



West Somerset Council LDF Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

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1 Introduction

What is this Document?

- 1.1 This is the updated Sustainability Appraisal (SA) scoping report for the West Somerset Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy. This report is the second version of the scoping report to be published and provides an update of the previous LDF Core Strategy and Williton Area Action Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (July 2006). In this second version of the report, key elements of the baseline data and policy review have been updated in light of the fact that new information has become available. The scope of the SA has also changed since 2006 in that the council no longer intends to produce a Williton Area Action Plan. The original SA scoping report addressed the Core Strategy and the Williton Area Action Plan. However, this SA scoping report relates only to the Core Strategy.

What is Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal?

- 1.2 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (*Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment*) was adopted in July 2001 and became English law through *Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 1633: The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004*. This Regulation requires an SEA to be carried out on certain plans and programmes prepared by public authorities that are likely to have a significant effect upon the environment. This process is compulsory for a number of plans including Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). Therefore, West Somerset Council will be carrying out an SEA under the regulations for the various Development Planning Documents and Supplementary Planning documents that make up the Local Development Framework. This is a formal screening determination under Paragraph 9 of the SEA Regulations referred to above.
- 1.3 In addition to the requirement to carry out an SEA, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a sustainability appraisal (SA) to be carried out for all emerging Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. SA helps planning authorities to fulfil the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in preparing their plans, through a structured assessment of the plan's objectives and core strategies against key sustainability objectives for the area. The Government accepts that although these requirements are distinct, it is possible to satisfy both through a single appraisal process and has published guidance to assist authorities to do this (ODPM, 2005)¹. In accordance with this guidance, a joint SA / SEA process (referred to within this document as an SA) will be followed for West Somerset's Core Strategy.

¹ ODPM (November 2005): *Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents*.

What is a Scoping Report?

- 1.4 SA has a number of stages which should be integrated with the planning stages of a LDF. The relationship between the SA and the planning process for the West Somerset LDF is shown within Table 1.

Table 1: Stages of the SA Process

| LDF Process | SA / SEA Stages |
|---|---|
| Evidence gathering | Stage A: Setting the context, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope |
| Prepare and consult on Issues and Options | Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing the effects of the plan |
| Prepare and consult on Preferred Options | Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing the effects of the plan Stage C: Documenting the appraisal process in the SA report (prepare SA report) Stage D: Consultation with the public and statutory bodies |
| Prepare Development Plan Documents for submission to the Secretary of State Independent Examination by Inspector Receipt of Inspector's binding report and Adoption of plan | Stage C: Documenting the Appraisal (prepare SA Statement) |
| Annual Monitoring Report | Stage E: Monitor the effects of the plan on the environment/sustainability |

- 1.5 Scoping is the name given to Stage A of the SA process and is a way of focusing effort on the key issues in SA / SEA, and ensuring that the SA fulfils the requirements of all relevant stakeholders. Scoping has a number of stages. These stages and their purpose are outlined in Table 2. This is taken from ODPM (2005).

Table 2: Purpose of scoping stages

| Scoping Stage | Purpose |
|---|---|
| Identify other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives | To document how the plan is affected by outside factors and suggest ideas for how any constraints can be addressed |
| Collect baseline information | To provide an evidence base to identify sustainability problems and to provide a basis for predicting and monitoring effects |
| Identify sustainability issues | To help focus the SA and streamline the subsequent stages, including baseline information analysis, setting of the SA Framework, prediction of effects and monitoring |
| Develop the SA framework (SA objectives) | To provide a means by which the sustainability of the plan can be appraised |

| Scoping Stage | Purpose |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Produce scoping report | To ensure that the overall objectives of the plan are in accordance with sustainability principles and provide a suitable framework for developing options |
| Consult 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. |

- 1.6 A scoping report gathers this information together and forms the basis of consultation with the statutory consultees (English Nature, Countryside Agency, English Heritage and the Environment Agency) and others. Under the regulations governing SA, it is compulsory to consult the statutory consultees and give them opportunity to comment on “the scope and level of detail of the environmental information to be included in the SA Report”. This is important because it gives the consultees an opportunity to comment on whether the assessment is focusing on the right issues.
- 1.7 Due to the changes in the LDF and the updated baseline, policy review and SA framework we are re-consulting with the statutory bodies on the scope and level of detail to be included in the SA Report. Details of how to make comments on this report are given in Section 6.

