

Sustainability Appraisal of the Great Yarmouth Core Strategy Development Plan Document Issues and Options

October 2005

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Sustainability Appraisal Process

- 1.1 The concept of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been devised by Government to ensure specific plans and policies are prepared in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.
- 1.2 The SA process is derived from the European Directive relating to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The aim of the Directive is to ensure the compatibility of all land use plans with the environmental and conservation aims identified at a European level.
- 1.3 The scope of the process has been extended to include social and economic issues. The SA process has been designed so that Local Authorities can satisfy the requirements of both the SA and the European SEA Directive with one process.
- 1.4 Where reference is made to the SA process, in this and other SA documents, this also incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive.
- 1.5 In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004, all Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that make up a Local Development Framework (LDF) must undergo a SA to assess their potential effects on social, environmental and economic aims.
- 1.6 In September 2004 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) published draft guidance on the SA process: 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks'. This document sets out the stages of carrying out the SA which includes a Scoping report, an initial SA report and a final SA report.
- 1.7 The initial appraisal was to represent the first appraisal stage of the emerging DPD options and their effects on the objectives set out within the sustainability framework.
- 1.8 However, in April 2005, as a response to the consultation on the draft SA guidance, the ODPM published an interim advice note of frequently asked questions. The advice note also provided information on some revisions to the SA guidance.
- 1.9 The advice note stated that the SA guidance would be revised to remove reference to the Initial SA Report, as the process would be 'contrary to the continuous nature of the Regional Spatial Strategy and LDF preparation process'.
- 1.10 Instead, Local Authorities should conduct SA work throughout the pre-submission process, making the appraisal information available to the public when consulted on identifying and selecting the DPD options.

- 1.11 This report represents the SA work undertaken in relation to the Core Strategy. It includes an appraisal of the current spatial vision, the spatial objectives, the spatial strategy options and some of the main core policy issues.
- 1.12 The Core Strategy DPD outlines the overall development strategy for the Borough until 2016 and how this will be achieved through a development strategy.

2.0 The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

- 2.1 The role of the SA Scoping Report is to identify and highlight the sustainability issues within the Borough and use these to produce a sustainability framework against which the emerging Core Strategy options can be assessed.
- 2.2 A number of sources were used to highlight the sustainability issues within the Borough. These included looking at the issues arising from higher level plans, programmes and objectives relevant to the Great Yarmouth Local Development Framework (LDF), issues identified from baseline information and highlighted through public consultation, as well as recent technical studies undertaken by the Council.
- 2.3 The plans, programmes and objectives relevant to the Great Yarmouth LDF are detailed in the SA Scoping Report and include; Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs) notes and Statements (PPSs), Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England, the Norfolk County Structure Plan to 2011, the current Great Yarmouth Community Strategy (2020 Vision) as well as a number of other documents which have been referenced in the Scoping Report.
- 2.4 To inform the SA, baseline information was gathered and used to highlight any sustainability issues which were specific to the Borough. The baseline information collected covered a range of topics in order to identify any specific sustainability issues relating to social, environmental and economic issues.
- 2.6 The draft SA is currently going through a period of consultation with relevant statutory bodies. If you would like a hard copy of the SA Scoping Report please contact the Planning Policy Team on 01493 846475 or ldf@great-yarmouth.gov.uk.

3.0 Initial Sustainability Appraisal Work and Consultation

- 3.1 This report documents the initial SA work that has been undertaken in relation to the emerging Core Strategy DPD. As explained above the Core Strategy sets out the planning framework for the Borough.
- 3.2 The emerging Core Strategy is comprised of a spatial vision and spatial objectives, a spatial strategy and core policies. This initial SA work seeks to appraise each of these in order to assess their compatibility with the sustainability objectives.
- 3.3 The emerging Core Strategy options are set out in the Core Strategy Questionnaire which has been published as a part of the Core Strategy consultation. The consultation period is from 24 November to 5 December 2005.
- 3.4 The method used for the appraisal is based on that set out in the ODPM draft guidance on 'SA of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks' (September 2004). For simplification, we have used a number of symbols (ticks,

letters and crosses) to show whether a considered option contributes to, or harms, a particular objective.

4.0 Compatibility of the Spatial Vision with Sustainability Objectives

The Borough Spatial Vision

4.1 The vision set out in the Great Yarmouth Community Strategy (2020 Vision) has been developed by community, public and statutory organisations through the Great Yarmouth Local Strategic Partnership.

Vision 1: Great Yarmouth Community Strategy (2020Vision)

“We want our community to offer a high quality of life and a secure future for all our residence”

These are grouped round four main themes:

- *Economic Objective: A prosperous and dynamic economy*
- *Environmental Objective: A safe and sustainable environment*
- *Social Objective: A healthy and cohesive community*
- *Learning Objective: To improve and coordinate learning activities across the Borough*

4.3 It is necessary to assess the spatial vision against the sustainability framework to ensure that it is compatible with the identified sustainability objectives within the sustainability framework.

4.4 The spatial vision has been assessed against the objectives within the sustainability framework. A simple grading system has been used to illustrate the performance of the spatial vision against the sustainability objectives as well as some explanatory comments:

Key

+ = positive effect

0 = neutral/no effect

N = negative effect

? = unsure of effect

Table 1: Appraisal of the Vision

Social Objective	Assessment of Effect	Comments
To the improve health of the population overall	+	Focus on improvement in quality of living environments and the aim of a healthy and cohesive community would help could help to improve health
To improve the education and skills of the population overall	+	Aim of being responsive to community needs would look to achieve the aims of the objective and improving and coordinating learning activities across the Borough would also help to achieve the objective.

