

Sustainability Appraisal : Non – Technical Summary

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The District of Easington is publishing a Local Development Framework (LDF) Development Plan Document (DPD), which incorporates a Core Strategy and Development Management policies. DPDs need to be subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA), under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The SAs must also meet the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with European Directive 2001/42/EC (also known as the SEA directive). This SA, incorporating SEA, was under taken in line with government guidance
- 1.2 This is a non - technical summary of the full SA report of the Easington Core Strategy and Development Management DPD, which will be published for consultation at the same time as the Preferred Options document, providing the public and statutory bodies with an opportunity to express their opinions on the SA report and to use it as a reference point when commenting on the Core Strategy and Development Management DPD.

2 Methodology

- 2.1 The approach that has been adopted is based on the process set out in the Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Documents (DCLG November 2005). Figure 1 below demonstrates the stages of the DPD production corresponding to the SA production stages.

DPD Stage 1: Pre-production- Evidence Gathering
SA Stages and tasks
<p>Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1: Identifying other relevant plans, programmes and polices, and sustainability objectives • A2: Collecting baseline information • A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems • A4: Developing the SA framework • A5: Consulting in the scope of the SA
DPD Stage 2: Production – Prepare Draft DPD
SA stages and tasks
<p>Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B1: Testing DPD objectives against SA Framework • B2: Developing the DPD options • B3: Predicting the effects of the draft DPD • B4: Evaluating the effects of the draft DPD • B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects • B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the DPD.
<p>Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C1: Preparing the SA Report

<p>Stage D: Consulting on the preferred options of the DPD and SA Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D1: Public participation on the SA Report and draft DPD • D2: Assessing significant changes
<p>DPD Stage 3: Adoption</p>
<p>SA Stages and Tasks</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D3: Making decisions and providing information
<p>Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the DPD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E1: Finalising aims and methods of monitoring • E2: Responding to adverse effects

Figure 1 – Incorporating SA within the DPD process

2.2 Stage A was completed in July 2006 with the publication of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

2.3 Stages B and C were carried out by evaluating the options using the appraisal framework developed in the Scoping Report. The significance of effects and mitigation measure were identified and documented through the SA report.

3 Who carried out the SA?

3.1 It is essential that an objective independent assessment of emerging policies and proposals is made. For this reason and to ensure that sufficient resources are available, the District of Easington, in partnership with other Districts and the County Council appointed a team of staff to assist in preparing SA reports. These officers have helped to coordinate the production of the DPD and provide the objective independent assessment its policies and proposals.

4 Characterisation of Easington and Key Sustainability Issues

4.1 A workshop was held in March 2006 to identify the key sustainability issues to be addressed as part of the appraisal. Attendees included various partners including East Durham Business Service, East Durham LSP, Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder, East Durham Homes and Council officers.

5 The SA Framework

5.1 The framework has been informed by a Scoping Report which sought to identify sustainability appraisal objectives, criteria and indicators through which DPDs can be appraised, measured and monitored. From this, 14 sustainability appraisal objectives and a range of sustainability appraisal criteria were proposed. These were devised to enable the effects of the DPDs on sustainability to be measured. Consultations at the Scoping Report stage have enabled the sustainability objectives to be revised as follows:

1. To enhance the sense of a strong, inclusive community
2. To provide everybody with the opportunity to live in a decent and affordable home
3. To improve the health of local people
4. To reduce poverty
5. To improve community safety and reduce the fear of crime
6. To improve sustainable travel options and access to basic goods, services and amenities

7. To improve education, training and life long learning and maintain a healthy labour market
8. To develop a sustainable and diverse economy which supports high employment levels in the district
9. To protect and enhance cultural heritage and the historic environment
10. To protect and enhance urban and rural landscape quality and character
11. To reduce waste and manage consumption of natural resources prudently
12. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity
13. To protect and improve the quality of surface, ground and coastal waters
14. To reduce the causes or adverse impacts of climate change and protect local air quality.

6 Plan Issues and Options

6.1 In 2006, the Council published two Issues and Options papers on a Core Strategy and Policies for Development Control. These papers were discussed widely through consultation with the East Durham LSP, town and parish councils and the wider community through area forums, the youth forum, a targeted citizens' panel representing a cross section of the community, and the general public through correspondence and publicity. Almost 70 responses were received with comments on nearly 600 issues. These have helped inform the preparation of the Core Strategy and Development Management DPD.

6.2 The **issues** from the two Issues and Options papers fall under 3 categories;

Strong, safe, healthy communities

How should towns develop in the future?

Where should new housing be built?

How can we manage housing renewal?

How should we deal with vacant and derelict land?

Should we alter the settlement boundaries?

How do we create better quality urban space to improve the quality of life for residents?

A thriving economy and learning culture

Do we have the right type of employment sites?

