



Stafford Borough Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

July 2017

Non-Technical Summary

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

What is the Development Plan?

The Development Plan is a term used to describe documents, which includes all the local planning authority's Plan documents. A Development Plan is usually comprised of:

- 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' Plan Document).

The Stafford Borough Development Plan is comprised of the following documents:

- The Plan for Stafford Borough
- The Plan for Stafford Borough – Part 2
- Made/Adopted Neighbourhood Development Plans

These documents can be found on the Council's Website via the link below:

<http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/lp>

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

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

- Delivery of Brownfield Register to promote the re-use of previously developed land
- Loss of biodiversity habitats.
- Protection and adaptation of heritage assets.
- Loss of individual character for Stafford Borough's settlements.
- Residents have relatively low access to woodland areas
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC) contributions are an opportunity to protect and enhance Cannock Chase
- Decreasing percentage of housing completions on previously developed land

Social, Health and Wellbeing

- High Levels of deprivation in some areas of the Borough
- High number of empty homes across the Borough
- The Borough has a high percentage of elderly people
- A relatively high percentage of the adult population are overweight or obese

- Relatively low crime rate
- A high percentage of people are satisfied with Stafford as a place to live
- Neighbourhood Development Plans offer an opportunity for local communities to become empowered
- Planned investment in sport and leisure facilities

Economic

- Growth in advanced manufacturing
- Need to deliver more employment land across the Borough
- Delivery of Brownfield to provide growth opportunities to meet housing demand
- Support needed for Town Centre regeneration and investment
- Growth of business parks
- Opportunities for higher value added companies in growth sectors
- Boost of MoD garrison
- Major opportunity with HS2 and development of the Stafford Gateway
- Ageing/shrinking workforce – need continued growth in housing and employment sites, and in migration of workers.
- Need to capitalise on the high skills base of Borough residents
- Ensure provision of the required infrastructure for growth – including broadband

Sustainability Objectives

The Scoping Report proposes the following Sustainability Objectives. These will be used to assess planning policies, in order to ensure sustainable development is achieved.

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, Health and Wellbeing

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
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

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

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 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

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 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

Or via post to the following address: Forward Planning, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford, ST16 3AQ

Or by e-mail to forwardplanning@staffordbc.gov.uk

If you wish to respond to the Proposals consultation please provide your feedback to Stafford Borough Council by 12 noon Wednesday 6 September 2017.

If you need this information in large print, Braille, other language or on audio cassette please contact: 01785 61900

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document is the scoping stage of a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). A Sustainability Appraisal provides a tool for helping authorities to identify sustainable approaches for dealing with key planning issues.
- 1.2. The scoping report will assess any local challenges based on the current position, and determine likely issues that may arise as part of the plan.
- 1.3. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, new development plans are required to be accompanied by a sustainability appraisal.
- 1.4. 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
- 1.5. 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
- 1.6. 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.
- 1.7. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) will apply to Plan documents prepared by the Council, allowing them 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 Plan documents requiring both SA and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), the SEA requirements will be incorporated into the SA reports.
- 1.8. 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”.

1.9. 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.

1.10. 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.

