

ADOPTION STATEMENT - SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (SA) & STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) - WESTMINSTER'S CITY PLAN 2019-2040

Westminster City Council adopted Westminster's City Plan 2019 -2040 on 21st April 2021 as a Development Plan document in accordance with regulation 16 (3) and (4) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (hereafter referred to as the SEA Regulations), and in compliance with the requirements of Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

This statement has been prepared to summarise the Sustainability Appraisal process for the adopted Westminster's City Plan 2019-2040 and to explain the environmental and wider sustainability impacts of the City Plan, in accordance with the SEA Regulations.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment regulations

Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 regulations, a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) - including a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – prepared in accordance with the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive EC/2001/42 (transported into national legislation through the SEA Regulations), is required for all Development Plan documents.

The Act stipulates that all Local Plans must be informed through an appraisal which considers how specific economic, social and environmental objectives will be met. The objective is to ensure that the plan-making process considers the policies' sustainability implications, so the Plan promotes sustainable development.

Paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides a more holistic SA process to incorporate the finer requirements of SEA.

Purpose of this Adoption Statement

This Adoption Statement demonstrates compliance with the requirements of the SEA Regulations¹ as set out below.

How sustainability considerations have been integrated into the City Plan

Westminster's City Plan sets out an overall strategy and the council's ambitious vision for Westminster. The Plan helps deliver the council's strategy set out in the council's City for All Vision and Strategy to create "*a city where residents live in a healthy and sustainable environment, have access to high quality, affordable homes, can grow and learn throughout their lives, build fantastic careers in world-leading industries, and retire into the community with dignity and pride*". It does so by providing a positive framework for development to take place in a greener and more sustainable manner taking account of climate change, infrastructure needs, high quality design, conservation and enhancement of its heritage assets.

The City Plan's Integrated Impact Assessment

As required by the SEA Regulations, the Sustainability Appraisal has been developed through an iterative process and has informed decision making at all City Plan preparation stages. The Sustainability Appraisal for the City Plan has been developed through an Integrated Impact

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/regulation/1/made>

Assessment (IIA) process, which helped consider the likely impacts of the Plan on environment, sustainability, equalities, health and community safety in an integrated manner. The IIA incorporates the following elements:

- Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – considering all likely significant effects on the environment, economic and social factors in line with European and National legislation.
- Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) – considering equality impacts, having regard to the protected characteristics in the Equalities Act 2010.
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA) – seeking to maximise positive health impacts.
- Community Safety Assessment – seeking to prevent crime and disorder in line with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

The first stage in the IIA preparation was the production of a draft Scoping Report, which provided local baseline information and identified a range of sustainability issues to be addressed by the City Plan. These were translated into a set of sustainability objectives, to guide the assessment on any likely significant impacts of the draft City Plan. These objectives covered a range of issues around the social, environmental and economic elements of sustainability, such as: improving quality of life and health and well-being, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting climate change adaptation, and sustaining economic growth. Detailed appraisal questions were developed for each objective to help the assessment. IIA objectives and appraisal questions together form the IIA Framework, which constituted the basis for assessing the sustainability of the Plan and informed its vision, objectives and spatial strategy. The draft Scoping Report was consulted upon in 2017 and contained the first version of the IIA Framework.

The IIA Framework was then updated and refined in light of comments received, including the objectives and appraisal questions. The full IIA was then published for consultation alongside the Regulation 19 publication version of the City Plan in 2019. A series of public consultations on the draft City Plan have also provided stakeholders with an opportunity to raise further sustainability issues and therefore inform the IIA process and, by result, the City Plan itself.

Comments received during the plan-making process informed the development of a series of IIA Addendums:

- the 'IIA Addendum Equalities Impact Assessment' (November 2019), which was produced to provide more clarity on how the EqIA was carried out as part of the IIA;
- the 'IIA Addendum Alternative Options Report (March 2020)', which sought to provide clarification of those growth options not considered to represent reasonable options; and
- the 'IIA Addendum Sustainability Appraisal of Main Modifications' (November 2020), which assessed whether the proposed Main Modifications to the City Plan would result in changes to the likely impacts associated with the Plan policies.

