

## **ACCRINGTON AREA ACTION PLAN**

### **POST-ADOPTION ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This statement documents how environmental considerations have been addressed in the preparation of the Accrington Area Action Plan (AAP). It fulfils the requirements of Regulation 16, paragraph 4, of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations<sup>1</sup>.

SEA regulations relating to environmental considerations have been fully incorporated into wider Sustainability Appraisal processes, covering environmental, social and economic considerations. All references to sustainability appraisal below, include the environmental considerations required by the SEA Regulations.

The Examination in Public (EIP) for the Accrington AAP has been completed following Hearings held in September 2011. Relevant extracts from the Inspectors Report are included below.

Hyndburn Borough Council resolved to adopt the Accrington AAP at a meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

#### **SEA REGULATIONS REQUIREMENTS**

The following information covers the matters referred to in Regulation 16, paragraph 4, sections (a) – (f).

##### **(a) How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Accrington AAP**

The Accrington AAP was advised by Sustainability Appraisal (SA) throughout its preparation. SA reports (also fulfilling the SEA requirements) have been prepared and consulted on at all stages. The final SA report was included with the submission documents (see AAAP\_Sub1.3 and Appendices in AAAP\_Sub1.3a - g). An addendum report was also prepared to reflect final changes to the AAP.

The formal SA processes and reporting requirements were carried out by an external independent consultant. This SA work was advised by workshop discussions with a Sustainability Appraisal Panel including representation from various disciplines within Hyndburn Borough Council together with statutory agencies, voluntary and community representatives.

Appropriate Assessment is required by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (Habitat Regulations). It provides an assessment of the potential effects of planning documents on sites of international nature conservation value, collectively known as European sites or Natura 2000 sites.

---

<sup>1</sup> Regulation 16 (Information as to adoption of plan or programme) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument 2004 No.1633)

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report was prepared and consulted on for the Accrington AAP together with the Hyndburn Core Strategy. The Screening Report concluded that "the Accrington AAP (and the Core Strategy) would not have any significant effects, either alone or in combination, on the function or viability of any Natura 2000 sites or prevent any of the Natura 2000 sites from maintaining their species or habitats in favourable condition."

Flood risk assessment has been carried out in detail for the Accrington AAP (see document ref Post\_2.23). This resulted in changes to the document, including omission of one development site and numerous policy changes including guidance to encourage deculverting

Paragraph 88 of the Inspectors report says "The AAP has been subject to extensive consultation and Sustainability Appraisal at all stages of its preparation [AAAP\_Sub1.3-1.4], and mitigation measures have been addressed or will be reflected in subsequent development briefs."

#### **(b) How the environmental report has been taken into account**

Commentary on how the Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA requirements) influenced the development of the AAP is included in the SA report (AAAP\_Sub1.3), in addition:

- Section 2.2, Table 2.1, page 8 - summarises the stages in development of the Accrington AAP and the SA processes
- Section 6 page 26 (together with Appendix D), covers the SA of four alternative options for the AAP, concluding that none of the alternative options in isolation would provide for sustainable development within the town centre. It was therefore considered that a hybrid approach would be required to ensure a balance between economic growth and social and environmental regeneration. This is the approach that was taken forward through the further development of the AAP.

Recommendations and Mitigation measures are documented throughout the SA report. These will also be considered during the preparation of more detailed development briefs.

Flood risk assessment has been carried out in detail for the Accrington AAP (see document ref Post\_2.23). This resulted in changes to the document, including omission of one development site and numerous policy changes including guidance to encourage deculverting.

Paragraph 104 of the Inspectors report says:-

"SA has been carried out at all stages during the preparation of the CS & AAAP [CS\_Sub1.5-1.8/AAAP\_Sub1.3-1.4], including details of how the SA influenced the final plans, and is adequate [CS\_Sub1.9/ AAAP\_Sub1.5].

The Habitat Regulations AA Screening Reports set out why AA is not necessary [CS\_Supp3.6/AAAP\_Supp1.1]."

**(c) How opinions expressed in response to consultation on the Accrington AAP and the Sustainability Appraisal report have been taken into account**

The Regulation 30 (1) (d) Statement (AAAP\_Sub3.2) lists the various stages at which engagement was undertaken, the methods and timing of that engagement and how each stage influenced the development of the document. A section specifically documents the sustainability appraisal processes together with the consultation and involvement arrangements.

In relation to the Appropriate assessment screening report, at Publication stage Natural England commented, saying "Natural England commented upon the draft appropriate Assessment Screening Report in our letter of 22 January 2010. Our advice appears to be reflected in the revised document, and we have no additional comments to make at this time."

**(d) how the results of any consultations entered into with other Member States have been taken into account**

This is not relevant to the Accrington AAP.

**(e) the reasons for choosing the Accrington AAP as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives**

Four options presented in the Issues and Options Report were evaluated against consultation responses and Sustainability Appraisal. The preferred option for the town centre emerged following public consultation and SA and formed the basis of the Accrington AAP.

The SA report (see AAAP\_Sub1.3 and Appendices in AAAP\_Sub1.3a - g) documents the SA of alternative options, concluding that none of the alternative options in isolation would provide for sustainable development within the town centre. It was therefore considered that a hybrid approach would be required, to ensure a balance between economic growth and social and environmental regeneration.

**(f) the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Hyndburn Core Strategy**

Part D of the AAP includes a section on monitoring and a table is presented that represents a "town centre health check". As part of this work it would be necessary to establish a baseline position and to monitor changes against that position. Some comparison with other similar towns would also be beneficial.

The monitoring outline includes some of the indicators and targets identified by the SA report. It is intended to be refined and ongoing work will reflect further environmental and social considerations.

Paragraph 101 of the Inspectors report says:-

“Part D of the AAP sets out details of monitoring and implementation of the plan’s proposals. Several changes have been made to this part of the AAP, including changes to public sector funding sources. HBC proposes to update and clarify the accompanying implementation and phasing table **[A56-57]**, which will ensure that the arrangements for implementing the AAP’s proposals are more effective and accurate, and soundly based.”