1.11. The SEA Directive defines environmental assessment as a procedure comprising of

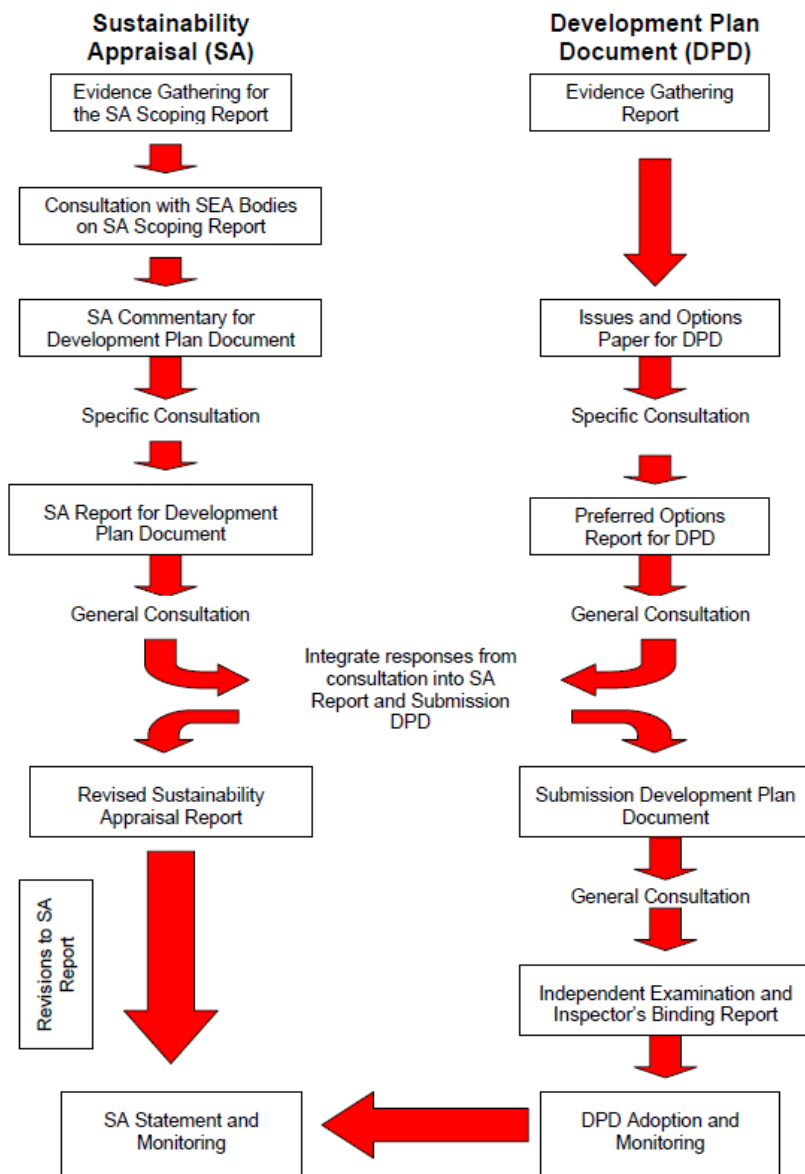
- Preparing an environmental report on the likely significant effects;
- Preparing an environmental report on the likely significant effects of the draft plan;
- Carrying out consultation on the draft plan and the accompanying environmental report;
- Taking into account the environmental report and the 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.

1.12. 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.

2. Sustainability Appraisal and the Development Plan Process

- 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 Plan document involves the process outlined in Figure 2.1 below. Although the approach is presented as 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 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 Development Plan. Subsequently individual reports will be issued for each Plan document. 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 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.

Figure 2.1: Incorporating Appraisals into the Plan Process



3. Plan Objectives

- 3.1. The Stafford Borough Development Plan consists of the Local Plan and ‘made’ Neighbourhood Development Plans. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) can also be created to provide further guidance to policies in the Development Plan. The 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 Development Plan should be?

4. Relevant Plans, Policies and Programmes

Review of Plans, Policies and Programmes

- 4.1. A Development plan is prepared in isolation, being greatly influenced by other plans, policies and programmes and by broader sustainability objectives. It needs to be consistent with international and national guidance and strategic planning policies and should contribute to the goals of a wide range of other programmes and strategies, such as those relating to social policy, culture and heritage. It must also conform to environmental protection legislation and the sustainability objectives established at an international, national and local level.
- 4.2. A review has been undertaken of the other plans, policies and programmes that are relevant to identify the environmental protection, social and economic objectives, established at international, national and local level, which are relevant to the plan or programme. The review of relevant plans, policies and programmes can be seen in full in the Technical Appendices, which identifies the SA objectives that are relevant to each plan, policy or programme. The key plans, policies and programmes are summarised below.
- 4.3. At the international level, Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the 'SEA Directive') and Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the 'Habitats Directive') are particularly significant as they require Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to be undertaken.
- 4.4. There are a wide range of other EU Directives relating to issues such as water quality, waste and air quality, most of which have been transposed into UK law through national-level policy; however the international directives have been included in Technical Appendix for completeness.