Appraisal method

In assessing any likely significant impacts, the IIA process has considered all identified impacts against each IIA Framework objective for each policy, which at times resulted in a mix of likely positive and negative impacts. The final score attributed to a single policy against each of the sustainability objectives in the IIA Framework is therefore an on-balance assessment of the combination of all the identified likely impacts which has been undertaken using professional judgement. For this reason, in some instances, while some likely significant impacts have been identified, some likely negative impacts may have offset them, resulting in an overall neutral score,

and vice-versa. When more than one likely positive impact was identified against an objective, the cumulative assessment resulted in a likely major positive impact.

The IIA also considered any potential cumulative effects of the City Plan in combination with other plans, policies and proposals in the vicinity of Westminster.

The findings of the IIA process have been considered at all stages of the preparation of the City Plan. This consisted in the assessment of the various iterations of the draft Plan against the social, environmental and economic objectives set out in the IIA Framework to establish likely significant positive or negative impacts associated with each policy, as well as likely cumulative impacts. The iterative process has helped highlight potential issues with the policies, leading to a number of recommendations to enhance the sustainability, equality, safety and health performance of the Plan. These recommendations have led to the substantial rewriting of the policies to improve the sustainability performance of the City Plan, while also assisting with improving clarity and making the Plan more user-friendly².

While likely significant negative impacts have not been identified in the final IIA, a number of likely differential negative impacts have been highlighted by the Equalities component of the assessment. In response to this, a series of mitigation measures were set out as part of the EqIA Addendum³.

Following the formal examination of the City Plan, the council published a document setting out the SA on the Main Modifications (MMs) that the Planning Inspectors' believed were necessary to make the Plan sound. All MMs were screened to determine whether they would likely impact on the original IIA assessment on the relevant policy. For MMs that were 'screened in' through the preliminary assessment, officers then carried out a full sustainability appraisal using the IIA Framework. As set out in the 'IIA Addendum – Sustainability Appraisal on the MMs (November 2020), where this exercise resulted in identifying likely significant impacts that differed from the original IIA results for a policy, narrative and justification for the updated conclusions of the assessment was provided within that document. Where the assessment considered that the MMs would not affect the conclusion on the likely impact of a policy as set out in the original IIA, no further justification was provided as what set out in the original IIA was considered to still apply. MMs that were 'screened out' were mainly changes to the supporting text.

A table setting out the likely sustainability impacts of all the City Plan policies (as adopted) can be found in Appendix 1.

How the results of consultation have been taken into account:

The SEA Directive requires that opinions expressed by consultees be taken into account during the development of a plan before the plan is adopted.

The development of the new City Plan formally started with the publication of the draft Regulation 18 statement for public consultation, which was undertaken between June to July 2017. At this time, the council also published a draft scoping report for its Integrated Impact Assessment for consultation.

² The main changes to the City Plan that were informed by the IIA process are set out in section 2.2 of the IIA.

³ See section 7 of the IIA Addendum Equalities Impact Assessment

Representations made during the Regulation 18 consultation informed the preparation of the draft policies in the Plan, following which an informal consultation on the draft City Plan was run between 12 November and 21 December 2018.

A revised City Plan which considered the comments received during the informal consultation and an updated IIA were published for public consultation under Regulation 19, between June and July 2019. The council also published a response to the issues raised through the informal consultation as part of a Consultation Statement (June 2019). The statement set out how the issues had been taken into account and informed the revised policy wording.

At submission stage, in November 2019, the council published a new Consultation Statement (November 2019) which contained a response to the issues raised through the Regulation 19 consultation and also explained how they had been taken into account when preparing the submission version of the City Plan. A Duty-to-cooperate Statement (November 2019) was also published and contained further information on how the comments received from statutory consultees had been considered.

From Regulation 18 consultation to adoption, at each consultation stage, copies of the IIA and other relevant documents were available online and at City Hall for inspection by the public at all reasonable times and free of charge.

The process of SEA requires notification consultation with the three key environmental bodies:

- Natural England;
- Historic England; and
- the Environment Agency.

At each consultation stage, all three bodies were consulted on the relevant documents. However, no comments were made on the IIA Framework (2019) itself by these bodies. Representations from both statutory and non-statutory stakeholders made on the IIA and any of its Addendums were considered and, where appropriate, amendments were made.

Following submission of the City Plan to the Secretary of State, the Examination of the City Plan began. No matters were raised during the public hearings of the Examination in Public in relation to the SA or SEA elements of the IIA. Concerns were however raised in relation to the Equalities Impact Assessment and were discussed during the hearing sessions of the Examination in Public.

