

Bath Western Riverside Sustainability
Appraisal - Non Technical Summary
Bath and North East Somerset Council

June 2006

QM

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Contents

1	Background	3
2	Results of the SA	7
3	Next Steps	8
	Appendix A Example of a Matrix	9



1 Background

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (SA) AND THE SA REPORT

1.1.1 Bath and North East Somerset Council appointed WSP Environmental Ltd to undertake an SA of the emerging Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Bath Western Riverside (BWR). This report presents the draft results of the SA.

1.1.2 The purpose of the SA is to help ensure that the SPD is sound and that it contributes to a range of sustainable development objectives.

1.1.3 This section of the draft SA Report:

- Defines sustainable development and Sustainability Appraisal;
- Outlines the content of the SPD;
- Discusses compliance with the SEA Directive, and
- Outlines the structure of the rest of this report.

1.2 WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

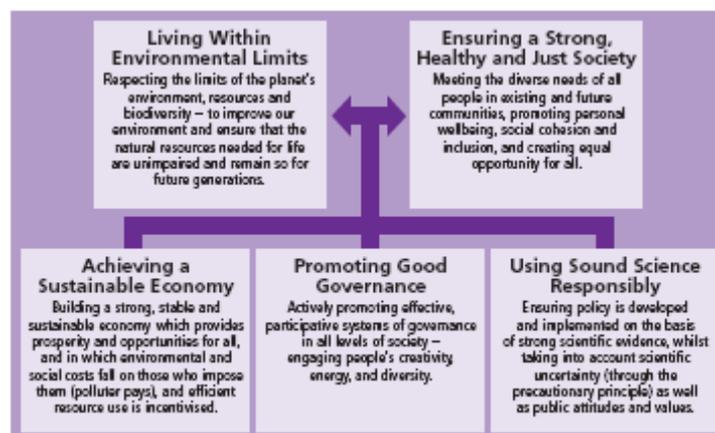
1.2.1 The most widely used and recognised definition of Sustainable Development is that taken from the report 'Our Common Vision' produced by the World Commission On Environment and Development in 1987 (Brundtland Report):

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”

1.2.2 The government outlined the United Kingdoms approach to sustainable development in the 'UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (March 2005). Within this document the government identifies five guiding principles with which the United Kingdoms sustainable development strategy would be developed:

- Living within Environmental Limits
- Ensuring a Strong Healthy and Just Society
- Achieving a Sustainable Economy
- Promoting Good Governance
- Using Sound Science Responsibly

1.2.3 The guiding principles are further explained in the diagram below which is taken from the government's strategy.



1.2.4 The Government has also produced a definition of sustainable communities. Sustainable communities are:

“Places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.”

1.3 WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL?

1.3.1 Sustainability Appraisal has been defined as:

“a systematic and iterative process undertaken during the preparation of a plan, which identifies and reports on the extent to which implementation of the plan would achieve environmental, social and economic objectives by which sustainable development can be defined, in order that the performance of the plan can be improved”¹.

1.3.2 Under the new planning system² SA is mandatory for Local Development Documents, including SPDs. The SA also needs to comply with the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC ‘on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment’ (the SEA Directive). Throughout the remainder of this report where reference is made to Sustainability Appraisal, SA or the SA Report, it denotes Sustainability Appraisal under the Act incorporating the requirements of the SEA Directive. Section 1.3 below demonstrates how this SA Report complies with the SEA Directive and associated regulations.

1.4 THE PLAN OBJECTIVES AND OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

1.4.1 The western riverside area of Bath is an exciting development opportunity which is of regional significance. At 35ha the site is comparable in size with Bath City Centre. The principle role of the SPD is to provide a Spatial Masterplan to guide the redevelopment and regeneration of BWR. More detailed Masterplans will be required as more specific development proposals are prepared.

1.4.2 The vision for Bath Western Riverside redevelopment is:

“To create a vital and viable place which reconnects the urban fabric of Bath in a seamless way to offer a high quality mixed use environment that functions as a working and living quarter of the City, and reinforces its World Heritage status”.

1.4.3 The SPD brings forward the key principles that are set out in the Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance for BWR and Policy GDS1:B1 of the Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan and applies them spatially to the site following detailed environmental investigation and a masterplanning process that has involved developers and stakeholders. Finally, the SPD sets out an Implementation Framework for development, in terms of phasing, requirements for applications, developer contributions, and design codes.

1.4.4 Section 1 of the SPD provides an overview of development requirements, including a discussion of the principal of achieving ‘embedded sustainability’ and a set of energy targets. Section 2 of the SPD presents a set of organisational principles and Section 3 sets out an implementation Plan. The SPD also includes a set of design codes.