Key national plans, policies and programmes

- 4.5. The Development Plan (which includes Local Plans) must be consistent with the requirements of the NPPF. The NPPF sets out information about the purposes of local plan-making, stating that: *"Local Plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. To this end, they should be consistent with the principles and policies set out in this Framework, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development."*
- 4.6. The NPPF also requires Local Plans to be 'aspirational but realistic'. This means that opportunities for appropriate development should be identified in order to achieve net

gains in terms of sustainable social, environmental and economic development; however significant adverse impacts in any of those areas should not be allowed to occur.

4.7. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan. This should include strategic policies to deliver:

- the homes and jobs needed in the area;
- the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
- the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
- the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
- climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.

In addition, Local Plans should:

- plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of the Framework;
- be drawn up over an appropriate time scale, preferably a 15-year time horizon, take account of longer term requirements, and be kept up to date;
- be based on co-operation with neighbouring authorities, public, voluntary and private sector organisations;
- indicate broad locations for strategic development on a key diagram and land-use designations on a proposals map;
- allocate sites to promote development and flexible use of land, bringing forward new land where necessary, and provide detail on form, scale, access and quantum of development where appropriate;
- identify areas where it may be necessary to limit freedom to change the uses of buildings, and support such restrictions with a clear explanation;
- identify land where development would be inappropriate, for instance because of its environmental or historic significance; and
- contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment, and supporting Nature Improvement Areas where they have been identified.

Local plans, policies and programmes

At the sub-national and local levels there are a wide range of plans and programmes that are specific to Stafford Borough. These plans and programmes relate to issues such as housing, transport, renewable energy and green infrastructure, and Community Infrastructure Levy. A review of these documents can be found in the Technical Appendix.

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 Development Plan from the sustainability perspective.
- 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 Development Plan. This approach will help to identify issues and alternative ways of dealing with such issues in the future. The Technical Appendix provides additional information on these indicators.

Economic Baseline Data					
Indicator	Quantified data (for Stafford Borough unless stated)	Comparators and Targets	Assessment / Trend	Issues Identified?	Action / Issues for Plan / SA
Qualifications (NVQ4 and above/ no qualifications (percentage) ¹	(Jan 2015 - Dec 2015) NVQ4: 41.5% No qualifications: 4.9%	NVQ4: West Midlands: 31.2% Great Britain: 37.5% No qualifications: West Midlands: 13.0% Great Britain: 8.6%	Performing well against the regional and national average	Favourable position	Maintain good performance
% Increase in number of enterprises ¹	2015/16 2.1%	West Midlands: 4.7% England: 4.6%	Performing below the national and regional average	Unfavourable position	Improve upon current position
Completion of land employment	Hectares completed	The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-	Employment land completions	Unfavourable position	Need to deliver more employment

¹ NOMIS - <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157178/report.aspx?town=Stafford#tabidbr>

provision? ²	Average between 2011/12-2015/16: 2.8ha	2031 set an annual target of 8ha	have been below the annual target		land across the Borough
Percentage of vacant retail units (Stafford Town Centre) ³	Dec16 Stafford Town Centre: 14%	England: 11%	Performing poorly against the national average	Unfavourable position	Deliver ways to reduce vacant units in town centre
Percentage of retail, leisure and office developments which have been in the Town Centres ⁴	2014/15: 7% 2015/16: 73% As of 2015/16 only 10% of commitments (sites with permission but not yet built) are within town centres	Target: Maximise developments in the town centres	Mixed success	Neither favourable or unfavourable position	Continue to promote uses within the town centres
Job Seekers Allowance (percentage) ⁵	Feb 2017 0.8%	West Midlands: 2.4% England: 1.9%	Stafford is performing well compared to the regional and national average	Favourable position	Maintain strong performance
Dependency ratio of older people per 100 working age population ⁶	2014: 34.2	West Midlands: 28.8 England: 27.7	Stafford has a higher ratio of dependent older people than the regional and national average	Unfavourable position	Improve current position
Young people not in education or training (NEET) ⁶	Jan 2015: 3.4%	Staffordshire: 3.1%	Stafford has a slightly higher percentage of NEETs than the county average	Slightly unfavourable position	Improve current position

² Stafford Borough Authority Monitoring Report 2016

³ Stafford Borough Council data / Local Data Company

⁴ Stafford Borough Authority Monitoring Reports

⁵ Nomis - <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157178/report.aspx?town=Stafford#tabidbr>

