

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report



Non Technical Summary

This non-technical summary introduces the Local Development Framework, Sustainability Appraisal and highlights the main outcomes of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

What is the LDF?

The Local Development Framework (LDF) is a term used to describe a folder of documents, which includes all the local planning authority's local development documents. An LDF is usually comprised of

- Development Plan Documents (which form part of the statutory development plan)
- Supplementary Planning Documents (these may cover a range of issues and provides further detail of policies and proposals in a 'parent' Development Plan Document).

The Stafford Borough LDF is comprised of the 3 following documents:

- Core Strategy Development Plan Document
- Allocations and Site Specific Policy Development Plan Document
- Development Management Development Plan Documents

Details of the timetable of production for these 3 documents can be found in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) on the Boroughs [website](#)

What is Sustainability Appraisal?

Sustainability Appraisal is a tool used to appraise planning policy documents in order to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations.

Why carry out Sustainability Appraisal?

Sustainability Appraisal is a compulsory requirement under the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. Councils must also comply with the requirements of the European Community 2001/42/EEC Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.

What is the Sustainability Appraisal Framework?

The Sustainability Appraisal Framework is the framework that will be used to appraise planning policies. The framework is made up of sustainability objectives, indicators and targets tailored to the key sustainability issues for Stafford Borough.

What are the main stages of the Sustainability Appraisal?

Stage A Setting the context, objectives, baseline and scope for the SA (Scoping Stage)

Stage B Developing and refining plan options (SA Commentary)

Stage C Appraisal of the social, economic and environmental effects of the plan (SA Report)

Stage D Consulting on the plan and the SA Report

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Stage E Monitoring the implementation of the plan

Summary of the Scoping Report Findings

Drawing on the baseline data the following sustainability issues, problems and opportunities have been reported....

Environmental

- Loss of biodiversity habitats
- Quality of SSSI's is improving, but still below national target
- Whilst river biology and chemistry have improved over the last decade, both are still under the national average
- High % of new homes are being delivered on Previously Developed Land.
- Stafford's Biomass energy project will provide renewable energy and opportunities for further renewable energy development in the future



Social

- High levels of deprivation in some areas of the Borough
- Relatively high number of empty homes across the Borough, the majority of which are empty for more than 6 months
- Relatively high number of homeless households
- Low level of provision of affordable housing compared with rising house prices
- Lack of access to services and facilities in some parts of the Borough, especially in rural areas
- The level of outdoor space provision is much lower than the national target

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Economic

- Decline in manufacturing industry resulting in job losses
- Opportunities for tourist related economy
- Slight increase in VAT business start ups in Stafford
- Decline in agricultural industries
- Vacant units within the town centres
- Growth in out of town warehouses
- Proximity to motorway



Sustainability Objectives

The Scoping report suggests the following Sustainability Objectives. These will be used to assess planning policies, in order to determine whether planning policies are sustainable.

Non Technical Summary

Economic

1. To create high, stable and equitable levels of employment
2. To ensure high and stable levels of economic diversity and competitiveness that recognises social and environmental issues
3. To sustain the vitality and viability of Stafford Borough's towns and villages, and their communities
4. To support the needs of the local rural economy and communities
5. to reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change such as risk flooding, on public well-being, the economy and the environment

Social

1. To ensure that everyone has the opportunity of a decent and affordable home
2. To improve opportunities for access for all to work, education, health and local services
3. To reduce and prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime
4. To reduce the impact of noise and light pollution
5. To improve health, safety and well-being across the whole community

Community

1. To create a sense of community identity and belonging
2. To ensure tolerance, respect and engagement with people from different cultures, backgrounds and beliefs recognising their rights and responsibilities
3. To ensure all individuals and groups in society have the opportunity to effectively engage in issues relating to their community
4. To encourage a strong, inclusive, community and voluntary sector
5. To engender a sense of civic and neighbourhood values, responsibility and pride

Environmental

1. To reduce societal contributions to climate change
2. To protect and enhance biodiversity

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3. To protect and conserve soil
4. To protect and enhance water quality of the Borough's rivers whilst maximising their carrying capacity and achieving sustainable water resource management
5. To protect, enhance and, where necessary, restore designated landscape areas and town character, scenic beauty, local distinctiveness, and historic and cultural character

Next Steps

Once the Scoping stage has been completed the next stage of the process involves appraising plan options against the sustainability objectives, in the Sustainability Appraisal Commentary. Each plan option will be appraised against short, medium and long term time-scales and will also be compared against a 'do nothing' option.

Where there is a preferred option in terms of sustainability, this will be highlighted and contribute towards the policies in the Preferred Options stage of each Development Plan Document.

How can I get involved?

At the Scoping stage we are asking for any comments regarding the following:

- Plan Objectives
- Key Sustainability Issues
- Sustainability Appraisal Framework
- Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

If you would like to make any comments, view the complete document or require any further information please contact forwardplanning@staffordbc.gov.uk or call 01785 619591

Alternatively the full Scoping report can be viewed below in the 1 'Introduction' and on our [website](#)

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1.1 Plan making has always involved choices between different options for handling issues such as housing, transport, employment and the environment. Sustainability Appraisal provides a tool for helping authorities to identify sustainable approaches for dealing with key planning issues and environmental concerns.

1.2 In 1999 the Government set out four central aims for achieving Sustainable Development in 'A Better Quality of Life: A Strategy for Sustainable Development in the UK.' (DETR, 1999). The four aims are as follows:

- Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
- Effective protection of the environment
- Prudent use of natural resources
- Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment

1.3 To meet these aims 'Securing the Future – A UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy 2005' (Defra, 2005) presents the following guiding principles to bring together and build on existing principles in order to set out an overarching approach for Sustainable Development.

- living with environmental limits
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Achieving a sustainable economy
- Promoting good governance
- Using sound science responsibly

1.4 To be effective, Sustainability Appraisal (SA) must be fully integrated into the plan-making process. The SA will appraise each stage of the development plan's production, and audit key policy decisions. Sustainability Appraisal will monitor the effectiveness of the plan during its implementation in order to inform future revisions.

1.5 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) will apply to both types of Local Development Documents prepared by the Council, allowing Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to be appraised to determine whether they are likely to make a positive contribution to sustainable development objectives, and not just minimisation of adverse impacts. In the case of Development Plan Documents requiring both SA and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) the SEA requirements will be incorporated into the SA reports.

1.6 *The objective of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive is:*

“to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans . . . with a view to promoting sustainable development”.

1.7 *The full title of the European Community Directive is 'Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effect of certain plans and programmes on the environment'. However for the sake of brevity, this Scoping Report will refer to the Directive as the SEA Directive.*

1 Introduction

1.8 The objective of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive is

- Identifying strategic alternatives;
- Collecting baseline environmental information;
- More thorough prediction of significant environmental effects;
- Greater consultation of the public and statutory environmental agencies;
- Addressing and monitoring the significant environmental effects of the plan.

1.9 The SEA Directive defines environmental assessment as a procedure comprising of

- Preparing an environmental report on the likely significant effects;
- Preparing an environmental report on the likely significant effects of the draft plan;
- Carrying out consultation on the draft plan and the accompanying environmental report;
- Taking into account the environmental report and the results of consultation in decision making; and
- Providing information when the plan is adopted and showing how the results of the SEA have been taken into account.

1.10 The main difference between Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is that SEA is focused primarily on environmental effects, whilst SA incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive and goes further by examining the social and economic impacts of the plan. Therefore the SA process fully complies with the European Parliament's SEA Directive and the SEA Regulations prepared by the British Government.

Sustainability Appraisal and the Development Plan Process 2

2.1 It has been normal practice for those preparing and commenting on development plans to consider their likely environmental effects. Therefore the principle of assessing the environmental consequences of plans is not new. However what the SEA Directive and SA process require is the use of an explicit and systematic method to comprehensively and impartially identify and assess the environmental consequences of the development plan.

2.2 The method for completing a Sustainability Appraisal on a Development Plan Document (DPD) involves the process outlined in Figure 2.1 below. Although the approach is presented as a sequence relevant objectives, policies and proposals may be re-examined in light of the information gathered through the SA process and in associated consultations. The consultation process and submission of both the Sustainability Appraisal Reports and the Development Plan Documents will take place at the same time.

