

4.0 Sustainability Appraisal Methodology

Approach

- 4.1 The Sustainability Appraisal of the Housing Options has been carried out in accordance with guidance and best practice including the Government guidance “*Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents*” as reviewed in Section 1.0. It has been prepared to provide sufficient information to accompany the Government’s response to the Phase 2 Preferred Option on the extent to which the options for additional housing promote the principles of sustainable development.
- 4.2 As noted above, the SA (2007) framework was revised to take into account the revised RDSF objectives which were in draft when the SA (2007) was carried out. Following a further review, it is considered that no further changes need to be made to the indicators included in the SA (2007) and any changes in the baseline or policy situation identified above can be taken into account as part of the analysis. This will also assist in comparison of the effects arising from the Preferred Option with the options identified as part of the current housing study.
- 4.3 All of the housing options assume that the housing growth identified in policy CF3 of the Phase 2 Preferred Option is brought forward in its entirety. The SA therefore appraises the cumulative effect of the housing options and the Phase 2 Preferred Option policy CF3. It has also been assumed that all other policies of the Phase 2 Preferred Option are assumed to be taken forward as identified and therefore form a further background component to the SA.
- 4.4 As identified in Section 2.0, the Options Appraisal proposes no amendments or changes to RSS policy. However, for the purposes of this SA, the appraisal has been carried out on the basis of the housing numbers identified in Policy CF3 and assumes that each option is, in effect, additional housing in the context of this policy.

Consultation

- 4.5 As this SA comprises additional evidence, and does not form part of the SA (2007), it is not subject to the statutory consultation process as part of the Phase 2 Preferred Option. However, to ensure that the SA robustly reflects the requirements of the SEA Directive, additional consultation with statutory consultees has taken place to allow input into the SA process.
- 4.6 In addition, the SA’s status as additional evidence means that it will not be subject to formal consultation but will be used to inform the Government’s response to the Phase 2 Preferred Option and will be a material consideration in the wider consultation process on the WMRSS. Further consultation would be required in the event that modifications to the Phase 2 Preferred Option are brought forward following the Examination in Public and additional SA is required as an addendum to the SA (2007).
- 4.7 In addition to meetings with statutory consultees at the inception of the SA of the housing options (May 2008), to review the scope of the methodology (July 2008) and to review the initial findings of the SA of the housing options (August/September 2008), issues in respect of the SA were raised as part of wider regional seminars forming part of the Options Appraisal process. Volume 1 provides a detailed summary of the key issues covered and raised at the two regional seminars which took place in May 2008 and July 2008 with a range of regional stakeholders, statutory consultees and interested parties. Evidence from the seminars has also been used to inform the SA process.

Difficulties

4.8 The SA of the Housing Options sets out difficulties encountered in its undertaking. These include uncertainties in the SA (2007), limited consultation which may have generated further information, and that spatially specific effects cannot always be identified. However, it is still possible to draw some conclusions to provide sufficient evidence as to the effect of the options on the principles of sustainable development.

Relationship to the SEA Directive

4.9 Paragraph 4.7 of Volume 5 explains how the Housing Options SA has been carried out to be consistent with the requirements of the SEA Directive, and the relevant section of Volume 5 that demonstrates this. This is summarised below.

Requirements of SEA Directive	Location in Housing Options SA	Location in this Non Technical Summary
An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	Sections 1.0 and 2.0	Section 1.0
The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme	Section 4.0	Section 3.0
The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	Section 4.0	Section 3.0
Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC	Section 4.0; Appendix 1	Section 1.0
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	Section 4.0; Appendix 1	Section 3.0
The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climactic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the inter-relationship between the above factors	Section 6.0	Section 5.0
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	Section 7.0	Section 6.0
An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know how) encountered in compiling the required information	Sections 3.0 and 5.0	Sections 2.0 and 4.0
A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10	Section 8.0	Section 6.0
A non-Technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	This document	This document