¹ Good Practice Guidance on Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Planning Guidance, DETR, 2000

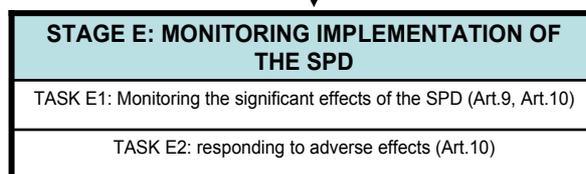
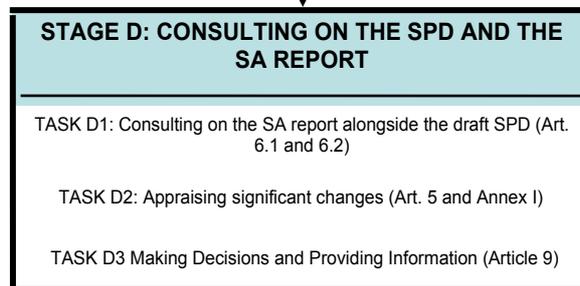
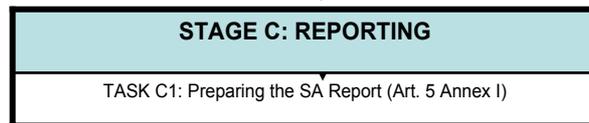
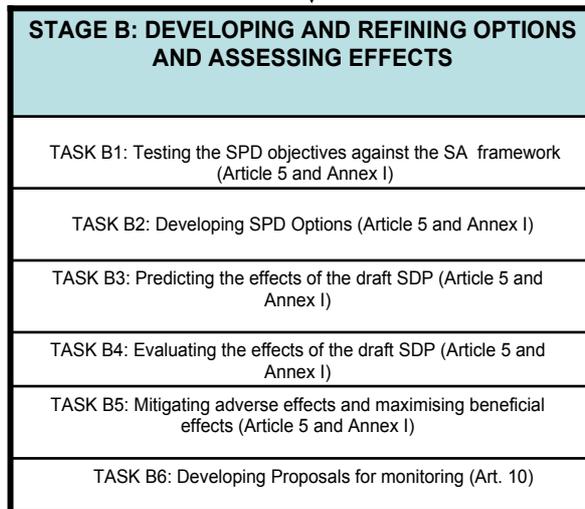
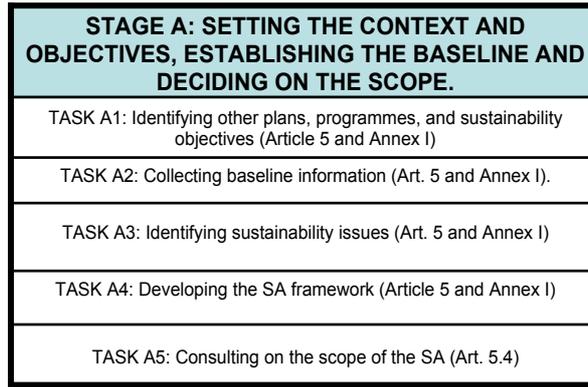
² Section 39(2) of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 (the Act).



1.5 COMPLIANCE WITH THE SEA DIRECTIVE AND REGULATIONS

1.5.1 The SA process consists of the following stages:

- Stage A – identifying other relevant plans and programmes and sustainability objectives, establishing the sustainability baseline, identifying sustainability problems and opportunities and establishing SA objectives;
- Stage B – deciding on the scope of the SA and consulting with environmental bodies and other sustainability consultees;
- Stage C – assessing the effects of the plan, identifying measures to reduce or mitigate negative effects or identify opportunities for improving sustainability, devise monitoring programme and prepare Sustainability Appraisal Report (this report);
- Stage D – consultation on the Draft SPD and Sustainability Appraisal Report;
- Stage E – monitoring the significant sustainability effects of implementing the SPD.





2 Results of the SA

2.1.1 The main SA Report sets out the full results of the appraisal. The results are summarised below: An example of the matrix used, showing the SA objectives is attached as Appendix A.

2.1.2 Overall it is considered that the draft SPD will make a significant contribution to sustainable development.

2.1.3 Although some areas of uncertainty have been identified, no instances where the SPD is anticipated to have a negative effect have been identified.