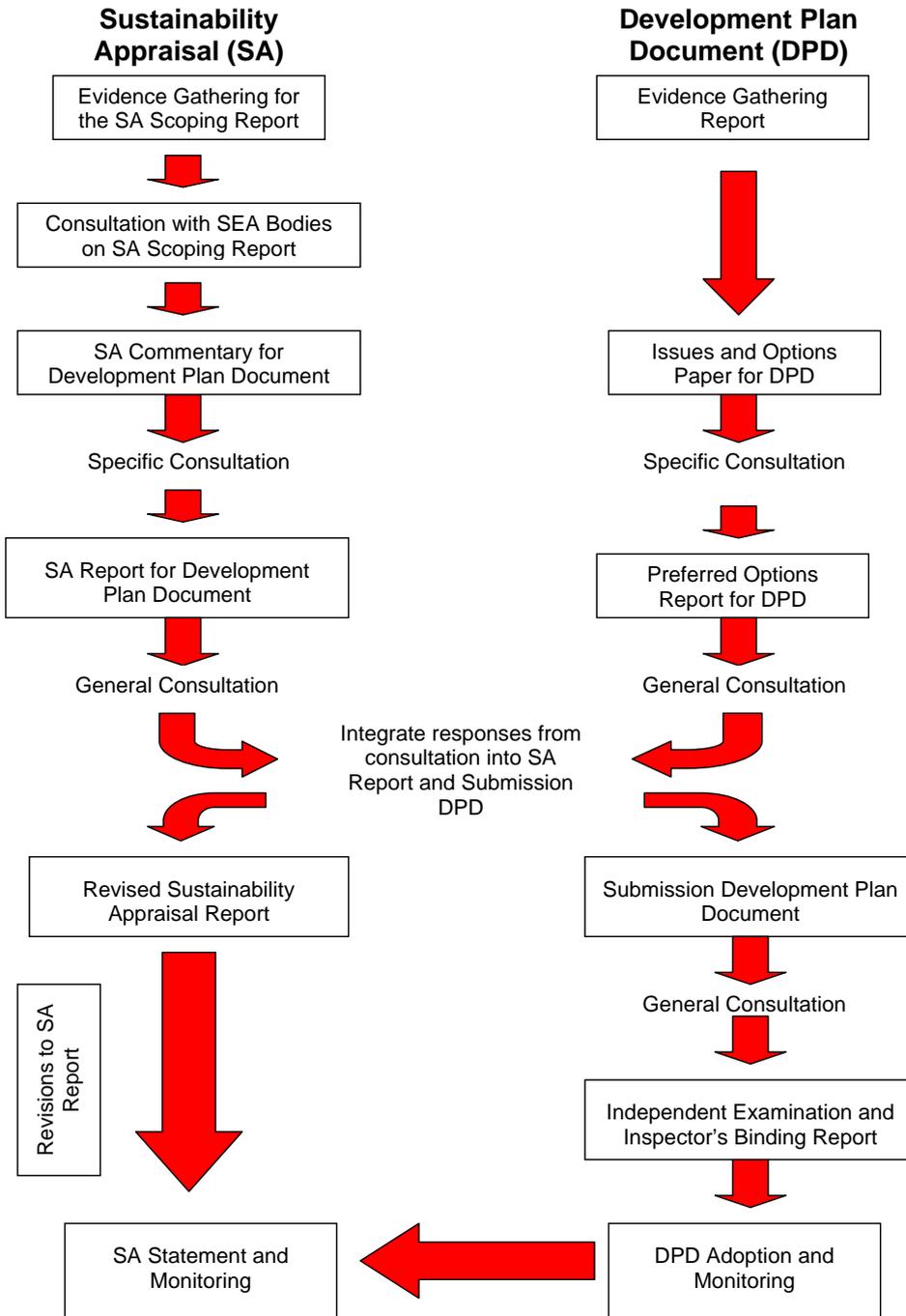
2.3 This Scoping Report covers the first stage of the process, Stage A – Scoping, providing a context for all elements of the LDF. Subsequently individual reports will be issued for each DPD. This Scoping Report is being consulted upon in order to decide the scope and level of detail for the Sustainability Appraisal Commentary and, subsequently, the Sustainability Appraisal Report and to ensure a robust and comprehensive Sustainability Appraisal process to appraise the Development Plan Document.

2.4 The Government has designated the Environment Agency, Natural England (previously English Nature and The Countryside Agency) and English Heritage as ‘authorities with environmental responsibilities’ through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. These agencies must be consulted by plan making authorities in England on the content of the Scoping Report and SEA requirements. Other agencies will also be consulted to provide feedback on the social and economic aspects of the Report.

2.5 Consultation on this Scoping Report will clarify the baseline information to be used for the Sustainability Appraisal process, identify all of the relevant plans, policies and programmes, refine the Sustainability Appraisal Framework and provide a context for next stages of the SA process.

2 Sustainability Appraisal and the Development Plan Process

Figure 2.1 Incorporating Sustainability Appraisal into the Development Plan Document Preparation Process



Plan Objectives 3

3.1 The Stafford Borough Local Development Framework consists of three Development Plan Documents (DPD's). The Core Strategy DPD will provide the strategic policy direction for guiding the preparation of subsequent Development Plan Documents. The Allocations and Site Specific Policy DPD will provide detailed information regarding to the location and use of land. The Development Management DPD will provide detailed policy on the management of development. Plan objectives will be appraised in the Sustainability Appraisal Commentary, based on the sustainability objectives.

Question SA 1

What do you think the plan objectives for the LDF should be?

4 Relevant Plans, Policies and Programmes

4.1 Stafford Borough Council has identified and reviewed relevant plans, policies, programmes and environmental objectives that will influence the Local Development Framework (LDF) in order to record how each Development Plan Document (DPD) will be affected by external factors. A review of relevant plans, policies and programmes (PPPs) has provided a focus for refining sustainability objectives and monitoring the plan objectives.

4.2 The following plans, policies and programmes have been identified as forming the assessment process. For further information, please see the Technical Appendices on our [website](#)

Local Development Framework

4.3 Relationships between these plans, policies and programmes have been identified, enabling potential synergies to be exploited and any inconsistencies or constraints to be highlighted in the Technical Appendices.

Where conflicts arise, principles of precedence between levels or types of plan, recent policy developments and legal requirements have been defined.

International PPP's

- The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development
- The European Spatial Development Perspective
- The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
- Natura 2000 – the Habitats Directive
- Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds – the Birds Directive
- Nitrates Directive
- Water Framework Directive
- Air Quality Framework Directive
- Waste Framework Directive
- Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters - Aarhus Convention
- Environment 2010: Our Future Our Choice - EU Sixth Environmental Action Programme of the European Community

National PPP's

- Securing the Future – Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005A Better
- Quality of life: A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK
- Energy White Paper – Our Energy Future: Creating a low carbon economy
- Urban White Paper – Our Towns and Cities: the future
- Rural White Paper – Our Countryside: the future. A Fair Deal for Rural England
- Rural Strategy 2004 (Defra)
- UK Fuel Poverty Strategy
- Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food (Defra)
- Sustainable Development Strategy – Foundations for our Future 2002 (Defra)
- Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future
- Ambitions for the Arts 2003-06 (Arts Council)

Relevant Plans, Policies and Programmes 4

- Tomorrow's Tourism (1999) and Tomorrow's Tourism Today (2004)
- Framework for the Future (Public libraries)
- Renaissance in the regions (museums)
- Listening to the past, speaking to the future (archives)
- Working with the Grain of Nature – Biodiversity Strategy for England (2002)
- England Forestry Strategy (Forestry Commission, 1998)
- A Space for Nature (English Nature, 1996)
- PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
- Supplement to PPS1: Planning and Climate Change (consultation)
- PPG 2 – Green belts
- PPS 3 – Housing
- PPG 4 – Industrial, commercial development and small firms
- PPG 5 – Simplified planning zones
- PPS 6 – Planning for Town centres
- PPS 7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- PPG 8 - Telecommunications
- PPS 9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- PPS 10 – Planning for Sustainable Waste Management
- PPS 11 – Regional Spatial Strategies
- PPS 12 - Local Development Frameworks
- PPG 13 – Transport
- PPG 14 – Development on unstable land
- PPG 15 – Planning and the historic environment
- PPG 16 – Archaeology and planning
- PPG 17 – Planning for open space, sport and recreation
- PPG 18 – Enforcing planning control
- PPG 19 – Outdoor advertisement control
- PPS 22 – Renewable Energy
- PPS 23 – Planning and Pollution Control
- PPG 24 – Planning and noise
- PPS 25 – Development and flood risk

Regional PPP's

- West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)
- The West Midlands Economic Strategy and Action Plan 2004 – 2010
- Regional Transport Strategy for the West Midlands
- Restoring the Region's Wildlife – Regional Biodiversity Strategy for the West Midlands (West Midlands Regional Biodiversity Partnership 2005)
- Regional Plan: Health Survey for England 1997 & 1998
- Sign up for Sport - A Regional Plan for Sport in the West Midlands: 2004-2008
- West Midlands Cultural Strategy 2001 – 2006
- West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy
- West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy

4 Relevant Plans, Policies and Programmes

- West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework 2004: Growing Our Future
- West Midlands Sustainable Development Framework
- West Midlands Regional Waste Strategy
- West Midlands Energy Strategy
- Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action for the West Midlands
- Sustainable Communities in the West Midlands: Building for the future
- West Midlands Regional Delivery Plan for Sustainable Farming and Food
- Advantage West Midlands Market Towns Initiative
- Regional Freight Strategy
- A vision for the Arts in the West Midlands 2003 – 2006 (Arts Council WM)
- Screen Image and Sound 3 year strategic business plan 2005 – 2008 (SIS Cluster Opportunity Group / AWM)