2 Context and Methodology

Development of the West Somerset LDF

- 2.1 Spatial planning in West Somerset is currently guided by the Local Plan, which sets the framework for development within the district. Exmoor National Park lies outside the administrative boundary covered by the West Somerset Local Plan and spatial planning in Exmoor is guided by the Exmoor National Park Local Plan. The most recent version of the West Somerset Local Plan was adopted in April 2006.
- 2.2 The Government has introduced comprehensive changes to the development planning system via the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Under the terms of this Act, West Somerset Council is obliged to replace the adopted Local Plan with a new-style plan, to be known as the Local Development Framework (LDF). This work has already begun in West Somerset, and will proceed in line with the agreed project plan set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS).
- 2.3 The LDF consists of a number of Local Development Documents (LDDs) including:
- Core Strategy: this will set out the vision, objectives and policies for spatial landuse planning in West Somerset.
 - Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD): This will set out the sites which have been selected to accommodate housing and other development. The process for producing this document will start later in the LDF process; and
 - Planning Obligations SPD.
- 2.4 All three documents will be subject to SA. However, this scoping report only covers the SA process for the Core Strategy.

Spatial Planning and Sustainability Context

- 2.5 A policy review has been undertaken on the spatial planning and sustainable development policies that will affect the plan. This is shown in Table 3. A number of spatial planning and sustainable development policies / strategies will have an influence on the development of the West Somerset LDF. The key documents are shown below.

Table 3: Spatial Planning and Sustainability Context

| Policy | Details of relevance to the plan and the SA |
|--|---|
| Key International Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg (UN, 2002).</i> | <p>▶ The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) represents a reaffirmation of international commitment to sustainable development coming 30 years after the Stockholm commitment to tackle environmental degradation and ten years after the Rio Summit and Declaration of 1992.</p> |
| Key National Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Securing the Future – the Government’s Sustainable Development Strategy (DEFRA, 2005).</i> • <i>PPS 1: Creating Sustainable Communities (ODPM, 2005).</i> • <i>Government Rural White Paper: Our Countryside – the Future – a Fair Deal for Rural England (DETR, 2000).</i> • <i>Government Urban White Paper: Our Towns and Cities: the Future - Delivering an Urban Renaissance (DETR, 2000).</i> | <p>▶ The key principles of sustainable development for the UK are set relatively broadly and focus on environmental sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living within environmental limits. • Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society. • Achieving a sustainable economy. • Using sound science responsibly. • Promoting good governance. <p>Linkages with planning are made through PPS1 and a vision to provide sustainable communities. The key policy messages for planning are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to take an approach based on integrating the four aims of sustainable development. • The need for positive planning to achieve sustainable development objectives and proactive management of development, rather than simply regulation and control. • The need for plans to set clear visions for communities and help to integrate the wide range of activities relating to development and regeneration. <p>This is translated into urban and rural policy through the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for growth in existing urban centres that are accessible in a variety of ways. • Facilitate the development of dynamic, competitive and sustainable economies in the countryside and tackling poverty in rural areas |

| Policy | Details of relevance to the plan and the SA |
|--|--|
| Key Local / Regional Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regional Spatial Strategy Proposed Changes (July 2008)</i> • <i>Our Environment Our Future – The Regional Strategy for the South West Environment (South West Regional Assembly, 2004).</i> • <i>South West Regional Sustainable Development Framework – A Sustainable Future for the South West (South West Regional Assembly, 2001). Now superseded by the SW Sustainability mission and principles listed on the Sustainability Shaper website.</i> • <i>South West Regional Planning Guidance (RPG10) (GOSW, 2001).</i> • <i>Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011 (Somerset County Council and Exmoor National Park Authority, 2005).</i> • <i>West Somerset Local Plan – Proposed Modifications (WSDC, 2005).</i> | <p>▶ Regional and local sustainability strategies re-emphasise the principles espoused at the national level and highlight the richness and diversity of the South West environment and its importance to the region’s economy and people’s sense of well-being. They set out a number of principles, objectives and targets related to the key aspects of sustainable development.</p> <p>This is translated into planning policy through RPG10, RSS and the Somerset and Exmoor Structure Plan which sets out the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration of the majority of development in principal urban areas (in Somerset the only PUA is Taunton). • Concentration of the rest of development in towns named in the Structure Plan (in West Somerset this only includes Minehead). • Development in villages should be sustainable and appropriate to their character. • Development outside towns/villages should be strictly controlled and restricted to that which benefits economic activity, maintains and enhances the environment and does not increase the need to travel. |

| Policy | Details of relevance to the plan and the SA |
|--------|---|
| | The final version of the RSS will be issued in June 2009. The latest version of the RSS is the Proposed Changes document which was published in July 2008. The RSS includes SSCTs (Strategically Important Cities and Towns). In Somerset there are two SSCTs – Taunton, Yeovil and Bridgwater).. |

Preparation of the Scoping Report

2.6 Stage A of the LDF SA process is being carried out by ENVIRON. The scoping report has also been produced by ENVIRON and has been prepared according to the following government guidance:

- ODPM (November 2005): Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents; and
- ODPM (September 2005): A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.

