



West Somerset Local Plan
Sustainability Appraisal Report
Part 1: Introduction and
Methodology

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West Somerset Council

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal	1
1.3	Aim and Structure of this Report	1
1.4	Habitat Regulations Assessment	3
1.5	How to comment on this report	4
2	West Somerset Local Plan Publication Draft	5
2.1	Spatial vision and objectives	5
2.2	Content of the Local Plan	5
3	Sustainability Appraisal Methodology	8
3.1	Introduction	8
3.2	Stage A: Scoping	9
3.3	Stage B: Assessing the elements of the Local Plan	9
3.4	Stage B: Alternative options	11
3.5	Stage C: Preparing the Draft SA Report	11
3.6	Stage D: Consulting on the SA Report	11
3.7	Difficulties encountered	11
3.8	The SA Framework	12
4	Next Steps	16

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is the Sustainability Appraisal Report (SA report) for the West Somerset Local Plan (Publication Draft).

The preparation of the West Somerset Local Plan has been subject to an integrated Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) (hereafter referred to as SA) in line with the requirements of:

- Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 1633: The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (which requires an environmental assessment to be carried out on certain plans and programmes prepared by public authorities that are likely to have a significant effect upon the environment); and
- The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (which requires Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of all emerging Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents).

The Sustainability Appraisal is being carried out by ENVIRON using a team of consultants experienced in SA and SEA of local authority spatial planning documents.

1.2 Purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal

The purpose of SA is to ensure that plans achieve sustainable development through the simultaneous integration of social, economic and environmental objectives in plan preparation and adoption.

Although planning authorities aim to address these issues, it is easy to miss opportunities for better supporting social, economic and environmental objectives, and for reducing conflicts. SA offers a systematic and robust way for checking and improving on plans as they are being developed. The potential significant effects of the Local Plan, both positive and negative will be identified and reported on within the SA Report. In addition, the justification for the selection and rejection of alternatives to the Local Plan needs to be explained in the SA report. The SA also provides the public and other stakeholders with further information on the development of the Plan and its potential relationship with relevant sustainability objectives within the Plan area.

1.3 Aim and Structure of this Report

The SEA Regulations require that an assessment is carried out on a draft version of the Plan and a statutory environmental report (an SA report under the English planning system) is produced and consulted on. This SA report should set out the results of the SA process, outline why alternatives were selected or rejected, report on the assessment of the draft plan and outline a programme for monitoring the effects of the plan.

This report is this statutory SA report and it reports on the assessment of the West Somerset Local Plan Publication Draft. This SA report has been produced alongside the production of the Plan and will be published at the same time, thus providing respondents with appropriate information on the sustainability implications of the Plan on which to base their representations to the Plan.

For the sake of clarity the SA report is split into a number of parts. This is Part 1 of the SA report: Introduction, Methodology and Next Steps. The other parts of the report are:

- Part 2: Scoping Information;
- Part 3a: Results of the Assessment: Assessment of Alternatives; and
- Part 3b: Results of the Assessment: Assessment of Publication Draft Local Plan.

A Non-Technical Summary is also available.

All reports are available at the following weblink:

<http://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Planning---Building/Planning-Policy/Local-Plan-to-2032/Sustainability-Appraisal>

Table 1.1 outlines where elements of the SEA regulations are addressed.

Table 1.1: SEA Regulation Requirements	
An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	Part 1 and Part 2
The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme	Part 2
The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	Part 2 and 3b
Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.	Part 2
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	Part 2
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. (These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects)	Part 3A and 3B
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	Part 3B
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	Part 3A and Part 1
A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring	Part 3B
A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	Non-Technical Summary issued with this report
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	Whole SA Report

assessment	
<p>Consultation:</p> <p>Authorities with environmental responsibility, when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report (Art. 5.4)</p>	Consultation was carried out at the scoping stage with consultees
<p>Authorities with environmental 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 report before the adoption of the plan or programme</p>	Consultation on this SA Report
<p>Other EU Member States, where the implementation of the plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment of that country</p>	Not applicable
<p>Taking the environmental report and the results of the consultations into account in decision-making (Art. 8)</p>	<p>This will be outlined in the SA Adoption Statement which will be produced after the final adoption of the plan.</p>
<p>Provision of information on the decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: • The plan or programme as adopted • A statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme and how the environmental 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 programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with • The measures decided concerning monitoring 	
<p>Monitoring of the significant environmental effects of the plan's or programme's implementation</p>	<p>A final monitoring programme will be outlined in the SA Adoption Statement</p>