Local PPP's

- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011
- Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan
- Shaping the Future of Staffordshire 2005 – 2020: The Sustainable Strategy for the County
- Stafford Borough Community Plan 2002-2003
- Stafford Borough Council Economic Development Strategy
- Stafford Borough Council Housing Strategy
- Stafford Borough Council Biodiversity Strategy
- Stafford Borough Council Local Agenda 21 Strategy
- Stafford Borough Council Local Cultural Strategy
- Stafford Borough Council Stafford Town Centre Vision – Urban Design Framework
- Stafford Borough Council Crime Audit and the Community Safety Strategy
- Stafford Borough Council Conservation Strategy for the Historic Environment
- Stafford Borough Council Tree Strategy
- Stafford Borough Council Draft Heritage Strategy
- Stafford Borough Council Tourism – Prosperity in Partnership Strategy
- Stafford Borough Council Open Space Strategy
- Stafford Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy
- Stafford Borough Council Town Centre Management Strategy
- Stafford Borough Council Policy Statement on Flood and Coastal Defence
- Stafford Borough Council Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy
- Staffordshire County Council Draft Transport Strategy for the Stafford Rural Area
- Staffordshire County Council Stafford Urban Area Transport Strategy
- Staffordshire County Council Stone Urban Area Transport Strategy
- Staffordshire County Council Local Transport Plan 2000-2005
- Staffordshire County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plans
- Staffordshire County Council Planning for Landscape Change SPG (May 2001)
- Staffordshire County Council Cycling Strategy
- Staffordshire County Council Historic Landscape Characterisation Programme Draft Report
- Staffordshire County Council School Organisation Plan 2007 - 2012

Relevant Plans, Policies and Programmes 4

- Parish Plan – Mid West Stafford Market Towns Partnership (July 2004)
- Learning and Skills Council Workforce Development Strategy
- Learning and Skills Strategic Area Review report on Stafford District
- Business Link Strategic Plan
- Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan
- Local Environment Agency Plans
- Local Town and Parish Design Statements

Question SA 2

Do you have any suggestions for other plans, policies or programmes to be considered through the Sustainability Appraisal process?

5 Baseline Data for the Sustainability Appraisal

5.1 Stafford Borough Council has collected significant data about the current state of the environment, economy and society in order to assess the effects of implementing the Local Development Framework (LDF) from the sustainability perspective. This baseline data can be viewed within Appendix 2 of the Technical Appendices to the Scoping Report at the [Borough Website](#).

5.2 The following table provides a selection of baseline data which will be used as the basis for prediction and monitoring of environmental and other sustainability effects in order to monitor how the sustainability position is improving or deteriorating in relation to the LDF. This approach will help to identify issues and alternative ways of dealing with such issues in the future.

Table 5.1 Economic Baseline Data

Economic Baseline data					
Indicator	Quantified data	Comparators and targets	Assessment / Trend	Issue Identified?	Action / Issues for Plan / SA
Employment Rate	Stafford 78.5% Source: Annual population survey (Oct 04 - Sept 05)	West Midlands 73.6% England and Wales 74.6%	Performing well in comparison to the national and regional figure	Favourable position	Maintain and improve current position across the Borough
Unemployment rate	Stafford 2.6%	England and Wales 3.4%	Performing well in comparison to the national figure	Favourable position	Maintain and improve current position across the Borough
% increase in total number of VAT registered business	Stafford 6.5% increase	West Midlands 2.5% increase England 5.05%	Performing above national and regional figures	Favourable position	Maintain and improve upon current position
Retail Centre ranking - GOAD	Stafford ranks second highest in Southern Staffordshire	Stafford ranks 16th regionally and 166th nationally	Performing well	Favourable position	Maintain and improve services and facilities
Completion of Employment provision	41.2 hectares since 1996 5.15 hectares per annum	Structure Plan targets 150 hectares 1996 - 2011 Annual rate of 10 hectares per year	Below annual completion rate	Unfavourable situation - low completion rate	Bring forward employment land and increase delivery

Baseline Data for the Sustainability Appraisal 5

Economic Baseline data					
Indicator	Quantified data	Comparators and targets	Assessment / Trend	Issue Identified?	Action / Issues for Plan / SA
Vacant retail units (Source GOAD 2005)	6.51% vacant units in Stafford	10.57% GB average	Below national average but above other Staffordshire rates	Relatively unfavourable	Consider ways to reduce vacant units in town centre

Table 5.2 Social Baseline Data

Social Baseline					
Indicator	Quantified Data	Comparators and targets	Trend	Issue identified?	Action / Issues for Plan / SA
Affordable Housing (house price / earnings affordability ratio)	Stafford Males 5.5 Females 6.6	West Midlands Males 4.5 Females 5.5	Above West Midlands average	Unfavourable	Requirement for more affordable housing
Unfit Dwellings	3570 unfit dwellings 6.5% of housing unfit	North Staffordshire Housing Market Area 5.2% west Midlands 3.9%	Above North Staffordshire and West Midlands figures	Unfavourable	Consider ways to improve existing housing stock
Development within walking distance of a frequent bus service	Within the settlement of Stafford 100% of dwellings were within 350m of a 30 min bus route. Within smaller settlements 67% of dwellings were within 350m of a 30 minute bus route, 12% were within 350m of a 60 minute route	In 2001, 63% of housing completions in the West midlands were within 200m of a bus stop and 91% within 400m of a bus stop (Source RPG Monitoring Report 2002 / 2003)	Below West Midlands figure	Relatively favourable situation in the urban areas	Need to increase % of housing completion within 350m of a 30 minute bus route

5 Baseline Data for the Sustainability Appraisal

Social Baseline					
Indicator	Quantified Data	Comparators and targets	Trend	Issue identified?	Action / Issues for Plan / SA
	and 21% were not within 350m of a frequent bus route. (Source: ArcGIS)				
Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)	Within the Borough: One ward scores IMD 25+, four wards IMD 20-25. Remaining wards range IMD range 1-20.	Highfields ranks as 1588 most deprived within national ranking. Most deprived in West Midlands is Aston in Birmingham, 27 th in national ranking.	Most deprived ward lower than most deprived in West Midlands	Favourable situation against regional and national ranking	Focus on reducing social deprivation within communities across the Borough.
Percentage of households with less than 2 Rooms per Person (2001)	Stafford 3%	West Midlands average 5.7%, England Average 7.1%	Below regional and national level	Favourable	Focus on reducing social deprivation
Affordable / Special needs housing	10 affordable dwellings built in 2005/2006	1,100 affordable dwellings to be completed between 1996 and 2011, giving a yearly average of 73 affordable dwellings. (Source: Staffordshire Affordable Housing SPG)	Significant decrease on previous years total of 85 affordable dwellings.	Unfavourable	Need to increase number of affordable houses and remain consistent in delivery
Homelessness	237 households accepted as homeless in 2006 – 07	2,206 homeless households in West Midlands	Decrease from previous year but second highest in	Relatively unfavourable	Need to reduce the number of homeless households

Baseline Data for the Sustainability Appraisal 5

Social Baseline					
Indicator	Quantified Data	Comparators and targets	Trend	Issue identified?	Action / Issues for Plan / SA
			North Staffordshire Housing Market Area		
Crime	32.1 notifiable crimes recorded per 1,000 population	118.8 notifiable offences per 1,000 population in the West Midlands	A slight increase in notifiable crimes per 1,000 over the year before.	Relatively favourable situation.	Contribute to reducing the rates of crime in rural areas.
Participation in sport and Recreation	25.6% of the population take part regularly in sport and active recreation	19.3% in West Midlands, 21% in England	Performing well against regional and national figures	Relatively favourable position	Retain and enhance current position
Hectares of outdoor provision	1.1 ha per 1,000 population within Stafford Borough (Source: Stafford Borough Council: Playing Pitch Assessment)	National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) minimum standard of 1.6 hectares per 1,000 population	No suitable data available to define a trend	Relatively unfavourable	Increase amount of formal outdoor sports provision.

Table 5.3 Environmental Baseline Data

Environmental Indicators					
Indicator	Quantified Data	Comparators and Targets	Assessment / Trend	Issue Identified?	Action / issues for Plan / SA
Woodland Access	2.19% of population with access to 2+ hectare wood within 500 metres	9.42% of West Midlands population with access to 2+ hectares of wood within 500 metres	Below regional level	Relatively unfavourable	Increase access to woodland.