Consultation

2.7 The following consultation was carried out at the scoping stage in 2006.

Stage A: Scoping and evidence gathering

2.8 A half day consultation workshop was held 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.
- Discussion groups on the proposed appraisal objectives, targets and key sustainability issues.

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

2.10 ODPM guidance requires a minimum five week formal consultation period on the scoping report. A six week consultation period was provided to give consultees additional time to provide responses.

2.11 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.

2.12 Further consultation will also be carried out on this updated scoping report and details are given later on in this report on how consultees can respond.

3 The Format of the Scoping Report

Introduction

- 3.1 Data has been collected for the Scoping Report in the form of topic papers which gather 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;
 - Issues identified and implications for spatial planning and SA in West Somerset.
- 3.2 The topic papers are available in a separately bound appendix document, Appendix 1, under the following headings:
- Air and noise.
 - Climate and energy.
 - Crime.
 - Public infrastructure.
 - Population and social inclusion.
 - Soils and geology.
 - Waste.
 - Water.
 - Cultural heritage.
 - Human health.
 - Landscape.
 - Labour market, economy and regeneration.
 - Biodiversity.
- 3.3 The next sections of the scoping report summarise the available information for each topic setting out the policy context and the key issues identified. Those who require more detailed information should review the relevant topic paper in Appendix 1. The rest of this section explains the rationale behind each step of the data collection process.

Policy Context

- 3.4 As identified in Table 2 the purpose of this stage is to document how the plan is affected by outside factors and suggest ideas for addressing any constraints. The SEA Regulations¹ (see Schedule 2) state that an Environmental Report should outline:
- The plan's relationship with other relevant plans and programmes; and
 - The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State 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

¹ HMSO (2004) The UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument No. 1633)

preparation. ODPM guidance (2005) extends this to include other sustainability objectives.

- 3.5 In order to fulfil this requirement, a review has been undertaken of other relevant plans, policies, programmes (PPPs) and objectives. The results can be found in each individual topic paper. An additional review has also been carried out for spatial planning and sustainable development policies of relevance to the plan and the SA (see Table 3). The information gathered through this review has been used to form the section of this report on the context of the LDF.

Baseline Data Review

- 3.6 The SEA Regulations require an examination of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution of the environment without the implementation of the plan (“future baseline” or “without the plan scenario”). This has been done through a desk-based study with the full results reported in the topic papers in Appendix 1.
- 3.7 Where possible trends are provided and data gaps have been acknowledged. It is expected that further data will need to be gathered as the assessment process progresses, and one of the aims of producing this Scoping Report is for the consultees to help fill known data gaps, as well as identify issues which may not have been addressed to a sufficient level of detail. Please see section 4 of this report for the results of the baseline review.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSULTEES

- Are any significant data missing or misrepresented?

Implications for Spatial Planning and SA

- 3.8 This section draws together the information gathered in the policy and baseline review and supplements it with information gathered during the scoping consultation. Information is provided for each topic in Appendix 1 on:
- Key issues arising from the baseline review.
 - Implications for spatial planning and SA.
 - Relevant objectives for the SA (from the policy review and the scoping consultation).

QUESTIONS FOR CONSULTEES

- Are there any additional problems, opportunities or issues that need to be considered in the development of the plan?

4 Results of the Scoping Review

Air Quality and Noise

- 4.1 The key policy framework for air quality and noise is shown below. Please see the air quality and noise topic paper for more details.