1.4 Habitat Regulations Assessment

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 require any plan or project not directly connected with, or necessary to the management of European designated sites, but which are likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, to be subject to a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA).

European designated sites (collectively termed Natura 2000 sites) comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Areas of Protection (SPAs) together with Ramsar sites which are afforded the same level of protection in the UK).

The term HRA refers to the assessment of the implication of a proposed plan on one or more European designated sites in view of the sites' conservation objectives. HRA is based on a rigorous application of the precautionary principle and therefore requires those undertaking the exercise to prove that the Plan will not have a significant effect on these conservation objectives. Where uncertainty or doubt remains, an adverse effect should be assumed.

The first stage of the HRA process is screening. The screening process involves the review of the proposed plan to identify any 'Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) on the European

designated site/s either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. If, following screening, LSEs are anticipated, a 'full' assessment (termed an appropriate assessment) would assess the impact on the integrity of European designated sites, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the sites' structure and function and its conservation objectives. Appropriate assessment would also determine whether alternative measures could be adopted in order to avoid adverse effects. If there are no viable alternatives, a plan can only be implemented if there are 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest'.

A combined screening (Stage 1) and appropriate assessment (Stage 2) report has been produced which reports on the assessment of the Publication Draft Local Plan. This report is entitled "Habitat Regulations Assessment of West Somerset Council's Publication Draft Local Plan to 2032" and has been produced by Somerset County Council. This report can be accessed via the West Somerset Council Local Plan webpages:

<https://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Planning--Building/Planning-Policy/Local-Plan-to-2032>

This report concluded at Stage 1 Screening that although a number of counteracting measures are included within Policies NH3 Nature Conservation; NH8 Bat Consultation Zone; and NH9 Waterfowl Consultation Zone, effects due to disturbance from an increased residential population and from policy encouraging tourism and air quality effects from resultant increases in private vehicle use could not be ruled out.

The Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment considered these potential effects in more detail and concluded that there would be no significant effect on the integrity of European and /or Ramsar sites from policies in the Local Plan. It is therefore, the conclusion of West Somerset Council that the Local Plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on Natura 2000 or internationally designated sites for nature conservation.

1.5 How to comment on this report

The SA report is being published for comment alongside the West Somerset Local Plan Publication Draft. If you have any comments on this report please respond as indicated below:

The primary means of responding to this consultation is to use the website at:

<http://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Home.aspx>

Alternatively representations can be made by e-mail to ldf@westsomerset.gov.uk

or by post to: Planning Policy Team, West Somerset Council, West Somerset House, Killick Way, Williton, TA4 4QA

2 West Somerset Local Plan Publication Draft

2.1 Spatial vision and objectives

The Local Plan includes a spatial vision, strategic objectives and a number of policies for achieving the Local Plan objectives, setting out how much development is intended to happen where and by what means it will be delivered. The spatial vision for the Local Plan is shown in Box 1 and the spatial objectives in Box 2.

Box 1: Spatial Vision

ECONOMY. By 2032 the area's main service and employment centre: Minehead, the secondary service and employment centres of Watchet and Williton and rural employment sites such as Brushford / Dulverton will be the centres of a thriving and increasingly varied local economy within West Somerset, aided by the provision of super-fast optical broadband access, all of which will enable more people to work close to, or in their homes. People will have the skills to enable them to work and thrive in this more diverse economy. The tourism industry will also have diversified with a wider range of sustainable enterprises. The Hinkley Point C new nuclear project will have been completed having brought considerable economic stimulus to the area whilst the temporary adverse impacts of the construction phase should be in the past.