5 Baseline Data for the Sustainability Appraisal

Environmental Indicators					
Indicator	Quantified Data	Comparators and Targets	Assessment / Trend	Issue Identified?	Action / issues for Plan / SA
	(Source: Woodland Trust: 'Space for people: Targeting action for woodlands access')				
Length of cycleway	6,275 metres created in 2002 (Source: Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Plan Monitoring Report 2002)	No information available	5,353 metres better than the year before	Favourable	Ensure that quality provision remains high.
Air quality	No Air quality Management Schemes	26 Air Quality Management Schemes in the West Midlands	No measured deterioration of air quality	Favourable	No action required
Quality of SSSIs	87.4% of SSSIs in Stafford Borough in 'Favourable' or 'Unfavourable recovering'	Governments Public Service Agreement (PSA) Target is for 95% of SSSI's to be in 'favourable' or 'unfavourable recovering' by 2010	1999 - 48% of SSSIs in Staffordshire increase in quality of SSSIs	Relatively favourable situation	To be maintained and enhanced in order to meet PSA target
Employment land supply on PDL	Stafford 11.9 hectares 88.2% of PDL	West Midlands Region 62% of PDL	Above West Midlands average	Favourable	Maintain current position

Baseline Data for the Sustainability Appraisal 5

Environmental Indicators					
Indicator	Quantified Data	Comparators and Targets	Assessment / Trend	Issue Identified?	Action / issues for Plan / SA
(Source: ELA survey 2002/2003, SCC/2003 RELS, WMRA)					
Contaminated Land	No 'classified' contaminated land identified	No data	No data to compare to	None at present	To be monitored
Inland Water (River and Canal) Quality	Biology 2005 52% - Good Chemistry 2005 25% Good (Source: DEFRA)	Biology 2005 England 72% - Good Chemistry 2005 England 68% Good (Source: DEFRA)	Biology is improving with the proportion classified as 'Good' increasing by 14% since 2000. Chemistry is declining with a 9% decrease since 2001	While biology has improved over time, chemistry has fallen over the last few years. Figures for both biology and chemistry are below the national averages for 'good' quality water so further improvement is required.	Continue to improve inland water quality
Daily domestic water use (per capita consumption, litres)	136 litres	Average for England and Wales is 150 litres per capita consumption per day. Code for Sustainable Homes aims for	Below average for England and Wales	Favourable in comparison to England and Wales average but needs improving to meet aim	Encourage water efficiency in LDF documents

5 Baseline Data for the Sustainability Appraisal

Environmental Indicators					
Indicator	Quantified Data	Comparators and Targets	Assessment / Trend	Issue Identified?	Action / issues for Plan / SA
		between 80 – 120 litres per capita consumption per day			
Buildings 'at risk'	7 out of 800 listed buildings within Stafford Borough that are on the 'at risk register'	3.4 % of Grade I + II* in England are at risk	Performing well against national figure	Relatively favourable position	Retain and enhance current position
Achieving national / regional / local conservation objectives	None available	To meet 100% of the targets set out in the Stafford Biodiversity Strategy and Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan.	Significant decrease in wet grassland, and a decrease in species including water vole, brown hare and skylark. However there has been some improvement in otter and nightjar populations.	Relatively unfavourable	Need to improve biodiversity habitats and increase the population numbers of the species that are targeted by the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan.
Transport Modal split	2001 Stafford Travel to work 11% - Walk 4% - Bicycle 79% - Private vehicle	1999/2001 England Trips per person per year by mode of transport 25% - Walk	1991 Stafford Travel to work 13% - Walk 4% - Bicycle 70% - Private Vehicle	Relatively unfavourable	Need to encourage use of more sustainable forms of transport; currently use of private vehicles is

Baseline Data for the Sustainability Appraisal 5

Environmental Indicators					
Indicator	Quantified Data	Comparators and Targets	Assessment / Trend	Issue Identified?	Action / issues for Plan / SA
	6% - Public Transport (Source: ONS 2001 Census)	2% - Bicycle 64% - Private vehicle 9% - Public Transport 1999/2001 England Distance per person per year by mode of transport 3% - Walk 1% - Bicycle 84% - Private vehicle 12% - Public Transport (Source: West Midlands RPG Monitoring Report)	6% - Public Transport 7% - Other (Source: ONS 1991 Census) Therefore there has been an increase in private vehicle use and a decrease in the number of people walking to work over the ten-year period.		still very high within the Borough
Renewable energy	Limited information regarding renewable energy. Eccleshall Biomass Power Plant will produce enough energy for 2,000 homes	10% of electricity from renewable sources by 2010 (Renewables Obligation DTI)	Not achieving 10% renewable energy sources	Relatively unfavourable	It will be necessary to encourage renewable energy usage in order to achieve the target.

5 Baseline Data for the Sustainability Appraisal

Environmental Indicators					
Indicator	Quantified Data	Comparators and Targets	Assessment / Trend	Issue Identified?	Action / issues for Plan / SA
Conservation of Energy	2.1% improvement in energy efficiency in 2002/2003	30% improvement in energy efficiency over 15 year period from 1996	Fluctuations but overall a general improvement of about 9% in efficiency to date since 1996.	Relatively favourable	Improve conservation of Energy
% of development on previously developed land (PDL)	74% - 2005/2006	National Target 60% Regional Target 65% Structure Plan Target 55%	Fluctuating 55% - 2003/04 81% - 2004/05	Favourable	Need to maintain consistency to meet target
Number (and percentage) of Empty Homes	212 Housing Association 1,401 Private Landlord empty homes at 2006 (of which 923 empty for more than 6 months) Total of 2.96% of housing stock is empty (Source: EHA)	3.60% of homes in the West Midlands are empty	Slight increase from 2002	Relatively unfavourable	Need to ensure data is collected fully. Need to reduce the number of empty homes.
Green Belts	3% of dwellings built in Stafford 2002/2003 were built on Green Belt land (of those 40% were on PDL)	4% of dwellings nationally were built on Green Belt land (of those 61% were on PDL) (Source: ODPM)	Below national average	Relatively favourable	Need to protect Green Belt from new (non agricultural) development

Baseline Data for the Sustainability Appraisal 5

Environmental Indicators					
Indicator	Quantified Data	Comparators and Targets	Assessment / Trend	Issue Identified?	Action / issues for Plan / SA
	(Source: LfNH database)				
% loss of Area in Sites of Biological Interest between 1979 – 1999	Lowland Wet Grassland 51% Neutral Grassland 15% Standing Water and Swamp 8% Broadleaved woodland 20%	Stafford Borough Biodiversity Strategy targets: Re-create/create 80 hectares of wet grassland by 2010 Create 20 hectares of neutral grassland by 2010	No data at present	Relatively unfavourable	Need to improve biodiversity habitats which are targeted by the Stafford Borough and Staffordshire Biodiversity Strategies

Question SA 3

Do you know of any data that is missing or misrepresented in these tables?

6 Key Sustainability Issues and Opportunities

6.1 Through analysis of the baseline data a number of key sustainability issues for Stafford Borough have been identified in order to focus the Sustainability Appraisal Framework for the Local Development Framework. The Sustainability Appraisal Framework is made up of Sustainability objectives, indicators and targets tailored to these key issues thus enabling a meaningful assessment of how successful each DPD has been in addressing these issues and opportunities. Nevertheless, it is recognised in Section 4 of this Scoping Report that other Plans, Policies and Programmes may affect the success of each DPD's and a more detailed analysis of these is outlined in Appendix 1 of the Technical Appendices.

6.2 The table below sets out the key sustainability issues identified for the Stafford Borough area, based on the baseline information gathered for the Sustainability Appraisal process, seen in the table in Section 5 and Appendix 2 of the Technical Appendices. There may be additional sustainability issues, problems and opportunities for the Borough that hasn't been identified through the collection of baseline data.

Social

Table 6.1 Social Sustainability Issues

Key Sustainability Issues and Opportunities
Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Levels of deprivation in some areas of the Borough • High number of empty homes across the Borough, the majority of which are empty for more than 6 months • Slight increase in number of homeless households in recent years • Low level of provision of affordable housing compared with rising house prices • Lack of access to services and facilities in some parts of the Borough • The level of outdoor space provision is much lower than the national target

Economic

Table 6.2 Economic Sustainability Issues

Key Sustainability Issues and Opportunities
Economic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline in manufacturing industry resulting in job losses • Opportunities for tourist related economy • Slight increase in VAT business start ups in Stafford • Decline in agricultural industries • Vacant units within the town centres

Key Sustainability Issues and Opportunities 6

Environmental

Table 6.3 Environmental Sustainability Issues

Key Sustainability issues and Opportunities
Environmental
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of biodiversity habitats • Quality of SSSI's is improving, but still below the national target • Whilst river biology and chemistry have improved over the last decade, both are still below the national average • High percentage of new homes are being delivered on Previously Developed Land • Stafford's Biomass energy project will provide renewable energy and opportunities for further renewable energy development in the future.

Question SA 4

Do you think there are any other sustainability issues or opportunities that need to be considered in the development of the plan?

Question SA 5

Do you think any of the sustainability issues and opportunities require further explanation?

7 Sustainability Objectives, Indicators and Targets

7.1 Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Framework involves the development of sustainability objectives, targets and indicators. These elements of the framework are developed from objectives, indicators or targets set out in Plans, Policies and Programmes. Other important sources include expertise within the Local Authority and consultation with key bodies and relevant stakeholders.