Social Objective	Assessment of Effect	Comments
To reduce anti-social activity	+	Combination of addressing the needs of a healthy and cohesive community as well as quality places, a prosperous and dynamic economy and a safe and sustainable environment would address several of the causes of crime.
To reduce poverty and social exclusion	+	Urban regeneration would maximise opportunities and the aim of a prosperous and dynamic economy would help to achieve the objective.
To Improve accessibility to essential services and facilities, including health, education and leisure.	+	The aim of a healthy and cohesive community, safe and sustainable environment and a secure future for all our residence would help to achieve the objective.
To offer everybody the opportunity for rewarding and satisfying employment	+	The aim of a prosperous and dynamic economy would help to achieve the objective.
To encourage a sense of community identity and welfare	+	The aim of a healthy and cohesive community would help to achieve the objective.
To encourage a greater usage of cultural attractions	+	The aim of a high quality of life improving and coordinating learning activities across the Borough would help to achieve the objective.
Minimise the irreversible loss of undeveloped land and productive agricultural holdings.	+	The aim of a safe and sustainable environment would help to achieve the objective.
Minimise waste production and support the recycling of waste	+	The aim of a safe and sustainable environment would help to achieve the objective.
To reduce the effects of traffic on the environment	+	The aim of a safe and sustainable environment would help to achieve the objective.
Reduce the effects of climate change.	+	The aim of a safe and sustainable environment would help to achieve the objective.
Limit or reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change	+	The aim of a safe and sustainable environment would help to achieve the objective.
To improve air quality and reduce potential pollution (including air, water, soil, noise, vibration and light)	+	The aim of a safe and sustainable environment would help to achieve the objective.
To maintain and enhance biodiversity, flora and fauna.	+	The aim of a safe and sustainable environment would help to achieve the objective.
To conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment.	+	The aim of a safe and sustainable environment would help to achieve the objective.
To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes	+	The aim of a safe and sustainable environment would help to achieve the objective.
To encourage sustained economic growth	+	The aim of a prosperous and dynamic economy would help to achieve the objective.

Social Objective	Assessment of Effect	Comments
To encourage and accommodate both indigenous and inward investment.	+	The aim of a prosperous and dynamic economy would help to achieve the objective.
Improve the efficiency, competitiveness and adaptability of the town centre.	+	The aim of a prosperous and dynamic economy would help to achieve the objective.
To encourage efficient patterns of movement in support of economic growth	+	The aim of a prosperous and dynamic economy would help to achieve the objective

4.5 The SA of the spatial vision suggests the aims of the vision are in agreement with the aims of the sustainability framework.

4.6 It is recognised however, that sometimes some aims can put pressure on other aspects of the vision or other SA objectives. This can often be seen with the aims of economic prosperity putting pressure on conserving natural resources. The degree to which this occurs would depend on the detail of the strategy and will be assessed through the appraisal of the spatial strategy options and core policy issues at a later date.

4.7 In some cases the effect or degree of effect on the objective is unclear as the vision only provides a summary of what the Core Strategy is aiming to achieve. However, the appraisal has not identified any potential negative effects on the sustainability objectives.

5.0 The Consistency of the Spatial Objectives and Sustainability Objectives

5.1 In order to explain the spatial vision in more detail, spatial objectives have been identified in more detail making up the vision. The spatial objectives aim to set out how the spatial vision will be achieved.

5.2 It is necessary to ensure the compatibility of the spatial objectives with the sustainability framework objectives in order to ensure that the overall Core Strategy Plan objectives are consistent with the aims of sustainability.

5.3 The appraisal of the spatial objectives against the sustainability objectives illustrates a general conformity in aims (with no direct conflicts identified). However as with the assessment of compatibility of the spatial vision and sustainability objectives it is recognised that some spatial objectives could put pressure on other spatial or sustainability objectives. The degree of this effect will be established through the appraisal of the options and the core policy issues.

6.0 The Core Strategy Options

6.1 The options have been formed in the context of the Norfolk County Council Structure Plan 1993- 2011 and Regional Planning Guidance for the East of England (RPG6). Consideration has also been had to the emerging East of England Plan which will replace RPG9 when adopted in 2007 (current timetable).

6.2 A full list of the core strategy options can be viewed in the Core Strategy Issues and options document which can be viewed on the Council's web site at:

The Appraisal of the Spatial Strategic Options

- 6.3 As part of the initial SA the strategic options for the emerging Core Strategy need to be assessed against the sustainability objectives set out within the sustainability framework.
- 6.4 The likely effects of the options have been considered in terms of their short, medium and long term effects in order to identify their real impacts. Other issues that have been considered are; the likelihood of the effect occurring, the scale of the effect (geographical impact and the number of people impacted) and whether temporary or permanent.
- 6.5 Where the appraisal has not been able to identify the potential effect of a particular option this has been stated and the reasons for coming to such a conclusion have been explained.
- 6.7 Each option, as set out in the Core Strategy questionnaire, has been assessed in terms of its potential impact against each of the 19 sustainability objectives as set out in the sustainability framework. A grading system has been used to illustrate the type of effect; positive, negative, or neutral/no effect. In order to gauge the amount of effect the following symbol system has been devised:

++ = significant positive effect

+ = positive effect

0 = neutral/no effect

- = negative effect

-- = significant negative effect

? = unsure of effect

Proposed mitigation measures

- 6.8 Through the SA process several of the options and core policy are identified as having potentially negative impacts on the aims of the objectives.
- 6.9 In these cases in order to minimise these effects possible mitigation methods have been identified where possible. These measures are often set out in a cautionary manner in order to avoid or minimise the potential negative impact of the option.
- 6.10 The main findings of the appraisal are summarised in appendix 1.