How can we encourage more leisure facilities?

How can we make employment accessible?

How can we support development of education, skills and training?

How do we manage control of development to maintain a supply of employment land?

How should information and telecommunications equipment be managed?

How can we ensure good access to employment sites?

An improved and protected environment

How should we protect the countryside?

How should we protect our heritage?

How do we manage coast and countryside?

How can we manage development for energy regeneration and energy conservation?

6.3 The **options** concentrate on the main issues and consider different approaches that could be taken to address them. Therefore to ensure the preferred options are underpinned by the principles of sustainable development, a range of options were subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. Therefore, this stage predicts the social, environmental and economic effects of the options being considered in the DPD process.

7 Results of Appraisal

7.1 The results of the appraisal identified preferred sustainable options. Full summaries for all the options considered in the Core Strategy and Policies for Development Controls DPDs are appended to the main SA report. These findings assisted in drafting the Core Strategy and Development Management DPD.

8 How the SA has impacted on the Preferred Options

8.1 The options have evolved from the two 'Issues and Options' documents to form the Preferred Options. The following table summarises how the SA has influenced the priorities put forward to the preferred options. The second column illustrates which priority was taken forward through the planning process and any policies that relate to it. The final column shows the recommended option. If the SA recommendation differs from the preferred option, an explanation is given and any mitigation that has been used.

Issue	Preferred Option taken forward	What the SA recommended
<i>Core Strategy Issues</i>		
CS1. How should our towns develop in the future?	Taken forward in Policy CS1	<i>Not appraised</i>
CS2. Where should new housing be built in the District?	A combination of priorities 1 and 2. Taken forward in Policies CS1, CS6	Option 1 was recommended. Option 2 is not opposed and will supplement Policy CS1 to highlight areas that have capacity for urban renewal and meet the social objectives.
CS3. How can we improve existing housing?	A combination of priorities 2 and 3. Taken forward in Policies CS6, CS7, CS10, CS11, CS12	Option 2 recommended. Option 3 promotes affordable housing in all new schemes which would not be opposed by the SA. As a combined option they generate stability and housing choice through renewal. Mitigation is given through policies that embed renewable energy and to encourage sustainable construction..
CS4. How should we deal with vacant land and buildings?	Priority 1 and 4 have been carried forward into the preferred option paper. Taken forward in Polices CS1, CS6, CS5, CS14	Option 3 was recommended which encourage redevelopment of brownfield sites according to contribution to sustainability of the main towns and surrounding settlements. However, the need for housing renewal in former colliery villages is acute and they may be located outside areas in Option 3. The negative impacts which were

Issue	Preferred Option taken forward	What the SA recommended
		scored in the options taken forward (identified in Appraisal Summary), have been mitigated by criteria in policies CS1,CS6 which ensures to meet housing needs and regeneration priorities of the District, contribute towards the target of new housing of previously developed land, create balanced and inclusive communities. Policy CS7 stipulates the provision for affordable housing.
CS5. Do we need to review settlement boundaries to manage new development in the villages and make them more attractive places?	A combination of priorities 2 and 3. Taken forward in Policy CS1	Option 1 was recommended by the SA.. Development should be within larger rural villages and main towns where services are available and regeneration needs are the greatest. The options taken forward are mitigated through CS1, CS2, CS7 and CS5. The negative effects highlighted in the priorities taken forward should be addressed in the Site Allocations DPD.
CS6. Do we have the right type of sites available to attract new employers?	All priorities have been taken forward in the preferred options paper. Taken forward in Policies CS2, CS3, CS4, CS5 , CS10, CS11.	All options were considered sustainable and viable, Option 4 considered the highest. SA does not recognise a specific employment type needed in this option. The only negative within the options identified through the appraisal process will be mitigated by policy CS10 which will promote a high quality of design, particularly where growth of the tourism sector will affect the coast line.
CS7. How can we help to create the right conditions for successful business?	All 4 options are taken forward to the preferred option stage. Taken forward in Policies CS1, CS2, CS3 , CS5 , CS10, CS11	SA recommended all options were sustainable, Option 2 as the most sustainable. Negatives scorings within some of the options are mitigated in policies CS5 which will promote sustainable travel and access. In addition, option 3 includes improving transport facilities to encourage sustainable travel to employment.
CS8. How can we encourage more leisure facilities?	Priority 1 has been taken forward into preferred option. Taken forward in Policies CS3 and CS4.	Option 1 is recommended.
CS9. How can we support development of education, skills and training?	Priority 1 can only be encouraged cannot be implemented. Will be encouraged in introduction and through economic policies. Priority 2 is not deliverable. Taken forward in Policies CS2, CS3, CS5	Option 1 is recommended.