2.1.4 The SA has identified a number of opportunities for enhancing the SPD. The key suggestions are:

- Adding a summary of the targets for embedded sustainability and broadening the targets to include targets relating to reducing water consumption, the recycling of water and recycling of waste;
- Adding such requirements and the need for buildings to be EcoHomes or BREEAM Excellent to the general section of the Design Codes;
- Amending the principles to provide a more rounded discussion of sustainability (see 4.4.5. of the main SA report)
- Adding a reference to District Heating as a concept to be explored;
- Review the discussion sustainability and local context in the over-arching design principles (see 4.6.2 of the main SA report);
- The key organising principles could be extended to include the opportunity for providing an ecological corridor along the river (which is identified elsewhere in the SPD) and also the need to consider micro-climate and opportunities for passive solar gain and the use of renewable energy;
- The section on public realm could give an indication of the total amount of open space that will need to be accommodated on site;
- The section on the River Corridor could discuss issues in relation to water safety, provision of a functional ecological corridor and promotion of cycling along the corridor;
- The landscape strategy could reference the need to use species that reflect local character but also consider the long term implications of climate change and the impact this might have on the choice of species;
- We suggest changing the title of the section on stakeholders to 'Building Communities' to better reflect the subject matter it covers;
- The general principles in the Design Codes would seem an appropriate part of the Codes to provide a section on embedded sustainability with a cross reference to the requirements and targets set out in Section 1.5 of the SPD, e.g. the need for buildings to achieve BREEAM or EcoHomes excellent. The general principles could also highlight the need for all buildings to be flexible and adaptable;
- The Design Codes could include an allowance for the provision of 'Life-Time Homes' and 'Live – Work Units';
- Construction and Environmental Management Plans could be added to the list of requirements in the Implementation Plan; and
- The Implementation Plan could also explore opportunities for local involvement in future arrangements for management of the area.



3 Next Steps

3.1.1 The consultation period for the draft SPD and SA Report runs from Monday 19th June 2006 to Friday 28th July 2006. Please send comments to:

Planning Policy Team,
Bath and North East Somerset Council,
Trimbridge House,
Trim Street,
Bath BA1 2DP.
[E-mail planning_policy@bathnes.gov.uk]

3.1.2 Representations should be made on a representation form and should specify the document and paragraphs to which they relate and the grounds on which they are made.

3.1.3 On adoption of the SDP a final Sustainability Appraisal Statement (SA Statement) will be prepared which will set out:

- Any changes to or deletions from the SPD in response to the information in the SA Report;
- Ways in which responses to consultation on the SA have been taken into account;
- Reasons for choosing the SPD as adopted, and why other reasonable alternatives were rejected; and
- Confirmation of monitoring measures, which could have been modified in light of consultation responses.

3.1.4 The final SA Statement will be made available to the consultation bodies and the public. The public and other consultees will be informed and given access to the Core Strategy once it has been adopted.

Appendix A Example of a Matrix

[Click here and type Appendix text.]

1.1 VISION AND KEY PRINCIPLES FOR BWR		
Does the policy / proposal . . .	Minor/Major positive effect (++/+) Minor/Major negative (--/-) Uncertain (+/-) No relationship (0) Unknown (?)	Appraisal Comments
1: Improve health		
1.1 Improve health	`+/-	No explicit reference to health in the vision or key principles. Some of the key principles would have an indirect benefit on health, e.g. employment generation and opportunities for cycling.
1.2 Reduce health inequalities	`+/-	No explicit reference to health in the vision or key principles.
1.3 Promote healthy lifestyles, especially routine daily exercise	`+/-	No explicit reference to health in the vision or key principles. Some of the key principles would have an indirect benefit on health, e.g. opportunities for cycling and walking.
2: Support communities that meet people's needs		
2.1 Help make suitable housing available and affordable for everyone	`+/-	No explicit reference to the provision of suitable and affordable housing in the vision or key principles.
2.2 Give existing and new residents access to learning, training, skills and knowledge	`+/-	No explicit reference to these considerations in the vision or key principles.
2.3 Reduce crime and fear of crime and promote health and safety	+	Appraised on the basis that a high quality mixed environment would incorporate crime reduction measures.



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Does the policy / proposal . . .	Minor/Major positive effect (++/+) Minor/Major negative (--/-) Uncertain (+/-) No relationship (0) Unknown (?)	Appraisal Comments
2.4 Promote safer, stronger and more vibrant communities	+	Appraised on the basis that a high quality mixed environment would help achieve this objective. Other key principles will also contribute to the achievement of this objective.
2.5 Increase access to and participation in arts and cultural activities	+/-	No explicit reference to these considerations in the vision or key principles.
3: Develop the economy in ways that meet people's needs		
3.1 Give everyone in the local area access to satisfying work opportunities, paid or unpaid	+	There is a commitment to ensuring that the local community benefits from investment in the area.
3.2 Help everyone afford a comfortable standard of living	+/-	Not explicitly covered but it is implied that standards of living could be improved through economic investment.
3.3 Reduce poverty and income inequality	+	One of the key principles is to ensure that the local community benefits from investment in the area.
3.4 Support the development of the local, city and regional economy, meeting local need locally where appropriate	++	The first part of the objective is strongly supported by two of the key principles. The second part of the objective, relating to meeting local needs locally, is not explicitly supported.
3.5 Increase the circulation of wealth within the local area	++	Three of the key principles support this objective, i.e. those relating to 2, 5 and 7.
3.6 Harness the economic potential of the river in a sustainable way	+	The key principles recognise the role of the river.



