to the quantum of development within Thurrock or its location relative to the Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar site. The modifications will not introduce new policies or infrastructure that would interact with the internationally important features of the SPA/Ramsar site. Therefore the modifications do not raise any issues regarding Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar site or other Natura 2000 sites that would require a Habitat Regulations Assessment to be formally undertaken.

Yours sincerely
for **URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited**

Dr James Riley
Principal Ecologist

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