⁶ Staffordshire Observatory – Stafford: Locality Profile

Social, Health and Wellbeing Baseline Data					
Indicator	Quantified data (for Stafford Borough unless stated)	Comparators and Targets	Assessment / Trend	Issues Identified?	Action / Issues for Plan / SA
Ageing population (percentage aged 65 and over) ⁷	2014 (estimate) 21.2%	West Midlands: 18% England: 17.6% (estimates)	Stafford Borough has a relatively high number of residents aged 65 and over compared to the regional and national average	Ageing population	Consider actions which can be taken to cater for an ageing population.
Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ⁷	2015 5.4% of people in the most deprived quartile	West Midlands: 29.3% of people in the most deprived quartile	Stafford Borough has a relatively low percentage of people in the most deprived quartile	Favourable situation against regional and national rankings	Focus on reducing deprivation within communities across the Borough
Statutory homelessness (homelessness acceptances per 1000 households) ⁸	Average 2014/15 – 2016/17 Q2) 0.21 % However, this figure has increased in the 2016/17 period	Staffordshire (excluding Newcastle): 0.4% England: 0.61%	Performing well in comparison to the regional and national figures	Favourable position	Focus on reducing homelessness in the Borough
Affordable housing completions ⁹	2014/15: 226 2015/16: 159 2016/17 (Q1-3): 226	Since 2014, Stafford Borough has delivered 643 affordable homes against a cumulative	Performing well against the Borough's target	Favourable position	Maintain and improve the current position across the Borough

⁷ Staffordshire Observatory – Stafford: Locality Profile

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics>

⁹ Stafford Borough Council affordable completions performance data

		target of 542.			
Housing Affordability Ratio (ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings) ¹⁰	2015: Ratio: 6.88	Staffordshire Ratio: 6.7 England Ratio: 6.5	Similar to the national ratio	Neither favourable or unfavourable position	Provide a housing mix to ensure a range of housing
Total recorded crime (rate per 1000) ¹¹	2014/15: 41.6	West Midlands: 56.9 England: 61.7	Performing well in comparison to the regional and national figures	Favourable position	Maintain and improve the current position across the Borough
Residents who felt fearful of being a victim of crime ¹¹	Mar14-Sept15: 6.2%	Staffordshire: 13.1%	Performing well in comparison to the county average	Favourable position	Maintain and improve the current position across the Borough
Lone pensioner households ¹¹	2011: 12.8%	West Midlands: 12.6% England: 12.4%	Performing slightly worse than the regional and national average	Slightly unfavourable position	Improve the current position across the Borough
Physical inactivity in adults (percentage) ¹¹	2014: 24.7%	West Midlands: 29.1% England: 27.7%	Performing well in comparison to the regional and national figures	Favourable position	Continue to promote physical activity in Stafford Borough
Adults who are overweight or obese ¹¹	2012-2014: 68.3%	West Midlands: 66.6% England: 64.6%	Performing poorly against the regional and national average	Unfavourable position	Need to promote a healthier lifestyles

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-housing-market-and-house-prices> (tables 576-578)

¹¹ Staffordshire Observatory – Stafford: Locality Profile

Limiting long-term illness (percentage) ¹²	2011: 18.2%	West Midlands: 19.0% England: 17.6%	Performing slightly better than the regional average and slightly worse than the national average	Neither favourable or unfavourable condition	Maintain and improve the current position across the Borough
Mortality from causes considered preventable (ASR per 100,000) ¹²	2012-2014: 158	West Midlands: 193 England: 183	Performing well against the regional and national average	Favourable position	Maintain and improve the current position across the Borough
Buildings 'at risk' ¹³	8 buildings were on the 2016 buildings at risk register equating to around 1% of listed buildings in the Borough	West Midlands 4.5%	Performing well against the regional average	Favourable position	Maintain and improve the current position across the Borough
Homes with a HHSRS hazard ¹⁴	2011: 16% average (Stafford Borough is performing particularly poorly in the excess cold monitor).	England: 15% average	Performing slightly worse than the England average	Slightly unfavourable condition	Need to improve the quality of the Borough's existing and new housing stock
Occupancy rating (bedrooms) estimate ¹⁵	2011: Percentage of dwellings which have an occupancy rating (bedrooms) of -2 or less	West Midlands -1 (3.77% (-2 or less (0.69%)) England -1 (3.95%), -2 or less (0.70%)	Performing well against the regional and national average	Favourable position	Maintain and improve the current position across the Borough