7.2 As the main purpose of this Sustainability Appraisal process is to assess the policies and proposals in each DPD against sustainability objectives, the Sustainability Framework is an important factor enabling the description, measurement, analysis and comparison of the effects of the plan. The following topics from the SEA Directive have been incorporated as elements of the framework.

- Biodiversity, fauna and flora;
- Population and human health;
- Water and soil;
- Air;
- Climatic factors;
- Cultural heritage and landscape;

7.3 It should be appreciated that each DPD may only have limited scope to influence these SEA Directive topics. Other Plans, Policies and Programmes at European Union and National level will have a more direct effect, e.g. the influence of future Government Aviation Policy on Climatic Factors.

7.4 The following sustainability objectives are proposed for the Sustainability Appraisal Framework:

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES

1. To create high, stable and equitable levels of employment
2. To ensure high and stable levels of economic diversity and competitiveness that recognises social and environmental issues
3. To sustain the vitality and viability of Stafford Borough's towns and villages, and their communities
4. To support the needs of the local rural economy and communities
5. To reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change such as risk of flooding, on public well-being, the economy and the environment.

SOCIAL OBJECTIVES

6. To ensure that everyone has the opportunity of a decent and affordable home
7. To improve opportunities for access for all to work, education, health and local services

Sustainability Objectives, Indicators and Targets 7

8. To reduce and prevent crime, and reduce the fear of crime
9. To reduce the impact of noise and light pollution
10. To improve health, safety and well-being across the whole community

ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES

11. To reduce societal contributions to climate change
12. To protect and enhance biodiversity
13. To protect and conserve soil
14. To protect and enhance water quality of the Borough's rivers whilst maximising their carrying capacity and achieving sustainable water resource management.
15. To protect, enhance and, where necessary, restore designated landscape areas and town character, scenic beauty, local distinctiveness, and historic and cultural character.

COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

16. To create a sense of community identity and belonging
17. To ensure tolerance, respect and engagement with people from different cultures, backgrounds and beliefs recognising their rights and responsibilities
18. To ensure that all individuals and groups in society have the opportunity to effectively engage in issues relating to their community
19. To encourage a strong, inclusive, community and voluntary sector
20. To engender a sense of civic and neighbourhood values, responsibility and pride

Table 7.1 Sustainability Objectives, Indicators and Targets

	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Indicator and Target
Economic	1. To create high, stable and equitable levels of employment	N / A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Rate <p>Target: Maintain good performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment Rate <p>Target: Maintain good performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross Value Added

7 Sustainability Objectives, Indicators and Targets

	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Indicator and Target
			<p>Target: Increase in line with figure for South Staffordshire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of jobs created across all sectors of the economy <p>Target: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of new jobs created in rural areas <p>Target: Increase</p>
	<p>2. To ensure high and stable level of economic diversity and competitiveness that recognises social and environmental issues</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foreign Direct Investment <p>Target: Increase share of FDI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● % of employees per Advantage West Midlands target cluster <p>Target: Increase the % of employees per AWM target cluster from 57.5%, (Stafford) in line with Southern Staffordshire (62.7%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The number of people reaching NVQ4+ qualifications <p>Target: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employment land take up rates on previously developed land <p>Target: Increase take up rates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of planning permissions for business premises linked to farm diversification in rural areas <p>Target: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of development sites with mixed business uses <p>Target: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employment land supply in years

Sustainability Objectives, Indicators and Targets 7

	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Indicator and Target
			<p>Target: To have 10 years supply of land.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employment land take up rates <p>Target: Increase take up to meet the RSS requirement</p>
	<p>3. To sustain the vitality and viability of Stafford Borough's towns and villages, and their communities</p>	N / A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adaptability and proximity of new developments to services <p>Target – No new development beyond 5 kilometres of a Town Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of Vacant Units <p>Target: Reduce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rank of centres: Stafford ranked at 115 <p>Target: Increase rank</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Housing densities in town centres <p>Target: 40-50 dwellings per hectare in town centres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Retail land take up rates <p>Target: Increase</p>
	<p>4. To support the needs of the local rural economy and communities.</p>	N / A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of planning permissions for business premises linked to farm diversification in rural areas <p>Target: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Availability of affordable homes to accommodate local needs in rural areas <p>Target: Increase according to identified need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amount of employment land on previously developed land that could be used to

7 Sustainability Objectives, Indicators and Targets

	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Indicator and Target
			<p>expand existing business located within the Green Belt</p> <p>Target: Increase according to identified need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-use vacant land and buildings for employment purposes in the rural area <p>Target: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of facilities located within rural centres <p>Target: Increase according to identified need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of sites identified for affordable housing through rural exception sites <p>Target: Increase</p>
	5. To reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change such as the risk of flooding, on public wellbeing, the economy and the environment.	N / A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new developments incorporating sustainable drainage systems and other water saving techniques <p>Target: All new developments to incorporate water saving measures or those which control water as near to the source as possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of employment developments given planning permission on flood plains or major aquifers <p>Target: No planning permissions on flood plains or on major aquifers vulnerable to contamination (Environment Agency Sheet 22 Groundwater Vulnerability Maps)</p>
Social	6. To ensure that everyone has the opportunity of a decent and affordable home	Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new housing developments that incorporate public transport provision <p>Target: All / Increase</p>

Sustainability Objectives, Indicators and Targets 7

	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Indicator and Target
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of affordable / special needs housing Target: 73 homes per year until 2011 ● Number of unfit dwellings Target: Meet Government's decent homes standards ● Homelessness Target: To provide sufficient short / medium term accommodation ● Number of new residential developments that provide for the accessibility of all users Target: All / Increase ● Number of new residential developments in the rural area providing for identified affordable / local needs housing Target: Increase according to identified need ● Number of new residential developments incorporating high quality layouts and landscaping
	7. To improve opportunities for access for all to work, education, health and local services	Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of new developments incorporating a range of transport options Target: All ● Disabled access Target: All new build to comply with Disability Discrimination Act ● % of development within walking distance (350 metres) of a frequents service Target: 100% of all new developments in urban areas

7 Sustainability Objectives, Indicators and Targets

	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Indicator and Target
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of mixed use developments Target: Increase
	8. To reduce and prevent crime and reduce fear of crime	Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new developments incorporating crime prevention design measures Target: Increase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded crime per 1,000 population Target: Maintain good results relative to other districts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of crime surveys Target: Reduce fear of crime <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new developments incorporating crime prevention design measures Target: Increase
	9. To reduce the impact of noise and light pollution	Population and Human health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of developments incorporating landscaping as a way of reducing potential noise or light impacts Targets: Increase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public concern over noise target: Low % of residents surveyed who are concerned with different types of noise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity of land uses that create noise and / or antisocial behaviour at night Target: Low number of breaches of IPPC permits on permitted noise level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public concern over light pollution from residential developments Target: Low % of residents surveyed who are concerned about light pollution

Sustainability Objectives, Indicators and Targets 7

	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Indicator and Target
	10. To improve health, safety and well-being across the whole community	Air, Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of Listed Buildings at Risk Target: Reduce ● Number of development sites that lead to the creation and enhancement of open spaces Target: Increase in line with Open Space Strategy ● % of residents within 500m (15 minutes walk) of public open space Target: Increase ● Modal Split Target: Increase potential trips on foot, quadruple levels of cycling trips by 2012 compared to 1996 (Dept. for Transport, Transport 10 year Plan, 2000) ● Air Quality Management Area Target: No air quality management area ● Number of buildings and vacant land reused Target: Increase ● Number of developments within town centres incorporating quality landscaping and linkages with the surrounding urban fabric Target: All ● Hectares of public open space per 1,000 population Target: Increase in line with target of 2.43 hectares per 1,000 population

7 Sustainability Objectives, Indicators and Targets

	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Indicator and Target
Community	11. To reduce societal contributions to climate change	Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of people travelling to work by private vehicle <p>Target: Reduce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of new developments producing Travel Plans to encourage use of sustainable modes of travel <p>Target: All</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of cycleways <p>Target: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new developments that increase significant road traffic movements <p>Target: Limit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new development incorporating water efficiency techniques <p>Targets: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of new developments encompassing energy efficient design / layout / features <p>Target: 30% improvement in energy efficiency over 15 years from 1996 (11.1% achieved so far)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average drive time / distance travelled to work <p>Target: Reduce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodlands lost to new development <p>Target: None</p>
	12. To protect and enhance biodiversity	Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of developments that may adversely affect species or habitats locations

Sustainability Objectives, Indicators and Targets 7

	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Indicator and Target
			<p>Target: Reduce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quality of historic parks and gardens <p>Target: Maintain / Conserve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quality of SSSI's <p>Target: 95% of SSSI's to be in 'favourable or 'recovering' condition by 2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● sites achieving Biodiversity Action Plan <p>Target: To achieve 100% of targets as set out in Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of planning permissions given affecting SSSI designated sites <p>Target: No planning permissions to be given that affect SSSI sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of developments that protect and enhance sites and spaces important for biodiversity as set out in the Biodiversity as set out in the Biodiversity Action Plan
	13. To protect and conserve soil	Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percentage of development on previously developed land <p>Target: In accordance with national and regional guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Area of statutory contaminated land remedied <p>Target: Await Environment Agency Soil Strategy Implementation Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Area of land converted to organic / agricultural environment schemes <p>Target: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Soil degradation