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Does the policy / proposal . . .	Minor/Major positive effect (++/+) Minor/Major negative (--/-) Uncertain (+/-) No relationship (0) Unknown (?)	Appraisal Comments
3.7 Reduce the vulnerability of the economy to climate change and harness opportunities arising	+	The key principles recognise the need for achieving 'embedded sustainability.'
4: Provide access to meet people's needs with least damage to communities and the environment		
4.1 Reduce the need/desire to travel by car	++	Supported by key principles 3 and 4.
4.2 Reduce the need/desire to travel by air	+	The vision contributes to this objective by seeking to enhance Bath as a World Heritage Site and as such a destination for tourism.
4.3 Help everyone access basic local services easily, safely and affordably	++	The vision seeks to deliver a high quality mixed use development, which we assume would contain basic local services.
4.4 Make public transport, cycling and walking easier and more attractive	++	Supported by key principles 3 and 4.
4.5 Encourage a switch from transporting freight and passengers by road to rail or the river	+	Public transport is promoted, although no role identified for the river.
5: Maintain and improve environmental quality and assets		
5.1 Protect and enhance habitats and species (taking account of climate change)	+	Key principle 5 seeks to maximise environmental works and we have assumed that the enhancement of habitats would be covered by this and that such works would have regard to existing wildlife. No reference to



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Does the policy / proposal . . .	Minor/Major positive effect (++/+) Minor/Major negative (--/-) Uncertain (+/-) No relationship (0) Unknown (?)	Appraisal Comments
		climate change in the vision.
5.2 Promote the long-term management and maintenance of the environment	0	No reference to management/maintenance of the environment.
5.3 Protect and enhance landscape and townscape	+	Key principles 1 and 5 work towards this. The vision seeks to reinforce the World Heritage status of the City.
5.4 Value and protect diversity and local distinctiveness including supporting the rural economy	+	Principles 1 and 5 support this objective. The vision also seeks to reconnect the urban fabric of Bath and it is assumed that this would be done in ways that value local distinctiveness (in terms of the built environment). No connection to the rural economy in the vision or key principles.
5.5 Maintain and enhance cultural and historical assets	+	No link to cultural assets made but historical assets are acknowledged.
5.6 Reduce vulnerability to flooding and potential consequences of climate change	+/-	No explicit reference to flood risk or climate change.
5.7 Promote waste management in accordance with the waste hierarchy	++	The concept of embedded sustainability is referred to in the key principles and this is explored in Section 1.5. The concept is taken to include sustainable waste management practices.
5.8 Promote the efficient use of land, including re-use of brownfield land and appropriate remediation of contaminated land	+	Key principle 8 accords with this objective.



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Does the policy / proposal . . .	Minor/Major positive effect (++/+) / Minor/Major negative (--/-) / Uncertain (+/-) / No relationship (0) / Unknown (?)	Appraisal Comments
6: Minimise consumption of natural resources		
6.1 Maximise the use of renewable energy and reduce non-renewable energy consumption thus reducing greenhouse gas emission	++	Key principles refer to embedded sustainability and this is taken to include renewable energy.
6.2 Keep water consumption within local carrying capacity limits (taking account of climate change)	+/-	No explicit reference to water consumption in the vision and key principles.
6.3 Minimise consumption and extraction of minerals and maximise recycling and use of materials obtained from sustainable and local sources	+/-	No explicit reference to minerals in the vision and key principles.
6.4 Encourage the adoption of sustainable design and construction practices	+/-	No explicit reference to sustainable design and construction.
6.5 Minimise land, water, air, light, noise pollution and statutory nuisance	+/-	No explicit reference to these factors.
Overall Commentary/key recommendations: Consideration of the vision and key principles against the appraisal objectives has identified a number of potential gaps and uncertainties. The reference to embedded sustainability is welcomed; this is discussed further in Section 1.5 of the SPD. In addition the		



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Does the policy / proposal . . .	Minor/Major positive effect (++/+) Minor/Major negative (--/-) Uncertain (+/-) No relationship (0) Unknown (?)	Appraisal Comments
<p>key principles should be extended to cover the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainable design and construction (this is broader than energy, waste and CO2 emissions – the factors discussed in Section 1.5 of the SPD and covers issues like, water consumption, flexible building design and Green Travel Plans);• The need to secure provision for long term management;• Opportunities to enhance biodiversity;• Ensuring the provision of facilities on or near the site (health facilities, community facilities, play facilities and open space)• Social inclusion (affordable housing/targeting local people for jobs and the role of education and training);		