¹² Staffordshire Observatory – Stafford: Locality Profile 2016

¹³ Stafford Borough Council: Buildings at Risk Register

¹⁴ BRE Client Report - BRE Integrated Dwelling Level Housing Stock Modelling and Database for Stafford

¹⁵ Census 2011

	0.24%, (-1) 1.7%				
Percentage of long term empty homes ¹⁶	Oct 2015 1.0%	West Midlands: 0.88%	Performing relatively poorly against the regional average.	Unfavourable condition	Need to improve the current position
Percentage of residents who are Satisfied with their area as a place to live ¹⁷	Mar14- Sept15: 95.8%	Staffordshire: 90.3%	Performing well against the county average	Favourable position	Maintain and improve the current position across the Borough
Depression prevalence (ages 18+) ¹⁷	2014/15: 7.2%	West Midlands: 7.6% England: 7.3%	The figures are slightly lower than the regional and national average	Neither favourable or unfavourable position	Continue to work with partners to support mental health across the Borough
Neighbourhood Development Plans ¹⁸	Since 2011: 8 areas designated 4 plans adopted	No comparators	No trends	Neither favourable or unfavourable position	Continue to support community groups creating Neighbourhood Development Plans
Number of voluntary organisations registered with Support Staffordshire which deliver in Stafford Borough ¹⁹	April 2017: 147	No comparators available	No trends available	Neither favourable or unfavourable position	Maintain/ improve current performance

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>
table 615 (data as of Oct 2015)

¹⁷ Staffordshire Observatory – Stafford: Locality Profile 2016

¹⁸ Stafford Borough Authority Monitoring Report 2016

¹⁹ Support Staffordshire data

Environmental Baseline Data					
Indicator	Quantified data (for Stafford Borough unless stated)	Comparators and Targets	Assessment / Trend	Issues Identified?	Action / Issues for Plan / SA
Housing completions on Previously Developed Land (PDL) (percentage) ²⁰	2015/16: 50%	Average 2011/12 to 2015/16: 64%	Decreasing percentage of housing completions on PDL	Unfavourable condition	Continue to maximise Housing completions on PDL
Woodland access ²¹	% of population with access to a 2ha+ wood within 500m 7.1%	West Midlands 16.6%	Performing poorly against regional average.	Unfavourable condition	Need to provide more woodland access
Travel to work (percentage) ²²	2011 Car/Van: 42.4% Bicycle: 1.8% On foot: 6.8%	Staffordshire: Car/Van: 44.2% Bicycle: 1.2% On foot: 5.4%	Performing well against the County average	Favourable position	Continue to promote more sustainable modes of travel
Percentage of household waste ²³	2016 52.4%	England: 43%	Performing well against national average	Favourable position	Maintain/improve current performance
Developer contributions to the Cannock Chase Special Area of	2015/16: £276,000 has been collected and £1,647,000 has been committed	No comparators	No trends	Continue to collect contributions to protect and enhance the SAC	Maintain/improve current performance

²⁰ Land for New Homes Publications – Stafford Borough Council

²¹ Woodland Trust: 'Space for People (Jan 2015) Targeting Action for Woodland Access

²² Staffordshire Observatory – Stafford: Locality Profile

²³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/env18-local-authority-collected-waste-annual-results-tables>

