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# Addendum to Interim Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal

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## Addendum

### Introduction

A Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy 'Shaping our District' consultation document was undertaken and has been published as the [Sustainability Appraisal: Shaping our District](#) document. This contains the proposed spatial strategy for the District to 2026.

This document is an addendum to the Interim Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal (ICSSA) and should be read in association with this and the Sustainability Appraisal: Shaping our District document which is currently available for comment.

A Sustainability Appraisal is a requirement when preparing plans affecting land which arises from European Directive and Government Guidance. Whilst the Shaping our District is not a formal consultation in the development plan making process, it is a useful tool for assessing the sustainability of the emerging plan and policies. The methodology used in assessing the sustainability of a site or policy is set out in the [Scoping Report for the SEA \(Core Strategy\)](#). The Scoping report identifies objectives which have been set locally and questions to measure these by and uses a simple scoring mechanism of ++ and - - to assess whether the impact of the site or policy will have a clear and strong positive impact on achieving the sustainability objective, a clear and strong negative impact, no impact or that the effects are impossible to assess at this time. As the process is to assess sustainability it does not consider factors such as Green Belt (which is a planning policy constraint) and forms only one element of the decision making process which is considered before a site is included within a Core Strategy.

Within the Core Strategy 'Shaping our District' consultation document a potential site for housing development has been identified at Highfields Farm, within Chasewater Country Park. This site had not been appraised by the Sustainability Working Group and is currently not included within the proposed spatial strategy. As it could make a significant contribution to the housing numbers currently identified it is important to appraise the site in terms of sustainability so it can be compared to the other sites proposed for inclusion within the spatial strategy.

A sustainability appraisal of the Highfields Farm site has now been undertaken by the Lichfield Sustainability Working Group (LSWG) and for comparison the findings have been published as an addendum to the Interim Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal (ICSSA) which was originally published in November 2008. The ICSSA was chosen as the document to add the information to as it contains the appraisals of the directions of growth around the major settlements and these most closely relate to individual sites (Appendix i Matrix of Directions of Growth).

### Matrix of the Sustainability Appraisal of Highfields Farm, Chasewater Country Park for housing

Sustainability Objectives	A	B	C	D	E	F	G Ec	G Soc	H	I Ec	I Soc	J	K	L
Highfields Farm, Chasewater Country Park for housing	-	-- *	-/+	+	+	0	?	+		+	+	+/-	+	+

#### Sustainability Objectives and comments on scoring:

A To maintain and enhance landscape and townscape quality - Negative impact upon landscape, due to loss of open land between communities.

B To promote biodiversity and geodiversity through protection, enhancement and management of species and habitat - Clear and strong negative impact upon biodiversity and geodiversity, due to effect on SBI, proximity to Chasewater Heaths SSSI, green corridor and Cannock Chase SAC.

C To protect and enhance buildings, features and areas of archaeological, cultural and historic value and their settings - Potential for archaeology to be negatively impacted upon, but also for greater understanding of local heritage to be provided.

D To mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change - Positive for mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change due to the proximity of Chasewater Country Park and the ambition for this to be a showcase for innovation in energy efficiency, sustainable development and low carbon technology.

E To encourage the prudent use of natural resources - Unknown impact upon minerals safeguarding and air quality but positive opportunities for waste re-use and using water efficiently.

F To reduce flood risk - No effect.

G To improve the availability of sustainable transport options to jobs and services - Unknown traffic impact.

H To encourage sustainable distribution and communication systems - Not scored.

I To create mixed and balanced communities - Accessible location for public transport and most facilities, not best placed to serve the need for affordable housing arising in Lichfield District.

J To promote safe communities, reduce crime and fear of crime - Mixed impact upon promoting safe communities and reducing fear of crime.

Sustainability Objectives	A	B	C	D	E	F	G Ec	G Soc	H	I Ec	I Soc	J	K	L
K To improve the health of the population and L To enable improved community - Positive impact upon improving the health of the population due to accessibility to Chasewater Country Park for recreation and opportunities for community involvement in volunteering.														