HOUSING. By 2032 there will have been a significant increase in the amount of affordable housing provided in the area. More people will be able to afford housing which is appropriate to their circumstances. New housing development will have been delivered in locations which will help to secure a reduction in transport demand and more self-contained settlements. About 2,500 additional houses will have been provided in the Local Plan area, the largest part of these being provided at Minehead.

ENVIRONMENT. By 2032 there will be a marked increase in the low carbon economy locally. Biodiversity will have been strengthened and flood risk will have been managed positively in accommodating new development. More of the District's food supply will be produced locally.

Box 2: Spatial Objectives

- Strengthening the roles and functions of Minehead as the District's main service centre, and Watchet and Williton as secondary service centres;
- Implementation of types and quantities of development in locations appropriate to meet the requirements of the Strategy based on the evidence and engagement;
- Increase self-containment within Minehead, Watchet and Williton;
- Successfully managing flood risk in implementing new development at Minehead Watchet and Williton;
- Make a step change in the provision of affordable housing to meet identified local needs;
- Make a significant reduction in Co2 emissions for the Local Plan area;
- Create an aspirational, enterprising and entrepreneurial culture within West Somerset;
- Develop the quality of the tourism offer within the Local Plan area;
- Protect and enhance biodiversity in the Local Plan area;
- Conserve and enhance the character of historic settlements, buildings and landscapes; and
- Deliver high quality design in new development which will contribute to the area's heritage in a positive way.

2.2 Content of the Local Plan

The policies included in the Local Plan are as follows:

- Policy SD1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Policy EN1: Mitigation of impact of Hinkley Point new nuclear proposals
- Policy EN2 Mitigation of impact of major energy generating proposals
- Policy SC1 Hierarchy of settlements
- Policy SC2 Housing provision
- Policy SC3 Appropriate mix of housing types and tenures
- Policy SC4 Affordable housing
- Policy SC5A AND 5B Self-containment of settlements
- Policy MD1 Minehead development
- Policy MD2 Strategic development at Minehead/Alcombe
- Policy WA1 Watchet development
- Policy WA2 Strategic development allocation at Parsonage Farm, Watchet
- Policy WI1 Williton development
- Policy WI2: Key strategic development allocations at Williton
- Policy LT1 Post 2026 Key strategic development sites
- Policy SV1 Development at primary and secondary villages
- Policy OC1 Open countryside development
- Policy EC1 Widening and strengthening the local economy
- Policy EC2 Major employment sites
- Policy EC3 Greenfield employment generating development
- Policy EC4 Home-based business activities
- Policy EC5 Safeguarding existing employment uses
- Policy EC6 Work/live developments
- Policy EC7 Training and educational provision
- Policy EC8 Tourism in settlements
- Policy EC9 Tourism outside of settlements
- Policy EC10 Gateway settlements
- Policy EC11 Agriculture
- Policy EC12 Minehead primary retail area and central areas for Alcombe, Watchet and Williton
- Policy TR1 Access to and from West Somerset
- Policy TR2 Reducing reliance on the private car
- Policy CF1 Maximising access to recreational facilities
- Policy CF2 Planning for healthy communities
- Policy CC1 Carbon reduction – small scale schemes
- Policy CC2 Flood risk management
- Policy CC3 Coastal change management area
- Policy CC4 Coastal zone protection
- Policy CC5 Water efficiency
- Policy CC6 Water management
- Policy NH1 Historic environment

- Policy NH1A Areas of high archaeological potential
- Policy NH1B Archaeological sites of local significance
- Policy NH2 Landscape character protection
- Policy NH3 Nature conservation and the protection and enhancement of biodiversity
- Policy NH4 Green infrastructure
- Policy NH5 Protection of best and most versatile agricultural land
- Policy NH6 Pollution, contaminated land and land instability
- Policy NH8 Bat consultation zone
- Policy NH9 Waterfowl consultation zone
- Policy NH10 Securing high standards of design
- Policy GT1 Gypsies and travellers
- Policy ID1 Infrastructure delivery