Conservation (SAC) ²⁴	across the four competent authorities				
Percentage of Sites of Biological Interest (SBIs) in appropriate conservation management (ACM) ²⁵	2015: 45%	2011: 32% 2008: 17%	Increasing number of SBIs in ACM	Favourable condition	Continue to increase the number of SBIs in ACM
Quality of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) ²⁶	Most recent data available for each site as of May 2017 13 out of 17 SSSIs had 95% of their area in a 'favourable' or 'unfavourable recovering' condition ²⁷	Data Compiled in 2014 14 out of 17 SSSIs had 95% of their area in a 'favourable' or 'unfavourable recovering' condition	Slightly reduction in the number of SSSIs meeting the 95% threshold	Slightly unfavourable condition	Enhance the quality of SSSIs in the Borough
Water quality ²⁸	Trent Valley Staffordshire (2015) Ecological status or potential: 51% moderate or over Chemical status: 98% good	Humber River Basin (2015) Ecological status or potential: 83% moderate or over Chemical status: 97% good	Poor ecological status compared to the wider area Chemical status is similar to the wider area	Unfavourable condition Favourable position	Consider ways to enhance the ecological status of waterways in the Borough
Noise complaints ²⁹	2016: 460	2015: 517 2014: 630 2013:740	Number of noise complaints across the Borough are	Maintain/improve current performance	Continue to address causes of noise pollution

²⁴ Stafford Borough Authority Monitoring Report 2016

²⁵ Staffordshire Wildlife Trust data

²⁶ Natural England <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteSearch.aspx>

²⁷ Includes all SSSIs within or partially within the Borough boundary

²⁸ Environment Agency <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/>

²⁹ Stafford Borough Council Data

			decreasing		
Light pollution complains ³⁰	2016: 6	2015: 5 2014: 12 2013: 8	The number of light pollution complaints have generally decreased	Maintain/improve current performance	Continue to address causes of light pollution

Question SA 3

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

³⁰ Stafford Borough Council Data

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 Development Plan. 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 document 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 plan document.
- 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. There may be additional sustainability issues, problems and opportunities for the Borough that hasn't been identified through the collection of baseline data.

Social, Health and Wellbeing

Table 6.1 Social Sustainability Issues

Key Sustainability Issues and Opportunities
Social, Health and Wellbeing
<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 Borough has an increasing percentage of elderly people • A relatively high percentage of the adult population are overweight or obese • Relatively low crime rate • A high percentage of people are satisfied as Stafford Borough as a place to live • Neighbourhood Development Plans offer an opportunity for local communities to become empowered • Planned investment in sport and leisure facilities

Economic

Table 6.2 Economic Sustainability Issues

Key Sustainability Issues and Opportunities	
Economic	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth in advanced manufacturing • Need to deliver more employment land across the Borough • Delivery of Brownfield Register to provide growth opportunities to meet housing demand • Support needed for Town Centre regeneration and investment • Growth of business parks • Opportunities for higher value added companies in growth sectors • Boost of MoD garrison • Major opportunity with HS2 and development of the Stafford Gateway • Ageing/shrinking workforce – need continued growth in housing and employment sites and in migration of workers. • Need to capitalise on the high skills base of Borough residents • Ensure we have the required infrastructure for growth – including broadband 	

Environmental

Table 6.3 Environmental Sustainability Issues

Key Sustainability Issues and Opportunities	
Environmental	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of Brownfield Register to promote the re-use of previously developed land • Loss of biodiversity habitats. • Protection and adaptation of heritage assets. • Loss of individual character for Stafford Borough's settlements. • Residents have relatively low access to woodland areas • SAC contributions are an opportunity to protect and enhance Cannock Chase • Decreasing percentage of housing completions on previously developed land 	

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 Plan document 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;
- Material assets;
- Landscape And;
- The interrelationship between these factors.

7.3. It should be appreciated that each plan 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, Health and Wellbeing 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
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 Objectives	SEA Topic	Indicator and Target
Economic	1.To create high, stable and equitable levels of employment	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of JSA applicants <p>Target: Maintain and improve good performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business deaths / business births <p>Target: Improve current performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new jobs created across all sectors of the economy <p>Target: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of young people not in education, employment or training <p>Target: Reduce</p>
	2.To ensure high and stable levels of economic diversity and competitiveness that recognises social and environmental issues		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of people reaching NVQ4+ qualifications <p>Target: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of people with no qualifications <p>Target: Reduce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The completion of employment land across the Borough <p>Target: Increase</p>
	3.To sustain the vitality and viability of Stafford Borough's towns and villages, and their communities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of new retail, office and leisure development in the town centres <p>Target: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of vacant units in the town centres <p>Target: Reduce</p>