| Policy | Details of relevance to the plan and SA |
|--|---|
| Key International Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Air Quality Framework Directive.</i> • <i>Directive on Environmental Noise</i> • <i>World Health Organisation Guideline Values for noise.</i> | <p>▶ Introduces air quality standards which must be met including for sulphur dioxide, particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide etc.</p> <p>Each Member State should determine exposure to environmental noise through noise mapping, ensure that information on environmental noise and its effects is made available to the public and to adopt action plans based upon noise mapping results</p> <p>Sets guideline values for outdoor noise levels at night (30 dB LA_{eq}) and during the day (50 dB LA_{eq}).</p> |
| Key National Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>PPS23 Planning and Pollution Control.</i> • <i>PPG24 Planning and Noise.</i> • <i>Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</i> • <i>Air Quality and Climate Change: A UK perspective</i> | <p>▶ Outlines the UK government's strategy for reaching the air quality objectives set by the Air Quality Framework Directive and how these issues will be dealt with through the land use planning system including principles such as the precautionary principle, the consideration of pollution as a material consideration, the inclusion of pollution criteria within development plans and locational considerations for noisy and noise sensitive developments.</p> <p>The air quality and climate change report highlights the need to consider the linkages between climate change and air quality mitigation / improvement measures in policy development.</p> |
| Key Local / Regional Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No local / regional policy (no AQMAs have been declared in West Somerset)</i> | ▶ N/A |

- 4.2 The key issues identified for air quality and noise in West Somerset are:
- Air pollution is not necessarily a significant issue in West Somerset and data shows that NO₂ objectives for 2010 are likely to be met. Monitoring is ongoing.
 - Ozone levels are high in the whole of the South West including West Somerset.
 - There is seasonal peak hour traffic congestion in West Somerset.
 - Noise and loss of tranquillity is an issue which may worsen with the increase in air traffic.
 - At the stakeholder workshop, the consultees also felt it was important that careful consideration should be given to the development of brownfield housing sites next to industrial sites.

Climate and Energy

- 4.3 The key policy framework for climate and energy is shown below. Please see the climate and energy topic paper for more details.

| Policy | Details of relevance to the plan and SA |
|---|---|
| Key International Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Kyoto protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.</i> • <i>Directive to Promote Electricity from Renewable Energy.</i> | <p>▶ The Kyoto protocol sets a climate change emissions target for the UK of 12.5% (reduction in emissions below 1990 levels by 2012)</p> <p>The internationally set UK target for renewables is 10% of UK energy consumption by 2010.</p> |
| Key National Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>UK Climate Change Programme.</i> • <i>UK Climate Change Act</i> • <i>Planning Policy Statement 1 Supplement: Planning and Climate Change</i> • <i>Energy White Paper: Meeting the Energy Challenge.</i> • <i>UK Renewable Energy Strategy Consultation.</i> • <i>Part L of the Building Regulations.</i> • <i>Better Buildings: Better Lives. Sustainable Buildings Task Force.</i> • <i>PPS22 Renewable Energy.</i> | <p>▶ The Climate Change Act has set legally binding targets to legally binding targets to reduce carbon emissions by at least 26% by 2020 and by 80% by 2050. Please note that the 2009 budget set a higher target for 2020 of 34%.</p> <p>Government policy restates the 10% renewables target and supplements this with CHP targets. Local Authorities should include an appropriate range of climate change and energy criteria when considering the impacts of their plan on climate change. PPS1 sets out key planning objectives for climate change</p> |
| Key Local / Regional Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The South West Climate Change Action Plan</i> • <i>Supporting and Delivering Zero Carbon Development in the South West</i> • <i>Responding to Climate Change in Somerset</i> • <i>Developing a Low Carbon Economy: West Somerset Community Climate Change Strategy 2008-2012</i> • <i>Regional Renewable Energy Strategy for the South West of England.</i> • <i>Somerset Renewable Energy Strategy.</i> • <i>West Somerset Community Plan.</i> | <p>▶ West Somerset's targets are a reduction of 88,000 tonnes of CO2 by 2012 and a reduction of 95,000 tonnes of CO2 by 2020.</p> <p>The SW should generate between 11-15% of its energy needs from renewable sources by 2010. In Somerset this means generating 359-412 GWh of electricity from renewable sources.</p> <p>Adaptation to climate change is needed especially in areas prone to coastal inundation and flooding.</p> |

- 4.4 The key issues identified for climate and energy in West Somerset are:
- West Somerset's emissions have increased between 2003 and 2006 from 379 ktonnes in 2003 to 385 ktonnes in 2006 and are higher per capita than the South West and the UK.
 - West Somerset is not sufficiently engaged with climate change adaptation forums within the region. Future adaptation strategies will need to be developed to prepare for the changes to come.
 - In West Somerset the average consumption of electricity was much higher than both in the South West and England as a whole. However, gas consumption was lower.
 - Climate change will have a number of effects in the region including effects on temperature, sea level rises, fluvial and coastal flooding. This will particularly affect coastal areas of West Somerset and areas such as Williton.
 - Climate change adaptation is an important issue as the climate for the next 30-40 years is now set. Effects on physical infrastructure, health, energy demands and demands for outdoor recreation all need consideration.