3 Sustainability Appraisal Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The key tasks in the SA process are outlined in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: SA key tasks	
SA Stage	Purpose of the SA Stage
Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope (scoping)	
A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes and sustainability objectives	To document how the Local Plan is affected by outside factors and suggest ideas for how any constraints can be addressed
A2: Collecting baseline information	To provide an evidence base for sustainability issues, effects prediction and monitoring
A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems	To help focus the SA and streamline the subsequent stages, including baseline information analysis, setting of the SA framework, prediction of effects and monitoring
A4: Developing the SA framework	To provide a means by which the sustainability of the Plan can be appraised
A5: Producing scoping report and consulting on the scope of the SA	To consult with statutory bodies with social, environmental, or economic responsibilities to ensure the appraisal covers the key sustainability issues
Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects	
B1: Testing the plan objectives against the SA framework	To ensure that the overall objectives of the Local Plan are in accordance with sustainability principles and provide a suitable framework for developing options
B2: Developing the plan options	To assist in the development and refinement of the options, by identifying potential sustainability effects of options
B3 and B4: Predicting and evaluating the effects of the plan	To predict the significant effects of the Local Plan and assist in the refinement of the Plan
B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects	To ensure that all potential mitigation measures and measures for maximising beneficial effects are considered
B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the plan	To detail the means by which the sustainability performance of the Local Plan can be assessed
Stage C: Preparing the SA report	
C1: Preparing the SA report	To provide a detailed account of the SA process <i>This is the stage we are at now</i>
Stage D: Consulting on the draft plan and SA report	
D1: Public participation on the preferred options of the plan and the SA report	To provide the public and statutory bodies with an effective opportunity to express their opinion on the SA report and to use it as a reference point when commenting on the Local Plan

3.2 Stage A: Scoping

A scoping report was originally produced in July 2006. For the scoping report, data was collected in the form of topic papers which gathered together the following information for each issue:

- Policy context (review of other plans, policies, programmes and objectives);
- Baseline data review including sources of data, data gaps and trends; and
- Implications for land use planning and SA.

The scoping report was produced with the involvement of consultees and was sent to statutory consultees and others for consultation in 2006 for a period of five weeks. The report was then updated in May 2009 and sent to statutory consultees for further comment.

Consultation with stakeholders formed an important part of Stage A. A half day consultation workshop was held in 2006 with key stakeholder organisations, which included the following elements:

- Update on the LDF and SA process so far;
- Report on the context of the SA and the baseline data collected; and
- Discussion groups on the proposed appraisal objectives, targets and key sustainability issues.

For those stakeholders unable to attend the workshop, a questionnaire was sent seeking responses to the same issues covered in the workshop. Draft topic papers were also made available to all participants and invitees through a project intranet site. The information from the workshop, questionnaires and email feedback was used to inform the scoping report.

The full list of the organisations and individuals who have been consulted at the scoping stage of the SA process is given in Annex 1 of the following report – ENVIRON (May 2009): *West Somerset Council LDF Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report*. This report is available on the following website:

<https://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Planning---Building/Planning-Policy/Local-Plan-to-2032/Sustainability-Appraisal>.

The information used to produce the scoping report has been updated for the purposes of the assessment of the Publication Draft Local Plan and this can be found in Part 2 of the SA report.

3.3 Stage B: Assessing the elements of the Local Plan

The SA has been carried out at each stage of plan making in order to guide the development of the Plan and ensure that the sustainability effects of the Plan were taken into account at all stages.

In order to adhere to the SEA Regulations the following types of effects have been identified where this has been possible:

- Short, medium and long term effects;
- Permanent and temporary effects;
- Positive and negative effects; and
- Secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects.