Social, Health and Wellbeing	4.To support the needs of the local rural economy and communities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of community land and floorspace lost to other uses <p>Target: Minimise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The diversification of agricultural and rural businesses <p>Target: Support</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"> • Re-use of vacant land and buildings for employment purposes in the rural area <p>Target: Increase</p>
	5. To reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change such as risk of flooding, on public well-being, the economy and the environment.		<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 in line with the National Planning Policy Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New developments incorporate renewable technology <p>Target: Increase</p>
	6.To ensure that everyone has the opportunity of a decent and affordable home	Population and Human Health	

			<p>completions</p> <p>Target: Meet identified target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness <p>Target: Decrease</p>
	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 <p>Target: All</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled access <p>Target: all new build to comply with the Disability and Discrimination Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of mixed use developments <p>Target: Increase</p>
	8.To reduce and prevent crime, and reduce the fear of crime	Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new developments incorporating crime prevention measures <p>Target: Maintain and improve current performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded crime per 1,000 population <p>Target: Maintain and improve current performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of crime surveys <p>Target: Reduce fear of crime</p>
	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 <p>Target: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of noise and Light pollution complains

Environmenta I	10.To improve health, safety and well-being across the whole community	Population and Human Health	<p>Target: Reduce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Listed Buildings at Risk <p>Target: Reduce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support developments and improvements identified in the Borough Council’s Sport and Leisure Investment Plan <p>Target: Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel to Work Model Split <p>Target: Increase more sustainable modes of transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Quality Management Area <p>Target: Ensure no Air Quality Management Areas are required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of buildings and vacant land reused <p>Target: Increase</p>
	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"> • Number of new development incorporating water efficiency techniques <p>Target: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new developments incorporating renewable energies <p>Target: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of developments Facilitating the use of electric vehicles through future provision of charging points / traffic schemes <p>Target: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodlands lost to new development

			Target: None
	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 <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"> • Percentage of SBIs in active management <p>Target: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of SSSIs <p>Target: Improve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stafford Borough’s Biodiversity Strategy <p>Target: Meet the targets in the strategy 2016 – 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of planning permissions given affecting SSSIs <p>Target: No planning permissions to be given that affect SSSIs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developer contributions to the SAC <p>Target: Maintain to collect and utilise developer contributions towards the SAC</p>
	13.To protect and conserve soil	Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of development on previously developed land <p>Target: Maximise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil degradation <p>Target: Minimise the degradation or loss of soils to new developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remediation of contaminated land

			<p>Target: Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brownfield Land Register <p>Target: Mobilise the register to promote brownfield sites</p>
	<p>14. To protect and enhance water quality of the Borough's rivers whilst maximising their carrying capacity and achieving sustainable water resource management.</p>	<p>Water</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of rivers, canals and freshwater bodies within the Borough <p>Target: Achieve standards set out by the Water Framework Directive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new developments incorporating sustainable drainage systems and other water saving techniques <p>Target: All new development to incorporate water saving measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of development given planning permission on flood plains or major aquifers <p>Target: No planning permissions for developments on flood plains or on major aquifers as stated in the National Planning Policy Framework</p>
	<p>15. To protect, enhance and, where necessary, restore designated landscape areas and town character, scenic beauty, local distinctiveness, and historic and cultural character.</p>	<p>Cultural Heritage and Landscape</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of developments that adversely affect historic character <p>Target: None</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number / Area and % of Listed Buildings 'at risk' <p>Target: Reduce the number of sites and buildings at risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of planning permissions adversely affecting the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) <p>Target: None</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

Community			<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of SBIs in active management <p>Target: Increase</p>
	16.To create a sense of community identity and belonging	Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a good housing mix including bungalows and C2 accommodation to cater for an ageing population <p>Target: Maintain a good housing mix in line with the Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and Community Facilities <p>Target: Maintain and enhance social and community facilities across the Borough</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"> • People who are satisfied with Stafford Borough as a place to live <p>Target: Increase</p>
	18.To ensure that all individuals and groups in society have the opportunity to effectively engage in issues relating to their community		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase engagement and interactions when creating the development plan <p>Targets: Increase interactions when creating Plan documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of plan documents compliant with the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) <p>Target: All plan documents to be compliant with the SCI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Planning

			Target: Support all communities wanting to create a Neighbourhood Development Plan
	19.To encourage a strong, inclusive, community and voluntary sector		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of voluntary organisations registered with support Staffordshire Target: Maintain/Increase
	20.To engender a sense of civic and neighbourhood values, responsibility and pride		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who are satisfied with Stafford Borough as a place to live Target: Increase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood Planning Target: Support all communities wanting to create a Neighbourhood Development Plan

Question SA 6

Do you agree with the targets and indicators?