- West Somerset has a small number of projects generating renewable electricity and heat but more needs to be done to help achieve the 2010 sub regional target for Somerset.
- 80% of Somerset residents support the use of renewable energy.

Crime

- 4.5 The key policy framework for crime is shown below. Please see the crime topic paper for more details.

| Policy | Details of relevance to the plan and SA |
|---|---|
| Key International Policy No International policy framework of relevance to development planning. | ▶ N/A |
| Key National Policy No National policy framework (although guidance documents on planning and crime that have been taken into account in the topic paper). | ▶ N/A |
| Key Local / Regional Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Somerset Crime Reduction and Drugs Strategy.</i> • <i>West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy</i> | ▶ West Somerset priority objectives focus on reducing fear of crime and anti social behaviour, reflecting West Somerset's relatively low crime levels. The community strategy has targets to reduce crime and fear of crime. |

- 4.6 The key issues identified for crime in West Somerset are:
- West Somerset has the lowest overall crime of all the districts in Somerset. The general trend in overall crime is down in West Somerset (although there was an increase in 2006/07).
 - Criminal damage and other theft offences are the most common form of crime in West Somerset accounting for 21% of crime each. Sexual offences account for less than 1% of crimes and drug offences account for 3% of crime.
 - Audit Commission data shows that a high % of residents in West Somerset feel safe both in the day and after dark in the District, perhaps indicating that people are less worried about crime against the person than they are about crimes such as theft.
 - The Police emergency response rates are improving, despite much of Somerset West being in rural areas. In 2006/07 85% of emergency calls in rural areas were attended in less than 20 minutes; 72% in urban areas were attended in less than 10 minutes;
 - There is a concern about motor vehicle theft in West Somerset as the theft of motor vehicles increased by 31% in 2006/07.

Public Infrastructure

- 4.7 Public infrastructure covers such issues as transport, housing, other communication and other public infrastructure such as parks and open spaces. The key policy framework for public infrastructure is shown below. Please see the public infrastructure topic paper for more details.

| Policy | Details of relevance to the plan and SA |
|---|--|
| Key International Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>EC White Paper on European Transport Policy.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The White Paper discusses the importance of issues such as intermodality, safety and sustainable transport. |
| Key National Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>PPG13 Transport.</i> • <i>The Future of Transport – A Network for 2030.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reiterates European policy in terms of the importance of intermodality and a sustainable transport system. Accessibility is a key theme in national transport strategy and vital to West Somerset. In order to aid this most travel generators in rural areas should be in local service centres. |
| Key Local / Regional Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regional Transport Strategy.</i> • <i>Somerset Local Transport Plan.</i> • <i>Western Somerset Economic Development and Access Strategy.</i> • <i>West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy</i> • <i>West Somerset Corporate Plan.</i> • <i>Somerset Schools Organisation Plan.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Regional transport strategy reflects that of national. The corridor from Minehead to Taunton is likely to be an area of activity for economic development and infrastructure needs. Various facilitating measures are needed. The aim in terms of housing infrastructure is to balance the local housing market and provide more affordable homes. |

- 4.8 The key issues identified for public infrastructure in West Somerset are:
- A number of measures have been proposed for the transport infrastructure in West Somerset, some of which are unlikely to go ahead.
 - Lack of social activities available to people with disabilities.
 - Viability of rural services and facilities.

Population and Social Inclusion

- 4.9 The key policy framework for population and social inclusion is shown below. Please see the population and social inclusion topic paper for more details.

| Policy | Details of relevance to the plan and SA |
|---|---|
| Key International Policy No International policy framework. | ▶ N/A |
| Key National Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal – National Strategy Action Plan.</i> • <i>PPS3 Housing.</i> | ▶ Strategies at national level address disadvantage and set out actions to ensure no-one is living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood within the next 10-20 years. Government planning policy on housing sets out how spatial plans can ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent affordable home. Plans should set the level of housing provision, set the housing trajectory, set a strategy for developing brownfield sites, ways to meet rural needs and ways to balance affordability and tenure. |
| Key Local / Regional Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>South West Regional Housing Strategy.</i> • <i>Sustainable Communities in the South West – Building for the Future.</i> • <i>West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy .</i> • <i>West Somerset Housing Strategy.</i> | ▶ Reflects national policy in terms of setting the importance of balanced and sustainable communities. Key local priorities include diversifying the local economy, increasing local wage rates, reducing homelessness, provision of affordable housing, lifelong learning opportunities, provision of activities for children and young people and sustainable construction. |