7 Sustainability Objectives, Indicators and Targets

	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Indicator and Target
			Target: Minimise the degradation or loss of soils to new developments
	14. To protect and enhance water quality of the Borough's rivers whilst maximising their carrying capacity and achieving sustainable water resource management	Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of developments that increase water consumption or pollution Target: None / Minimise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of rivers, canals and freshwater bodies within the Borough Target: Achieve standards set out by the Water Framework Directive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new developments incorporating sustainable drainage systems and other water saving techniques Target: All new development to incorporate water saving measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of development given planning permission on flood plains or major aquifers Target: No planning permissions for developments on flood plains or on major aquifers vulnerable to contamination (EA Sheet 22 Groundwater Vulnerability Maps)
	15. To protected, enhance and, where necessary, restore designated landscape areas and town character, scenic beauty, local distinctiveness, historic and cultural character	Cultural Heritage and Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of developments that adversely affect historic character Target: None <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number / Area and % of Listed Buildings 'at risk' Target: Reduce the number of sites and buildings at risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of planning permissions adversely affecting the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Sustainability Objectives, Indicators and Targets 7

	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Indicator and Target
			<p>Target: None</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of accessible natural greenspace <p>Target: A greenspace of at least 2ha < 300m from home; a Local Nature Reserve at a minimum of 1ha per thousand population; at least one greenspace site within 5km of home and one 500ha site within 10km of home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of developments and re use of existing buildings in the Green Belt area that do not maintain its openness <p>Target: None</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people living close to accessible woodland, accessible recreational routes and spaces <p>Target: Increase</p>
	16. To create a sense of community identity and belonging	Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projected household change <p>Target: Maintain number of households</p>
	17. To ensure tolerance, respect and engagement with people from different cultures, backgrounds and beliefs recognising their rights and responsibilities	Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of residents who think that people being attacked because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion is a very big or fairly big problem in their local area <p>Target: Reduce</p>
	18. To ensure that all individuals and groups in society have the opportunity to effectively engage	Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-enabled interactions as a proportion of all possible interactions <p>Targets: Increase E-enabled LDF interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of DPD's compliant with the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

7 Sustainability Objectives, Indicators and Targets

	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Indicator and Target
	in issues relating to their community		Target: All DPD's to be compliant with the SCI
	19. To encourage a strong, inclusive, community and voluntary sector	Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of voluntary / community organisations performing well Target: Maintain
	20. To engender a sense of civic and neighbourhood values, responsibility and pride	Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-being score Target: Increase well-being score across the Borough

Question SA 6

Do you agree with the targets and indicators?

Question SA 7

Do you think any other targets and indicators should be included?

Quality Assurance 8

8.1 Quality assurance is an important element of the appraisal process. Quality assurance helps to ensure that the SEA requirements are met, it highlights any issues whilst carrying out the Sustainability Appraisal, and it shows how effectively the appraisal has integrated sustainability considerations into the DPD preparation process. A quality assurance checklist will be included in the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

9 Methodology for preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Reports

9.1 Following the Scoping Report stage (Stage A – Scoping) of the Sustainability Appraisal process, the Sustainability Appraisal Commentary will be prepared in order to test the objectives for the LDF against the SA Framework and to appraise the options in each Development Plan Document (DPD) Issues and Options Paper. The Sustainability Appraisal Commentary and the DPD Issues and Options Paper will then be consulted upon at the same time, after which a Sustainability Appraisal Report will be published and consulted upon alongside the Preferred Options Paper for each DPD. Finally the Council will prepare the submission DPD's and submit the policy documents alongside the amended Sustainability Appraisal Reports.

9.2 The remaining stages of LDF Sustainability Appraisal process are as follows:

- Stage B2 – Developing the DPD Options for each DPD, including the Core Strategy DPD, Allocations and Site Specific Policy DPD and Development Management DPD
- Stage B3 and B4 – Predicting and Evaluating the Effects of the DPD
- Stage C – Preparing the SA Report
- Stage D – Consulting on the preferred options and the SA Report
- Stage E – Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the DPD

Stage B2 - Developing and Refining the DPD Options 10

10.1 The Sustainability Appraisal Objectives set out how the key sustainability issues will be addressed, whilst the Plan Objectives in each DPD will set out what the Local Development Framework is aiming to achieve in terms of land use and planning policies.

10.2 A key element of the Sustainability Appraisal process is to compare the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives with the Plan Objectives to appraise the plan in terms of sustainability and the achievement of targets under SEA target areas. Using the table below the DPD Plan Objectives will be compared to the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives. The purpose of this analysis is to ensure that the plan objectives in each individual DPD are in accordance with the Sustainability Appraisal objectives to assist with the development of policy options.

Table 10.1 Example of Appraisal table

Plan Objective Number	Sustainability Objectives – Economic				
	1	2	3	4	5
PO1	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Conflict	Compatible
<i>Comments: Plan Objective 1 is in conflict with Sustainability Objective 4 because.....</i>					
PO2	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible
PO3	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible
PO4	Conflict	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Conflict
<i>Comments: Plan Objective is in conflict with Sustainability Objectives 1 and 5 because.....</i>					
	Sustainability Objective – Social				
	6	7	8	9	10
PO1	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Conflict
<i>Comments:</i>					
PO2	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible

10.3 The Sustainability Appraisal Commentary will also test the compatibility of the Plan Objectives with each other, using the table below. Where conflicts exist between the various objectives these will be highlighted. Whilst the aim would be to achieve consistency with each other, in practice there will be tensions between Plan Objectives. The purpose of this exercise is to highlight where win-win situations cannot be achieved. Where this occurs decision makers are required to determine where the priorities should lie.

10 Stage B2 - Developing and Refining the DPD Options

Table 10.2 Example of Plan Objectives Appraisal Table

	<i>PO1</i>	<i>PO2</i>	<i>PO3</i>	<i>PO4</i>
<i>PO1</i>				
<i>PO2</i>	<i>Compatible</i>			
<i>PO3</i>	<i>Compatible</i>	<i>Compatible</i>		
<i>PO4</i>	<i>Compatible</i>	<i>Conflict</i>	<i>Compatible</i>	

Comments: Plan Objective 4 and Plan Objective 2 are in conflict because.....

10.4 During the preparation of the issues and options for each individual DPD various policy options will be developed in order to meet the plan objectives. Each of these policy options will be tested through the Sustainability Appraisal Framework to identify the sustainability effects of each option and to assess its performance in terms of sustainability.

10.5 Initially the various policy options and alternatives will be appraised against the sustainability objectives to establish whether the effect is positive, negative or uncertain through the short, medium and long term perspective. For example will the policy option create two jobs or a hundred jobs; will the policy option temporarily cause noise pollution whilst buildings are constructed or lead to a more permanent noise infringement. As such, during this Sustainability Commentary stage general differences between the alternatives will be considered and documented. Further details will be duly assessed as the options are developed and the DPD's progress through the various stages.

10.6 The most effective way of appraising the effects of a policy option is by comparing it with a state, an option or an objective. Using the table below refined policy options will be compared with the sustainability objectives. This process may also lead to new policy options being developed or composed of several different aspects of the initial DPD policy options.

Table 10.3 Example of Options Appraisal Process

	<i>Option A</i>			<i>Option B</i>			<i>Option C</i>		
<i>SA</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>L</i>
1	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	-
2	+	+	+	0	-	-	0	-	-
3	+	+	+	-	-	-	0	0	+
4	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+
5	0	0	0	-	-	-	+	+	+
6	+	0	-	+	+	+	+	-	-
7	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	0	-

Stage B2 - Developing and Refining the DPD Options 10

	Option A			Option B			Option C		
SA	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L
8	+	+	+	+	0	-	+	+	+
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+
11	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	0	-
12	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	0	-
13	+	0	-	0	+	+	+	+	+
14	+	0	-	0	+	+	+	+	+
15	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	0	+
	Option A			Option B			Option C		
COMMENTS	Option A			Option B			Option C		
	RECOMMENDATION								
	Option ** performs best in terms of sustainability objectives etc...								

10.7 Where policy options could be altered in light of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process this will be highlighted in the SA Commentary. The Sustainability Appraisal Commentary will also provide comments on any sustainability issues that arise during the refinement of the policy options or during the consultation process.

10.8 The developing and refining options process will form part of the Sustainability Appraisal Commentary, which will be consulted upon at the same time as the DPD Issues and Options Papers. Alongside the appraisal of plan options the SA commentary will also compare plan options against the option of 'do nothing' or business as usual. This will highlight what benefits each plan option could provide.