At the close of the hearings, the Planning Inspectors asked the council to consult on a schedule of proposed Main Modifications (MMs), that they considered were necessary to make the City Plan sound. They required the council to consider the MMs implications on the SA findings. The council therefore published the schedule for consultation alongside an 'IIA – Addendum Sustainability Appraisal on the MMs in November 2020.

The Planning Inspectors' considered the responses to the MMs consultation when drafting their final report. The Planning Inspectors' Report on the Examination of the Westminster City Plan 2019-2040 was published on 19 November 2020. It recommends the inclusion of the Main Modifications in the City Plan and concludes the City Plan 2019-2040 (with MMs) is sound and can be adopted.

Reasons for choosing the plan as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives:

The IIA process has provided a means of assessing the positive and negative effects of the City Plan policies in light of the key issues. For each policy area, the IIA process has explored reasonable

alternatives and assessed their sustainability to ensure that, on balance, the most sustainable policy option was selected and incorporated into the City Plan. The findings of the IIA on the reasonable alternatives, together with the reasons for selecting or rejecting the options, were reported in the IIA. Overall, the reasons for choosing the spatial strategy for Westminster as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives that were considered, was that the assessment indicated that the chosen spatial strategy realised the vision, objectives and spatial growth strategy for Westminster with the most benefits and the least negative effects for sustainable development.

The detailed IIA analysis on reasonable alternatives within the 'IIA Addendum Alternative Options Report (March 2020)' includes clarification on growth options that were not considered to represent reasonable alternatives.

Monitoring the effects of the implementation of the plan

The SEA Regulations require that the significant environmental effects of implementing the City Plan should be monitored with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage, so it is possible to undertake appropriate remedial action.

Local Planning Authorities are required to produce Authority Monitoring Reports on the progress of Local Plans. Government Guidance on SA/SEA advises on a pragmatic approach with shared monitoring for the SA/SEA and the Local Plan.

The Monitoring Framework in the City Plan 2019-2040 includes a wide range of indicators that also relate to the SA Framework. It is considered that these indicators will be sufficient to identify any unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and provides information on the predicted effects from the SA.

The council's annual Authority Monitoring Report will be the key document monitoring the effectiveness and impacts of the City Plan policies.

Appendix 1 - Effects of the adopted City Plan policies

This table sets out the effects of the City Plan 2019-2040 policies (as adopted).

If comparing this table to the table in Annex 1 of the Integrated Impact Assessment, please note that policy 10 'Affordable housing contributions in the CAZ' was deleted during the Examination and that the numbering of the subsequent policies has therefore changed.

Westminster's City Plan policies	SA Objectives																	
	Communities	Crime reduction	Housing	Health & wellbeing	Climate change	Natural resources	Flood risk & water quality	Biodiversity	Air quality	Noise	Transport	Waste	Heritage	Public realm & townscape	Open space	Employment opportunities	Economy	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
Chapter 1 – Spatial Strategy Policies																		
1. Westminster's spatial strategy	+	0	++	++	++	++	0	0	++	0	++	0	++	++	0	++	++	
2. Spatial Development Priorities: West End Retail and Leisure Special Policy Area and Tottenham Court Road Opportunity Area	++	0	++	++	0	+	0	0	++	0	++	0	++	++	0	++	++	
3. Spatial Development Priorities: Paddington Opportunity Area	++	0	++	++	0	+	0	0	++	0	++	0	0	++	++	++	++	
4. Spatial Development Priorities: Victoria Opportunity Area	++	0	++	++	++	+	0	0	++	0	++	0	+	++	+	++	++	
5. Spatial Development Priorities: North West Economic Development Area	++	0	+	++	0	0	0	+	0	0	+	0	0	++	++	++	++	
6. Spatial Development Priorities: Church Street / Edgware Road and Ebury Bridge Estate Housing Renewal Areas	++	0	++	++	+	0	0	+	++	0	+	0	0	++	++	++	++	
7. Managing development for Westminster's people	++	+	++	++	+	+	+	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	+	+	
Chapter 2 – Housing Policies																		
8. Housing delivery	++	+	++	++	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+
9. Affordable housing	++	0	++	++	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+
10. Housing for specific groups	++	0	++	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11. Innovative housing delivery	++	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Westminster's City Plan policies	SA Objectives																
	Communities	Crime reduction	Housing	Health & wellbeing	Climate change	Natural resources	Flood risk & water quality	Biodiversity	Air quality	Noise	Transport	Waste	Heritage	Public realm & townscape	Open space	Employment opportunities	Economy
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
12. Housing quality ⁴	++	0	++	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0
Chapter 3 – Economy and Employment Policies																	
13. Supporting economic growth	+	0	+	++	0	+	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	+	0	++	++
14. Town Centres, high streets and the CAZ	++	++	++	++	0	+	0	0	0	0	++	0	+	+	0	++	++
15. Visitor economy	++	++	0	++	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	++	+	0	++	++
16. Food, drink and entertainment	++	++	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	++	++
17. Community infrastructure and facilities	++	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	++
18. Education and skills	++	0	+	++	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	++
19. Digital infrastructure and information and communications technology	++	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	++
20. Soho Special Policy Area	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	++
21. Mayfair and St. James's Special Policy Area	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+
22. Harley Street Special Policy Area	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	+	+
23. Savile Row Special Policy Area	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	+	+
Chapter 4 – Connections Policies																	
24. Sustainable transport	++	++	0	++	++	+	0	0	++	+	++	0	0	+	0	0	++
25. Walking and cycling	+	0	0	++	++	++	0	0	++	0	++	0	0	+	0	0	++
26. Public transport and infrastructure	++	0	0	++	++	++	0	0	++	+	++	0	0	++	0	0	++