Table .1

**Key:**

- ++ clear and strong positive effect in response to criterion
- + positive effect in response to criterion
- - clear and strong negative effect in response to criterion
- negative effect in response to criterion
- +/- mixed effect in response to criterion
- 0 no effect in response to criterion
- ? effects impossible to determine from information

**The Findings**

The site scores double negative with a red asterisk for sustainability objective B, promoting biodiversity and geodiversity. This is largely due the incorporation within the site of a Site of Biological Interest (SBI). No mitigation information has been submitted with regard to the developable area of the site and this has been interpreted that all land will be developed including the SBI. The area is close to the Chasewater Heaths SSSI and is also a known corridor for wildlife movement and part of the Regional Biodiversity Enhancement Area. Due to the proximity to the Cannock Chase SAC there may be detrimental effects upon this due to extra visitors. However, the score may change when further details are submitted, as has happened for other sites appraised.

There are also impacts due to the loss of an open area of landscape and the coalescence between the communities of Newtown and Brownhills West, as well as the local authority areas of Lichfield District and Walsall Borough. There may be a potential negative impact upon archaeology due to the proximity of the site to the A5 and the Staffordshire Hoard; although this could enable a positive impact upon the understanding and local heritage of the area.

The site also scores positively for sustainability objective D, mitigating and adapting for the effects of climate change, as there is an ambition within the Core Strategy 'Shaping our District' for Chasewater to be a showcase for innovations in energy efficiency, sustainable development and low carbon technology. The site is also close to the Poplars landfill site,

cannot which has potential for generating energy from waste. It should be noted that this objective was not able to be appraised at the ICSSA for the other directions of growth due to the lack of evidence available at that time.

Transport is currently an unknown element as no transport assessment has been undertaken for the site and access is via the A5 which is currently a trunk road and therefore managed by Highways Agency. There are therefore concerns about traffic safety, also air quality due to the proximity of Muckley Corner which is an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

With regard to the provision of affordable housing for local people in need of a home, there is some concern that whilst the site would deliver some affordable housing, due to its location it is not best placed to meet the needs generated from Lichfield City and relates poorly to Burntwood. However, there is also a need for affordable housing from across the boundary in Walsall and this site may help address these needs, although no information is currently known in relation to this.

Due to the proximity of Chasewater Country Park there is potential for community involvement and volunteering. Potential was also considered to exist to reduce anti-social behaviour, due to the loss of an area to development where anti-social behaviour takes place and increased surveillance on the site may also result from development.

There is currently unknown potential for mineral deposits within the site which could be sterilised if developed upon, as the site has been used for mining activity in the past. The site falls within a 12 mile radius of the Cannock Chase SAC and is therefore within the "area of influence" upon it. There may also be potential for the site to be used as site of suitable alternative natural green recreational space, as referred to in Policy NR6 'Shaping our District' consultation document, which is of significance with regard to the need to mitigate for impacts on the Cannock Chase SAC.

### **Comparison to other Directions of Growth**

In the ICSSA Sustainability Objectives D (to mitigate and adapt to the effects on climate change), Sustainability Objective H (encouraging sustainable distribution and communication systems) and Sustainability Objective L (to enable improved community participation) were not scored at the time of the ICSSA due to lack of evidence and the lack of a spatial dimension for each of the objectives. In addition, Sustainability Objective G (improving the availability of sustainable transport to jobs and services) and Sustainability Objective I (creating mixed and balanced communities) were not split between social and economic factors.

When assessed on this basis the Highfields Farm site score is equivalent to the West of Tamworth and South Lichfield option, and these were the highest scoring options at the time.

### **Conclusion**

The site scored well with regard to being a sustainable location to build housing when compared to other sites appraised as part of this process. The score improves further when other factors are incorporated in the appraisal, such as the ability to mitigate to the effects of climate change and opportunity for community participation.

The site scores well as it is an accessible location for public transport and a wide range of facilities. The proximity to Chasewater Country Park provides relatively easy access not only to recreational facilities and volunteering, but also has the potential to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change due to the ambition within the Park for it to become a showcase for innovations in energy efficiency, sustainable development and low carbon technology. The site scores poorly with regard to the negative effects upon the Site of Biological Interest, Chasewater Heaths SSSI, the wildlife corridor, and Cannock Chase SAC and further information is required on these matters, mineral deposits, archaeology and on the traffic implications for the A5. The site has not been appraised for uses for any other purposes and there are other potential uses for this area, such as recreation.

A further sustainability appraisal in accordance with the appropriate Regulations will be undertaken at the publication stage of the Core Strategy.