11 Stages B3 and B4 - Predicting and Evaluating the Effects of the DPD

11.1 The next stage of the Sustainability Appraisal process is to assess, in more detail, each preferred policy option in the DPD Preferred Options Report to determine whether it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment and sustainable development. The objective of this stage is to predict and evaluate the effects of DPD policies so that where adverse effects are predicted consideration will be given to what mitigation measures may be required. This will lead to Stage C – preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

11.2 Each preferred policy option will be assessed using the table set out below, with recommendations for refining the policy option included in the process. At this stage it is expected that the predictions regarding the policy impacts may be broad based and qualitative rather than detailed and quantitative if there are limitations in the data that is available. Where possible the potential effects will be quantified, although where this is not possible a subjective judgement will be made.

Table 11.1 Example of predicted impacts table

Policy 1: [Description]						
SA Obj.	Target	Can the effect be quantified?	Effects over time			Comments
			Short term	Medium term	Long term	
Economic Objectives						
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
Summary						
Social Objectives						
1						
2						

11.3 Completion of this process will make it possible to decide if any of the policies are likely to have any adverse impacts. Where adverse impacts are predicted, information will be required on the measures proposed to prevent, reduce or offset these adverse effects. Where an adverse effect can not be mitigated consideration should be given to deleting or modifying the policy. If a policy does not have any adverse impacts Stafford Borough Council will try and enhance its positive and beneficial effects.

Stages B3 and B4 - Predicting and Evaluating the Effects of the DPD 11

11.4 It will also be necessary to assess and record the cumulative effects of all the preferred policy options against the sustainability objectives using the table below. Where there are adverse cumulative impacts, recommendations will be made in the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

Table 11.2 Example of cumulative effects

DPD Policies	SA Objectives										
	<i>Economic Objectives</i>						<i>Social Objectives</i>				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	
Effects											

11.5 Where policies are proposed for alteration in light of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process these will be highlighted in the Sustainability Appraisal Report. The SA process will also provide a commentary on any sustainability issues that arise during the refinement of the preferred policy options. Conclusions on the overall sustainability effects of the preferred policy option will be provided as part of the SA Report.

11.6 Furthermore the Sustainability Appraisal Report will detail the proposals for monitoring the sustainability effects of each individual DPD, allowing the actual effects of the DPD to be measured against those predicted in the SA.

11.7 The appraisal of the effects of the plan will form part of the Sustainability Appraisal Report, which will be available for consultation at the same time as the Preferred Options Reports for each individual DPD.

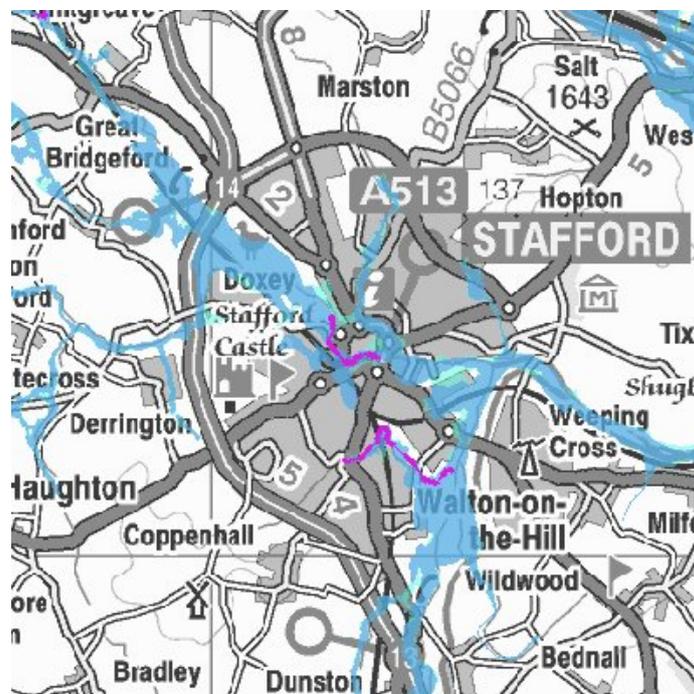
11.8 Following the consultation on the DPD Preferred Options Report and the Sustainability Appraisal Report the preferred policy options will be used to prepare the policies for inclusion in the Submission DPD to the Secretary of State. At the stage the policies in the Submission DPD document will be assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal Framework and the Sustainability Appraisal Report will be amended to detail this assessment process.

12 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

12.1 Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25) Development and Flood Risk, states that the Sustainability Appraisal of Local Development Documents should incorporate or reflect the planning authority's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), to ensure that the planning strategies for the area support the Government's objectives for development and flood risk.

12.2 Stafford Borough has appointed consultants to carry out a joint SFRA with several authorities within Staffordshire. Whilst the results of the assessment will be reported in a separate document, information will be drawn on when assessing policy and development options through the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Map 12.1 Flood zone in Stafford



Habitats Regulations Assessment 13

13.1 The purpose of Habitats Regulations Assessment of land use plans is to ensure that protection of the integrity of European Sites is a part of the planning process at a regional and local level. The requirement for Habitats Regulations Assessment of plans or projects is outlined in Article 6 (3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.

13.2 Whilst the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulations Assessment are two separate processes each with their own legal requirements, the SA will draw on results and evidence gathered by the Habitats Regulations Assessment process. Where this will contribute towards the assessment of policy and development options reference to the Habitats Regulations Assessment process and related evidence will be reported within the SA documents.

Picture 13.1 Cannock Chase SAC



Picture 13.2 Chartley Moss SAC



14 Stage D - Consulting on the Plan and the Sustainability Appraisal Report

14.1 The Revised Sustainability Appraisal Report will be submitted to the Secretary of State alongside each Submitted DPD, each of which will be subject to the independent Examination process. The independent Examination will consider whether the Sustainability Appraisal process has been incorporated into the production of each individual submitted DPD and whether the requirements of the SEA Directive have been met.

14.2 The Environmental Report is a key requirement of the SEA Directive. The Environmental Report documents the whole SEA process and provides a record of how environmental considerations are incorporated into production of the DPD. The elements of the SA process that meet this requirement will be highlighted in a table at the end of the SA Report. The suggested layout of the table is set out below.

Table 14.1 Environmental Report Table

SEA Requirements for Environmental Report	Location in Sustainability Report
An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	
The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	
The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	
Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental, <i>economic or social</i> importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;	
The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	
The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;	
The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	
An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties encountered in compiling the required information;	

Stage D - Consulting on the Plan and the Sustainability Appraisal Report 14

SEA Requirements for Environmental Report	Location in Sustainability Report
a description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10;	
a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	
The report must include the information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, its stage in the decision-making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process to avoid duplication of the assessment (Art. 5.2)	
<p>Consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● authorities with environmental responsibility, when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental / <i>sustainability appraisal</i> report (Art. 5.4) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● authorities with environmental, <i>social or economic</i> responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental / <i>sustainability appraisal</i> report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● other EU Member States, where the implementation of the plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment of that country (Art. 7). 	
Taking the environmental/ <i>sustainability appraisal</i> report and the results of the consultations into account in decision-making (Art. 8)	
<p>Provision of information on the decision:</p> <p>When the plan or programme is adopted, the public and any countries consulted under Art.7 must be informed and the following made available to those so informed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the plan or programme as adopted ● a statement summarising how environmental, <i>social and economic</i> considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme and how the environmental / <i>sustainability appraisal</i> report of Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of consultations entered into pursuant to Art. 7 have been taken into account in accordance with Art. 8, and the reasons for choosing the plan or 	

14 Stage D - Consulting on the Plan and the Sustainability Appraisal Report

SEA Requirements for Environmental Report	Location in Sustainability Report
<p>programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the measures decided concerning monitoring (Art. 9) 	
<p>Monitoring of the significant environmental, <i>social and economic</i> effects of the plan's or programme's implementation (Art. 10)</p>	
<p>Quality assurance: environmental / <i>sustainability appraisal</i> reports should be of a sufficient standard to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive</p>	

Examination for Development Plan Documents 15

15.1 Following the independent Examination into each Development Plan Document the Inspector will provide Stafford Borough Council with a Binding Report setting out recommended policy changes. Where necessary a Sustainability Appraisal of any significant policy changes made through the Examination process will be required. The completion of this task will result in a second revised Sustainability Appraisal report being produced.

16 Stage E - Monitoring the Significant Effects of Implementing the LDF

16.1 After Stafford Borough Council has received the Inspector's Binding Reports each Development Plan Document can be adopted and published. At this time a statement will be issued summarising how the SA results and consultee's opinions have been taken into account, an explanation of the policy choices made and information concerning the arrangements for monitoring.

16.2 Monitoring will allow the actual effects of each Development Plan Document to be tested against those predicted in the Sustainability Appraisal Reports. It will help to ensure that issues, which are identified through the implementation of each Development Plan Document, whether or not they were foreseen, can be identified and future predictions can be made more accurately. The monitoring information will also be used to provide baseline data for future Development Plan Documents and SA Reports. An example of one type of indicator can be viewed below. The full monitoring table can be viewed in Technical Appendix 3 in the Technical Appendices.