The Plan has been assessed using appraisal matrices. Mitigation and enhancement measures are included within the appraisal matrices. These matrices are included in Part 3a

and 3b of this report. A combination of expert judgement and analysis of baseline data has been used to judge the potential effects of the Plan.

3.3.1 Defining what is a significant effect

The SEA Regulations specify the criteria that should be taken into account when determining likely significant effects. These criteria, which principally relate to the nature of the effects arising from the Plan and the value and vulnerability of the receptors, are as follows:

- How valuable and vulnerable is the receptor that is being impacted?
- How probable, frequent, long lasting and reversible are the effects?
- What is the magnitude and spatial scale of the effect?
- Are the effects positive or negative?

The assessment of significance should involve, where possible, the assessor considering the above criteria for each potential effect along with a consideration of how the Plan will help to achieve (or not) the SA objectives. Table 3.2 shows the approach adopted for the assessment of significance. This focuses on the achievement of the SA objectives and the relationship with baseline information. It is important to recognise that these criteria are only guidelines and the SA team has used expert judgement to assess the significance of the effects.

Score	Description	Symbol
Significant positive effect	The option strongly supports the achievement of the SA objective and has a major positive effect with relation to characteristics of the effect and the sensitivity of the receptors	+ +
Minor positive effect	The option generally support the achievement of the SA objective and has a minor positive effect with relation to characteristics of the effect and the sensitivity of the receptors	+
Neutral	The option does not have an effect on the achievement of the SA objective	0
Minor negative effect	The option conflicts with the achievement of the SA objective and has a negative effect with relation to characteristics of the effect and the sensitivity of the receptors	-
Significant negative effect	The option conflicts with the SA objective and has a negative effect with relation to characteristics of the effect and the sensitivity of the receptors. In addition the future baseline indicates a worsening trend in the absence of intervention	- -
Uncertain	It is unclear whether there is the potential for a negative or positive effect on the SA objective	?

Mitigation measures have been suggested to reduce negative and uncertain effects and where possible enhancement measures have been suggested to enhance positive effects.

3.4 Stage B: Alternative options

The purpose of this stage is to set up and test reasonable alternative options to the selected plan and in doing so, identify and evaluate their sustainability effects. Part 3A of this report details the alternatives that were assessed as part of the SA process.

3.5 Stage C: Preparing the Draft SA Report

This report (in all its parts) constitutes the SA report for the West Somerset Local Plan Publication Draft.

A lot of material has been generated as part of the SA process of the Local Plan and relevant documents are available at the following website:

<https://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Planning---Building/Planning-Policy/Local-Plan-to-2032/Sustainability-Appraisal>.

3.6 Stage D: Consulting on the SA Report

The SA report has been produced for comment alongside the West Somerset Local Plan Publication Draft.

The scope and the level of detail to be included in the SA has been consulted on twice. It was consulted on in 2006 and then again in 2009. Consultees were broadly happy with the work that had been carried out but recommended some changes were made to the report including stronger references to Exmoor National Park in the SA framework, stronger references to Hinkley Point major energy generating proposal, recognition of the broader role that the historic environment has in creating sustainable communities and updated water data including better references to the Water Framework Directive. Where possible these comments have been taken into account in the SA report. A detailed analysis of consultation responses will be provided as part of the SA Adoption Statement.

3.7 Difficulties encountered

The purpose of this work is to assess the likelihood of significant sustainability effects. SA relies on expert judgement, which is guided by knowledge of the likely effects of the Plan, the baseline data available and responses and information provided by consultees and other stakeholders. The assessment has been carried out and reported using an expert, judgement-led qualitative assessment. A 'precautionary approach' is taken, especially with qualitative judgements. Regulation 12 (3a) of the SEA Regulations (The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) states that the Environmental Report shall include information taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment. The description of the baseline environment provides information with relation to the current knowledge of the Plan area.

Please note that a number of data gaps have been identified in Part 2 of this report. However, these data gaps are not significant enough to affect the results of the assessments.