- 4.10 The key issues identified for population and social inclusion in West Somerset are:
- West Somerset has the lowest population density in the region, which could have implications for providing services to a dispersed population.
 - Inward migration is the main cause of population growth, which is putting pressure on the local housing market, particularly as the district has a large proportion of second home owners.
 - The area also has a high percentage of people within the older age bands (65 years and over), which could have put pressure on health care services and affect the available local workforce for employers.
 - West Somerset has pockets of deprivation. The 2007 IMD scores found the worst affected wards were: Quantock Vale, Minehead, Williton, Quarne and Dulverton wards. Data also shows that West Somerset has the highest level of deprivation compared to the rest of Somerset.
 - Lack of affordable housing is a key issue in the district. Average house prices are some of the highest in the county. The low level of provision of affordable housing in recent years is a cause of continuing concern for the council.

Soils and Geology

- 4.11 The key policy framework for soils and geology is shown below. Please see the soils and geology topic paper for more details.

| Policy | Details of relevance to the plan and SA |
|--|--|
| <p>Key International Policy Proposals for an EU Soil Framework Directive</p> | <p>▶ The commissions proposals would involve very wide ranging measures covering protection of agricultural soils, soil contamination, soil sealing, and a general duty on policy makers to take into account the impact of their policies and activities on soil and on land users to prevent and minimise negative impacts. However, ministers have not been able to reach an agreement on this approach.</p> |
| <p>Key National Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The First Soil Action Plan For England.</i> • <i>Consultation on the Draft Soil Strategy for England</i> • <i>Planning for soil: Advice on how the planning system can help to protect and enhance soils.</i> • <i>PPS9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.</i> • <i>Farming and Food Strategy.</i> | <p>▶ Government strategies aim to promote sustainable development by ensuring geological diversity is conserved and enhanced; to ensure policies and decisions relating to land use integrate geological diversity with other considerations, to support the viability and diversity of rural and urban economies and communities and respect and operate within the biological limits of natural resources (especially soil, water and biodiversity).</p> |
| <p>Key Local / Regional Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Delivery Plan for a Sustainable Farming & Food Industry in the South West.</i> • <i>The Somerset Minerals Local Plan 1997-2011.</i> • <i>Somerset Minerals and Waste Development Framework.</i> | <p>▶ The regional farming delivery plan has a number of wide ranging objectives such as a year-by-year increase in the participation of the rural workforce in training and development, a marked increase in the awareness of the rural workforce in sustainability, an increase in the profitability of rural businesses, particularly land-based ones, water resource and quality targets met and reduction in farm and catchment-scale soil erosion, compaction and run-off.</p> <p>Somerset's mineral extraction should make an appropriate contribution to the local, regional and national need for minerals, which does not compromise the pattern of sustainable development across Somerset, and recognises the need to encourage material recycling</p> |

- 4.12 The key issues identified for soils and geology in West Somerset are:

- Some areas of West Somerset are classed as the best and most versatile agricultural land. The district does have some grade one and two and therefore the high quality agricultural land should be protected.
- West Somerset has two sites registered under the Geological Conservation Review (GCR). These are Blue Anchor to the Listock Coast and Glenthorne.
- West Somerset currently has very low levels of mineral activity restricted to some small scale working of building stone.
- Development can impact on soils even if they are not classed as particularly vulnerable.
- West Somerset currently has low levels of new development on previously developed land.
- The Contaminated Land Strategy has a phased ten year programme for identifying these sites and this information can be utilised in the appraisal as it becomes available.

- The 2004/05 Annual Monitoring Report indicates that 86.5% of new dwellings were completed at 30 dwellings or more per hectare coming close to the government target of 100%. Data has not been reported since 2004/05 because of changes in the way housing completions are monitored. Consultees at the Scoping Consultation Workshop have indicated that there may be concern that high density development may be inappropriate for West Somerset.

Waste

- 4.13 The key policy framework for waste is shown below. Please see the waste topic paper for more details.

| Policy | Details of relevance to the plan and SA |
|--|--|
| Key International Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste Framework Directive. Directive on Waste. Waste to Landfill Directive. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires Member States to establish a network of disposal facilities to dispose of waste safely. Emphasis is placed on the waste hierarchy. The Waste to Landfill Directive sets a target to reduce biodegradable waste going to landfill by 75% by 2006. |
| Key National Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste Strategy for England PPS10 Planning and Waste Management. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out the national strategy of how England will implement the waste hierarchy, invest in clean technology, reduce climate change impacts of waste management and encourage communities and individuals to take more responsibility for their own waste. |
| Key Local / Regional Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Waste Strategy for the South West. Somerset Waste Local Plan. Future Waste Planning In Somerset. Issues and Options Consultation Somerset Municipal Waste Strategy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out how to achieve the regional vision for waste – <i>Minimum Waste, Maximum Benefit</i>. A key theme is sustainable construction and the strategy sets regional targets – by 2020 45% of waste will be recycled and reused and less than 20% of waste will be landfilled. Local documents reiterate the same themes. |

