

Core Strategy Constraints and Soundness Tests

The Core Strategy and subsequent development plan documents are required to be prepared in accordance with **legislative requirements** and to meet three main **tests of soundness**. This will be assessed through the examination process by an independent Planning Inspector.

Legal Compliance

This includes:

- complying with Regulations and other documents including the Local Development Scheme (timetable for the LDF) and the Statement of Community Involvement;
- regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy;
- subject to a Sustainability Appraisal;
- conformity with the South East Plan.

Tests of Soundness

There are three main tests of soundness.

a) Justified

- Participation – has there been effective engagement?
- Research and fact finding – is the content of the DPD justified by the evidence? Is it up to date?
- Alternatives - can it be shown that the Local Planning Authority's chosen approach is the most appropriate given the reasonable alternatives? This should be reflected in the sustainability appraisal.

b) Effective

- Deliverable – This includes - sound infrastructure delivery planning; having no regulatory or national barriers to delivery; delivery partners signed up to it; and coherence with strategies of neighbouring authorities
- Flexible is the Plan flexible enough to respond to unexpected changes in circumstances?
- Able to be monitored - does the Plan contain targets and milestones that relate to delivery of the policies? Needs to be clear how these are to be measured.

c) Consistent with national policy

- The DPD should be consistent with national policy. Where there is a departure LPAs must provide clear and convincing reasoning to justify their approach.