⁴ Officers have identified an error in the 'IIA Addendum – Sustainability Appraisal of the Main Modifications' (November 2020) in relation to Policy 12. The report, under the heading 'Reasonable alternatives' (page 3) states that "a negative impact has resulted against the noise objective as greater flexibility can give rise to applicants not providing external amenity space in noisy areas". This is, again, repeated under the heading '3.0 Appraising proposed modifications' (page 11). Under heading '4.0 Conclusions and next steps' (page 12) the report states that "a minor negative impact on the health and wellbeing objective has been recorded, recognising that the greater flexibility the policy provides may contribute to applicants not providing external amenity space in noisy areas." Clarification is required to confirm that no change in the cumulative appraisal of Policy 12 against Objectives 4 and 10 of the IIA Framework was identified as a result of the IIA assessment on the Main Modifications. The latest assessment confirmed that the overall scoring in relation to these objectives remains as at Regulation 19 stage.

Westminster's City Plan policies	SA Objectives																	
	Communities	Crime reduction	Housing	Health & wellbeing	Climate change	Natural resources	Flood risk & water quality	Biodiversity	Air quality	Noise	Transport	Waste	Heritage	Public realm & townscape	Open space	Employment opportunities	Economy	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
27. Parking	0	0	++	++	++	++	0	0	++	0	++	0	0	++	0	0	++	
28. Highway access and management	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	++	0	0	++	
29. Freight and servicing	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	++	+	++	0	0	++	0	0	++	
30. Technological innovation in transport	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	++	
31. Waterways and waterbodies	0	0	0	++	0	0	+	++	0	0	+	0	+	0	++	0	++	
Chapter 5 – Environment Policies																		
32. Air quality	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+
33. Local environmental impacts	+	0	+	++	0	0	++	+	+	++	0	0	+	+	+	+	0	
34. Green infrastructure	++	0	0	++	++	++	++	++	++	+	+	0	+	++	++	0	+	
35. Flood risk	0	0	0	+	+	0	++	+	0	0	0	+	+	0	+	0	+	
36. Energy	0	0	+	+	++	++	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	
37. Waste management	+	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	
Chapter 6 – Design and Heritage Policies																		
38. Design principles	++	++	++	++	++	++	0	+	0	0	0	0	++	++	+	0	0	
39. Westminster's heritage	0	0	0	++	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	++	+	++	++	
40. Townscape and Architecture	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	++	++	0	0	
41. Building height	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	+	++	0	0	+	
42. Building height in the Housing Renewal Areas	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	+	++	0	0	+	
43. Public realm	++	++	0	++	0	0	0	+	0	0	++	0	+	++	0	0	0	
44. Security measures in the public realm	0	++	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	
45. Basement development	0	0	0	+	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	++	+	0	0	0	