- 4.14 The key issues identified for waste in West Somerset are:
- Waste recycled and composted in West Somerset is increasing but will need to increase more to meet the national target of at least 40% by 2010, 45% by 2015 and 50% by 2020.
 - The amount of household waste collected per head in West Somerset appears to be declining.
 - The majority of commercial waste is still being disposed of in landfills.
 - Policies to encourage the local use of recycled materials at all levels from construction, to operation to within the community could be incorporated into the LDF.
 - A significant proportion of hazardous waste in Somerset is exported.
 - There is a limited landfill capacity within Somerset, which is expected to run out 3-4 years after the end of the current Somerset Waste Local Plan period in 2011.

Water

- 4.15 The key policy framework for water is shown below. Please see the water topic paper for more details.

| Policy | Details of relevance to the plan and SA |
|--|---|
| <p>Key International Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Water Framework Directive.</i> • <i>Bathing Water Quality Directive.</i> • <i>Urban Waste Water Directive and Waste Water Treatment Directive.</i> • <i>Directive on the Assessment and Management of flood risks.</i> | <p>▶ Key international policy aims to protect inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater in terms of their ecological status, promote sustainable water use, reduce discharges to priority waters, sets binding targets for bathing water quality and collection and treatment systems for urban waste water.</p> <p>The flood Directive requires Member States to assess if all water courses and coast lines are at risk from flooding, to map the flood extent and assets and humans at risk in these areas and to take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce this flood risk.</p> |
| <p>Key National Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>PPS25 Development and Flood Risk</i> • <i>Making space for water Developing a new Government strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England.</i> • <i>Future Water - The Government's water strategy for England</i> • <i>Water Resources for the Future: A Strategy for England and Wales</i> • <i>Groundwater Protection: Policy and Practice GP3</i> • <i>PPG20: Coastal Planning</i> • | <p>▶ National planning policy aims to reduce risk from flooding and coastal erosion / inundation taking into account the effects of climate change and reduction in water pollution.</p> |
| <p>Key Local / Regional Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Water Resources for the Future – A Strategy for the South West Region.</i> • <i>West Somerset Stream Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (in production).</i> • <i>West Somerset Catchment Flood Management Plan (in production)..</i> • <i>Draft Water Resources Plan 2008</i> | <p>▶ Regional policies set out the importance of maintaining a supply of water, ensuring sustainable abstraction and identifying broad policies for the long term (up to 100 years) to assist future flood risk management planning.</p> |

- 4.16 The key issues identified for water in West Somerset are:
- West Somerset streams are of good and improving quality.
 - Bathing Water is of good quality.
 - Water efficiency as measured through water leakage is increasing.
 - There are two main areas at risk from fluvial flooding in West Somerset, Williton and Minehead. Flooding may become more common with the effects of climate change and the planning system needs to deal with adaptation to flooding.

Cultural Heritage

- 4.17 The key policy framework for cultural heritage is shown below. Please see the cultural heritage topic paper for more details.

| Policy | Details of relevance to the plan and SA |
|--|---|
| Key International Policy No International policy framework of relevance to development planning. | ▶ N/A |
| Key National Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>PPS/PPG 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) and 16 (Archaeology and Planning).</i> • <i>Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning.</i> • <i>Protecting our historic environment: making the system work better.</i> • <i>Draft Heritage Protection Bill</i> • <i>The Historic Environment - A Force for our Future.</i> | ▶ Sets out the principles of protection and enhancement of cultural heritage in planning policy. Archaeological remains especially are a finite and non renewable resource that should be preserved for our own and future generations. Local Authorities should be more ambitious in their conservation and enhancement initiatives and work positively with the relevant agencies. Distinctive and innovative design is not incompatible with traditional developments. The Draft Heritage Protection Bill would put in place a unified heritage protection system that is easier to understand and use, more efficient, accountable and transparent, and maximises opportunities for public inclusion and involvement. |
| Key Local / Regional Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A Strategy for the Historic Environment in the South West.</i> • <i>A Better Place to be: Culture and South West England</i> • <i>Somerset's Culture – Something to declare.</i> • <i>A cultural strategy for the county of Somerset.</i> | ▶ Reflects national policy and states that conservation should be put at the heart of regeneration and planning for informed and positive conservation. Specific SW actions - understand the coastal and maritime environments and wetland environments, increase access to cultural activities and makes links between cultural activities and regeneration and celebrate regional diversity. |