Issue	Preferred Option taken forward	What the SA recommended
<p>CS10. How should we protect and improve our countryside?</p>	<p>Priority 1 and 2 has been taken forward to preferred options paper.</p> <p>Taken forward in Policies CS4, CS9, CS12, CS13, CS14</p>	<p>Option 3 is recommended through SA. Option 1 has a positive scoring. The negatives can be mitigated through policies on coastal protection thereby protecting habitats, landscapes and biodiversity.</p> <p>Although there are no negative scorings in Option 2, there are few positives. SA would recommend the wording for Option 2 to include 'sustainable' enhancements along strategic transport routes.</p>
<p>CS11. How should we protect and improve our built heritage?</p>	<p>Both priorities have been taken forward in preferred options paper.</p> <p>Taken forward in Policies CS3 , CS10 and CS12.</p>	<p>Scoring on the SA comes out equal and recommends both are taken forward.</p>
<p><i>Policies For Development Control Issues*</i></p>		
<p>DC1. How do we create better quality urban space to improve the quality of life for residents?</p>	<p>All priorities have been taken forward into the preferred options paper. They are considered throughout the document in the introduction and numerous policies.</p> <p>Taken forward in Policies CS9, CS10, CS14.</p>	<p>SA recommended Option 1 overall. None of the options scored negatively as each satisfy the issue in different ways. Taking all the options forward is not opposed though the SA process.</p>
<p>DC2. How do we manage the control of development to maintain a supply of employment land?</p>	<p>Priorities 1 and 2 have been taken forward.</p> <p>Taken forward in Policies CS2, and CS3.</p>	<p>SA recommended Option 3. Overall, the appraisal shows little difference in the 3 options, they highlight different issues. Therefore combining options 1 and 2 is not opposed. Negative impacts of the priorities taken forward are mitigated through CS11, promoting renewable energy and detailing sustainable buildings.</p>
<p>DC3. How should information and telecommunications equipment be managed?</p>		<p>This option has been withdrawn at the preferred option stage as the topic is covered by National Policy and Easington will follow guidance given in Planning Policy Guidance 8, Telecommunications (PPG8).</p>
<p>DC4. How can we ensure good access to employment sites?</p>	<p>Both priorities taken forward to Preferred Options.</p> <p>Taken forward in Policy CS5 .</p>	<p>The two options score the same, however Option 1 is more proactive. SA would not oppose to merging the options, however the appraisal process highlighted the need to address sustainable transport through Core Strategy Policy to ensure a transport plan is produced with planning application as referred to in CS5.</p>

Issue	Preferred Option taken forward	What the SA recommended
		SA would recommend the word 'encouraged' to include Travel Plans be replaced with 'required'.
DC5. How do we properly manage coast and countryside development?	All priorities have been taken forward. Taken forward in Policies CS4 , CS10, CS12, CS13, CS14.	SA recommends Option 1. In isolation of each other, many score neutral, as a combination there are benefits therefore SA does not oppose taking all options forward as a shared priority. CS13 mitigates the negative scoring through protection of biodiversity.
DC6. How can we manage development for energy generation and energy conservation?	Both priorities have been addressed and taken forward. Taken forward to Policies CS11, CS12.	SA recommends combining the two options. Option 1 in the Issues and Options paper recommends 'on-site renewable energy development', SA would like to see that brought forward to the policy wording by including 'local' renewable energy or 'low carbon sources' in CS11.

Table 1 How the SA has influenced the Preferred Options.

9 Evaluating the effects

- 9.1 The Core Strategy and Development Management document includes a spatial strategy and strategic policies to deliver the Council's vision. It provides a framework for development management decisions by looking at broad locations for delivering new development in defined growth areas. This aims to utilize synergy by concentrating development in the main centres of Peterlee and Seaham and the surrounding villages. These represent the most accessible locations and ensure sustainable development is pursued in an integrated manner (as described in *Planning Policy Statement 1*) where communities can contribute to economic, social and cultural life of the area. This is apparent in CS1 The Spatial Strategy, CS2 Providing for Employment, CS3 Tourism and Visitors Attractions, CS7 Town and Local Centres and CS12 Protection and Enhancement of Landscape and Local Heritage.
- 9.2 When the cumulative effect of policies is considered, there may be conflicts that need to be resolved in the Preferred Options. For example, Peterlee is a main service centre including employment, retail and leisure services; it has an extensive business park and provides a large proportion of the districts jobs. Peterlee is a former New Town and therefore cannot supply sufficient previously developed land for its planned growth. This is dealt with in defined growth area of CS1 The Spatial Strategy and has identified settlements in surrounding areas as prescribed through the regional planning process.
- 9.3 The appendix of the SA report sets out the full appraisals of the cumulative effects with the 'total effects of all policies on the individual SA objective.