The SEA Regulations state that effects assessment should include assessment of secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects. It has not always been possible to make an assessment to this level of detail due to the strategic level of many of the policies contained within the Local Plan. However, where information is available on the likelihood of different types of effects this has been included in the matrices.

In relation to the strategic development areas assessed under policies MD2, WA2, W12 and LT1 and the major employment sites assessed under policy EC2, it is important to note that the assessment is not intended to be a detailed development assessment (such as you would find as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment process) but a general assessment taking into account known site constraints.

3.8 The SA Framework

The SA framework is the list of sustainability criteria that the Plan is measured against in order to test its sustainability. Table 3.3 presents the SA framework which has been used to assess the relative performance of the Local Plan. The SA framework has been consulted on twice (in 2006 and 2009) and changes have been made in line with consultee comments. Please note that potential interactions between issues are also important and are noted where relevant in the assessment.

Table 3.3: SA Framework	
SA objective	Appraisal questions. Will the plan lead to...
1. Air and noise	
1a. Reduce impacts on tranquility from noise and visual intrusion. 1b. Reduce the need to travel and facilitate modal shift (particularly with regard to reducing the impact of traffic during the peak summer months).	Potential changes in areas currently identified as tranquil areas? A reduction in the number of private motor vehicle trips and / or a reduction in the number of existing traffic congestion hotspots? Potentially incompatible land use with relation to noise and air quality for local residents
2. Climate and energy	
2a. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions 2b. Improve adaptation for unavoidable climate change including consideration of the location of development. 2c. Increase energy efficiency and the amount of energy generated from renewable sources.	A change in CO ₂ emissions per person? A change in the amount of energy used per person through promotion of energy efficient materials use, design and construction and environmental standards e.g. Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM)? A change in numbers of renewable energy projects? Better adaptation of development to the effects of climate change?
3. Crime	
3a. Reduce anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.	A reduction in fear of crime and the level of anti-social behaviour.
4. Public infrastructure	
4a. Ensure equitable access to viable facilities and services for all sectors of the community including those in rural areas.	Improved access to services and facilities (including open space, recreation and sports facilities, cultural and educational facilities)?
5. Population and social inclusion	
5a. To develop and maintain a balanced and sustainable population structure which good access to services, facilities and homes for all	The development and maintenance of a balanced and sustainable population structure within the

Table 3.3: SA Framework	
SA objective	Appraisal questions. Will the plan lead to...
sectors of the society	District Meeting the need for affordable housing across the District and particularly in the areas where the need is greatest? Flexibility in the use of homes, e.g. by the use of lifetimes homes standard etc? Reduced deprivation across the district?
6. Soils and geology	
6a. Reduce land contamination, and safeguard soil and geological quality and quantity.	The remediation of contaminated sites? Levels of development on brownfield sites that are above the national target of 60%? Development that protects soil processes and functions and sites valued for their geological characteristics?
7. Waste	
7a. To reduce waste generation and disposal, increase recycling and achieve the sustainable management of waste	A reduction in the amount of waste generated by development and land use change? Encouragement for development to use re-cycled materials and make provision for recycling / composting in all new development?
8. Water	
8a. Maintain and improve the quality of ground/river/coastal water. 8b. Reduce risk of flooding including coastal flooding. 8c. Improve efficiency of water use.	Development where adequate water supply, foul drainage, sewage treatment facilities and surface water drainage is available or where suitable arrangements are made for their provision? A reduction in per capita water consumption or help to reduce the demand for water through measures such as water efficient design (e.g. rainwater recycling / grey water reuse and BREEAM / Code for Sustainable Homes standards)? Development which avoids areas of high and medium flood risk and adheres to coastal policy? Development likely to affect the status of groundwater and surface water? An increase in the use of SUDS?
9. Cultural heritage	
9a. Protect the fabric and setting of designated and undesignated archaeological sites, monuments, structures and buildings, recorded Historic Parks and gardens, maritime and coastal heritage, listed buildings and conservation areas.	Development that affects listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens? Development being steered to where it can be accommodated in less sensitive areas? Distinctive development that is well related to the natural environment and characteristic scale, form