Table 16.1 Example of SA Monitoring Table

Objective	Indicator	Where does monitoring data come from?	How often to monitor?	At what point should additional action be considered?	What could be done if a problem is identified?
Protect, enhance and where necessary restore species and habitats	Number and area of designated sites	English Nature (EN)	Annual	Condition gets worse	Consider ways of improving biodiversity protection and enhancement
	Quality of SSSIs Area of ancient woodlands and number of ancient trees	English Nature (EN)	Annual (However EN rolling cycle of 6 years)		

Glossary a

Accessibility	The ease with which facilities of any kind can be reached by people wishing to use them.
Adverse Impact	Where a development / policy would result in harmful effects.
Affordable Housing	Low cost market housing and subsidised housing irrespective of tenure, ownership or financial arrangements, available to people who cannot afford to rent or buy houses generally available on the open market.
Agricultural Land Classification	Classification of land by DEFRA (Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) according to quality. The quality of agricultural land is based on the extent to which its physical or chemical characteristics impose long term limitations on the agricultural use of the land for food production. The scale ranges from 1 (excellent) to 5 (uncultivated land suitable for rough grazing only) with the best and most versatile falling within grades 1, 2 and 3a.
Air Quality Management Area	Areas identified as being unlikely to meet National Air Quality Objectives set out in the National Air Quality Strategy
Alternative	One of two or more possibilities / options / courses of action.
Amenity	The perceived value and pleasant features of space and place.
Amenity Uses	Uses such as open space, which contribute to the pleasantness of place and quality of life of an area.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	Locations with statutory national landscape designation to provide special protection of the area's natural beauty. These are designated by the Countryside Agency.
Baseline Data	The data is used as a reference with which to compare future observations or results.
Biodiversity	The richness and variety of living things (i.e. plants, birds, animals, fish and insects etc.), which exist in a given area, and the habitats that support them.
Community Plan	A Plan or Strategy for enhancing the quality of life of the local community which each local authority has a duty to prepare under the Local Government Act 2000. The plan is developed and implemented by the Local Strategic Partnership.
Compensate	To make satisfactory payment, reparation or substitution in exchange for something that has been lost or damaged or for some inconvenience.
Conservation Area	An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Within a Conservation Area there are special controls over development and the felling of trees.

a Glossary

Consultation Body	Authorities which because of their environmental responsibilities are likely to be concerned by effects of implementing plans and programmes and must be consulted at specific stages of the SEA. The Consultation Bodies designated in the SEA regulations are the Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature and the Environment Agency.
Contaminated Land	Land that is polluted by virtue of past industrial and chemical uses or naturally occurring radiation, which makes it unsuitable for development without decontamination taking place to remove potential hazards to occupiers and potential users of the development.
Countryside Character Areas	Areas of distinctive landscape, wildlife and natural features as defined by the Countryside Agency.
Cultural heritage	Places or things that are valued because they give us a sense of the past and of our cultural identity.
Cumulative Effects	These effects can be caused by a number of developments which, individually and in themselves, may have insignificant effects, but together combine to create a significant effect.
DEFRA	Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, responsible for promoting sustainable development, protecting and improving rural, urban, marine and the global environment.
Derelict Land	Land that has been previously developed but has been allowed to fall into disrepair and is no longer used.
Economic Development	The development of the economy of the Council area by the creation of employment opportunities.
Environmental Assets	All environmental assets that provide ecosystem services, e.g. landscape, habitats, pollination, erosion prevention, and the absorption of emissions and pollutants resulting from human activities.
Environmental Capital	The combination of the assets (i.e. the tangible commodities, land, trees, fields, etc.) with the environmental benefits derived from them (leisure opportunities, tranquility, natural habitats etc.)
Environmental Limits	The limit to which an environment or ecosystem can cope with the population, resource exploitation and pollution pressures placed on it. Beyond the environmental limit, there is a risk of causing long-term damage to the health and productivity of an environment.
Environmental Report	A document required by the SEA Directive, as part of an environmental assessment, that identifies, describes and evaluates the likely effects on the environment of implementing a plan or programme.
Fauna	All the animal life of a given place or time.
Flora	All the plant life of a given place or time.

Glossary a

Green Belt	Land designated in development plans to be kept open in accordance with PPG2.
Greenfield Sites	Land that has never been built on, usually grassland, farmland or heath.
Habitat	A site or areas inhabited by wild flora and fauna upon which they are reliant for their continued free existence.
Heritage	Things of value inherited or passed on from generation to generation, qualities which are worthwhile to preserve for prosperity.
Historic Parks and Gardens	Parks or gardens of special historic interest.
Indicator	Measure of variables over time, often used to measure achievement of objectives.
Indirect (Secondary) Effects	Effects which are not a direct result of the plan, often produced away from or as a result of a complex pathway
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	Telephone, computing and other technology designed to enable Communications Technology remote working and communication.
Infrastructure	Roads, sewers, drainage and the availability of energy supplies at the most basic level, through to social infrastructure such as schools and community centres.
Listed Building	A building contained in a list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest prepared by the Secretary of State for the Culture, Media and Sport (under Section 1 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).
Local Nature Reserve	Sites established by the Local Authority which can make a valuable contribution to nature conservation, local wildlife or geological interest, providing opportunities for education and enjoyment at the local level.
Local Transport Plan	Plan prepared by Staffordshire County Council detailing transport priorities and actions to be taken.
Local Need	Anticipated requirements (e.g. for housing) generated by local growth or other (e.g. demographic) trends. This specifically excludes demands generated by inward migration.
Modal Split	The proportion of people traveling by different types of transport.
Mitigate	To alleviate or to moderate a quality or condition that is harmful or unpleasant (e.g. pollution)
Mitigation Measures	Measures designed and intended to reduce adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided.

a Glossary

National Nature Reserve (NNR)	An area of national / international importance for nature conservation and managed in accordance with a nature reserve agreement.
National Playing Fields Association (NPFA)	A charity where the aim is to acquire, protect and improve playing fields and other recreational space for the community.
Net Gain	The useful and/or positive benefits remaining after all deductions have been made.
Non-statutory Designations	A designation not enacted, created, or regulated by statute.
Objective	A statement of what is intended, specifying the desired direction of change in trends.
Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)	A series of notes issued by the Government, setting out policy guidance on different aspects of planning. Local Planning Authorities must take their content into account in preparing their LDF.
Precautionary Principle	The assumption that an activity or development might be damaging unless it can be proved otherwise.
Previously Developed Land (PDL)	Fully defined at Annex C of PPG3. Housing land that is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings) and associated fixed surface structures. The definition covers the curtilage of the development.
Public Transport Nodes	Areas that offer greater accessibility by public transport and reduce reliance on the private car.
Ramsar	A wetland site designated under the European Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.
Reclaim/Re-use	To regenerate, rescue or restore an area to bring it back into use.
Regional Planning Guidance (RPG)	Planning Guidance produced at a regional level to tackle issues of strategic importance that can be best dealt with over a larger area.
Renewable Energy	Energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment (e.g. from sun, wind or wave or fall of water). Plant and some waste materials are also potential sources.
Rural Diversification	Engaging in new and different economic activity to strengthen the rural economy and support existing agricultural businesses and farm incomes.
SEA Directive	European Directive 2001/42/EC 'On the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.'
SEA Regulations	<i>The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004</i>

Glossary a

Scoping	The process of deciding the scope and level of detail of an SA, including sustainability effects and alternatives which need to be considered, the assessment methods to be used, and the structure and contents of the SA Report.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	A European designation for the conservation of sites of international conservation importance, designated under the European Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora.
Special Needs Housing	A segment of the housing market where a proportion of the housing is targeted or reserved for those people who require special housing requirements. It covers a spectrum of providers and tenures including housing association, joint ventures, public sector and owner occupation.
Site of Biological Importance (SBI)	A site of biological importance that is of county importance for its wildlife interest.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	A protected area identified as being of national importance in terms of wildlife, flora, fauna, geological or physiological features. They represent irreplaceable parts of our natural heritage
Special Protection Area (SPA)	A European designation for the protection of wild birds, designated under the European Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds.
Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR)	Is the ratio of the actual number of deaths one would expect if the population had the same death rate as a standard population.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	A tool for integrating environmental considerations into decision-making by ensuring that significant environmental effects of the decision are taken into account.
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	Appraisals of plans, strategies and proposals to test them against the four broad objectives set out in the government's sustainable development strategy.
Sustainable Development (SD)	Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland 1987).
Synergies	The working of two things to produce an effect greater than the sum of their individual effects.
Target	An objective that seeks a specified desired end, stated usually within a specified time-scale.
Unstable Land	Land which by reason of geological conditions or man-made changes, is likely to be subject to movement or collapse, putting at risk life and developments located on or near it.