Question SA 7

Do you agree with the targets and indicators?

8. Quality Assurance

- 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 plan 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 Development Plan against the SA Framework and to appraise the options in each Plan document Issues and Options Paper. The Sustainability Appraisal Commentary and the 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. Finally the Council will prepare the submission plan and submit the policy documents alongside the amended Sustainability Appraisal Reports.
- 9.2. The remaining stages of Development Plan Sustainability Appraisal process are as follows:
 - Stage B2 – Developing the Options for each plan document
 - Stage B3 and B4 – Predicting and Evaluating the Effects of the plan document
 - 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 Plan document

10. Stage B2 – Developing and Refining the Plan Options

- 10.1. The Sustainability Appraisal Objectives set out how the key sustainability issues will be addressed, whilst the Plan Objectives will set out what the Development Plan 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 Plan Objectives will be compared to the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives. The purpose of this analysis is to ensure that the Plan Objectives 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.

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>	
<i>Comments: Plan Objective 4 and Plan Objective 2 are in conflict because.....</i>				

- 10.4. During the preparation of the issues and options 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 Plan document’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 policy options.

Table 10.3 Example of Options Appraisal Process

<i>SA</i>	<i>Option A</i>			<i>Option B</i>			<i>Option C</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	-

	<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>
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	+
	<i>Option A</i>			<i>Option B</i>			<i>Option C</i>		
COMMENTS	<i>Option A</i>			<i>Option B</i>			<i>Option C</i>		
	RECOMMENDATION								
	<i>Option ** performs best in terms of sustainability objectives etc...</i>								

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 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 Plan

- 11.1. The next stage of the Sustainability Appraisal process is to assess, in more detail, each preferred policy option in the Preferred Options Document 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 plan 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 cannot 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.

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									
	Economic Objectives						Social Objectives			
	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 the plan document, allowing the actual effects of the Plan document 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 of the Plan.
- 11.8. Following the consultation on the Preferred Options and the Sustainability Appraisal Report the preferred policy options will be used to prepare the policies for inclusion in the Submission Plan to the Secretary of State. At the stage the policies in the Submission 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. The National Planning Policy Framework provides clear guidance that development should not take place where there is substantial risk of flooding. Paragraph 100 states:

‘Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere’.

- 12.2. Stafford Borough will appointed consultants to carry out a SFRA. 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.

13. Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 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.
- 13.3. Below is a list of Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) sites within or on the edge of Stafford Borough:
- Cannock Chase
 - Chartley Moss
 - Pasturefields Salt Marsh
 - Cop Mere
 - Aqualate Mere
 - Mottey Meadows

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 Plan, 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 submitted plans 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 Plan. 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;	

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 	
<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) 	
Monitoring of the significant environmental, <i>social and economic</i> effects of the plan's or programme's implementation (Art. 10)	
Quality assurance: environmental / <i>sustainability appraisal</i> reports should be of a sufficient standard to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive	

15. Examination of the Plan

- 15.1. Following the independent Examination into each 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 Development Plan

- 16.1. After Stafford Borough Council has received the Inspector's Binding Reports. The Plan 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 the 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 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 Plan documents and SA Reports and can be found in the Technical Appendix.

Glossary

Term	Description
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 Historic England, Natural England 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.
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.
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	An area of national / international importance for nature conservation and managed in accordance with a nature reserve agreement.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was introduced in March 2012 to replace previous national planning policy. The document sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
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 Practice Guidance (PPG)	The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was established to support the NPPF. PPG provides detailed guidance across a number of specific categories.
Precautionary Principle	The assumption that an activity or development might be damaging unless it can be proved otherwise.
Previously Developed Land (PDL)	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.
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	The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004
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.
Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs)	A site of biological importance that is of county importance for its wildlife interest.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	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.