Table 3.3: SA Framework	
SA objective	Appraisal questions. Will the plan lead to...
	<p>materials and detailing of the settlement and contributes to a sense of place?</p> <p>The enhancement (and re-use of) of the archaeological resource and other aspects of heritage, such as, parks and open spaces, and areas with a particular historical or cultural association?</p>
10. Human health	
10a. To improve the health and wellbeing of the population and improve access to health services for all.	<p>Healthier lifestyles?</p> <p>Improved access to healthcare?</p>
11. Landscape	
<p>11a. Ensure that special and distinctive landscapes, and the features within them, are conserved and enhanced.</p> <p>11b. Enhance the form and design of the built environment.</p> <p>11c. Ensure provision is made to incorporate green infrastructure into spatial planning.</p>	<p>Provide the AONB / Exmoor National Park with the highest level of policy protection, make appropriate provision for their economic and social wellbeing and reflect AONB Management Plan objectives?</p> <p>Encourage the use of Town Design Statements, Village Design Statements, Parish Plans, Conservation Area Appraisal, Concept Statements, and Master Plans to raise the standard of design in new development?</p> <p>Encourage development which considers the existing character, form and pattern of the landscape, buildings and settlements?</p> <p>Encourage development which incorporates green infrastructure, woodland into the design e.g. green corridors, linking open space etc?</p>
12. Labour market, economy and regeneration	
12a. Improve sustainable economic activity within West Somerset enabling regeneration of key areas.	<p>Improved access to skills and training to encourage young people to remain in the district?</p> <p>Increased wage rates?</p> <p>An increase the District's self-sufficiency in terms of employment?</p> <p>Diversification of employment opportunities?</p> <p>An increase in available employment land/workspace, industrial and commercial properties?</p>
13. Biodiversity	
<p>13a. Protect and enhance biodiversity at all levels.</p> <p>13b. Maintain, restore and enhance populations of focal species.</p> <p>13c. Increase the land area of UK Biodiversity</p>	<p>Avoidance of net loss, damage to, or fragmentation of designated wildlife sites and the qualifying habitats and species?</p> <p>Avoidance of loss of 'Favourable Conservation Status' of species afforded protection at a</p>

Table 3.3: SA Framework	
SA objective	Appraisal questions. Will the plan lead to...
<p>Action Plan habitats within the district.</p> <p>13d. Maintain and improve the conservation status of selected designated and non-designated nature conservation sites.</p>	<p>European level?</p> <p>Fragmentation of habitat networks?</p> <p>Opportunities for people to come into contact with robust wildlife places whilst encouraging respect for and raising awareness of the sensitivity of these sites?</p> <p>A maintenance and increase of biodiversity and the variety of habitats?</p> <p>Protection and enhancement of conditions for focal species (with recognition of the fact that the SEA will also take account of species assemblages associated with key habitats for which there is an Action Plan)?</p> <p>Development which includes the integration of ecological conditions?</p>

4 Next Steps

After the Local Plan Publication Draft has been consulted on, it will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for Public Examination as a Submission Local Plan. It is unlikely that significant changes will be made between the Publication and Submission versions but any changes made will be subject to SA if significant.

The independent Public Examination will test the “soundness” of the Local Plan and consider representations on that basis. After the Public Examination the Council may need to make some changes based on the Inspector’s recommendations. The Local Plan is then finalised and adopted.

Once the Local Plan is adopted, a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) adoption statement will need to be published in accordance with the SEA Regulations. The regulations state that as soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of the plan a statement should be produced and published setting out how environmental considerations and opinions expressed through consultation have been taken into account in the planning process.

The SEA Regulations set out the particulars that should be covered by the statement as follows:

- How environmental (sustainability) considerations have been integrated into the Local Plan;
- How the Environmental (SA) Report has been taken into account;
- How opinions expressed in response to consultation have been taken into account;
- The reasons for choosing the Local Plan as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental (sustainability) effects of the implementation of the Local Plan.