- 4.18 The key issues identified for cultural heritage in West Somerset are:
- West Somerset has a high number of sites registered for their cultural heritage value. See the Cultural Heritage Topic Paper for more details.
 - Loss of historic patterns of development, plots and boundaries (historic grain) i.e. loss of gardens accompanying larger historic houses and loss of backland burgage plots in the historic core of settlements.
 - Demolition of unlisted buildings and structures of local historic or architectural merit. Loss of gardens, other curtilage areas and boundary features important to the character of historic buildings. Loss of architectural features and detailing to historic buildings, i.e. replacement of windows.
 - Standardisation and cluttering of the public realm and restrictions on the creation of good quality new external spaces.
 - Mixed quality of architectural design and sensitivity to the historic environment for new developments including lack of good boundary treatment for new developments.
 - Loss of local architectural distinctiveness with the diminished use and reference to traditional local materials and architectural detailing.

- Erosion of registered and non-registered historic parks and gardens.
- As 80% of the land use in West Somerset is agricultural, there is an increasing need to preserve the known and unknown archaeological baseline of the area; the preservation of buried archaeological sites, conservation areas and registered landscapes conflicts with the requirements for a larger stock of good affordable housing.

Human Health

- 4.19 The key policy framework for human health is shown below. Please see the human health topic paper for more details.

| Policy | Details of relevance to the plan and SA |
|---|---|
| Key International Policy No International policy framework. | ▶ N/A |
| Key National Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation.</i> | ▶ Well designed and implemented planning policies are fundamental in delivering broader government objectives on sustainability. |
| Key Local / Regional Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Strategic Framework for Improving Health in the South West 2008/09 to 2010/11</i> • <i>West Somerset Corporate Plan</i> • <i>West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy</i> | ▶ Sets out policy to tackle issues of poor housing and educational opportunities, promote healthy environments and lifestyles and provide health services as locally as possible to meet the needs of the rural population. |

- 4.20 The key issues identified for human health in West Somerset are:
- West Somerset has an ageing population, the problems of which will be exacerbated in the future by a low total fertility rate and an increasing life expectancy.
 - Limiting long term illness in West Somerset is greater than the regional and national averages.
 - The potential implications of better health and increased life expectancy on housing numbers and types.
 - The impact of large seasonal influxes of people during the summer months can double the local population in the area, putting pressure on services.
 - In Somerset 34.7% of adults are overweight and 13.5% are obese.

Landscape

- 4.21 The key policy framework for landscape is shown below. Please see the landscape topic paper for more details.

| Policy | Details of relevance to the plan and SA |
|--|--|
| Key International Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Landscape Convention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The aims of the European Landscape Convention are to promote European landscape protection, management and planning, and to organise European co-operation on landscape issues. |
| Key National Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning.</i> <i>Natural England Policy Position Statement: Housing Growth and Green Infrastructure</i> <i>Wildlife and Countryside Act.</i> <i>Countryside and Rights of Way Act.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Authorities should be more ambitious in their conservation and enhancement initiatives and work positively with the relevant agencies. Policy set out a number of key principles including ensuring development is good enough to approve, enhancing the environment rather than mitigating unavoidable impacts, respecting the character of all landscapes, sustaining the countryside through development. Countryside in and around towns should provide a bridge to the country and will bring many benefits to health and well being. |
| Key Local / Regional Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Quantock Hills AONB Management Plan.</i> <i>Exmoor Landscape Character Assessment.</i> <i>Exmoor National Park Management Plan.</i> <i>Vale of Taunton and Quantock Fringes Countryside Character Assessment.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The management plans for these various areas set out a number of objectives such as conserving their distinctive character, ensure new development is harmonious within the landscape and increasing access and user conflicts. |

- 4.22 The key issues identified for landscape in West Somerset are:
- Major development of areas outside the boundaries of designated areas can have a visual impact on views and lead to light pollution.
 - The Quantock Hills has identified visual impacts within the AONB as a key threat to the landscape through the construction of pylons, masts and wind turbines.
 - New development is not always consistent with the character of the area and the local building vernacular.
 - The plan will need to develop a coherent Green Infrastructure Plan and supporting policies.
 - The Countryside Agency's Character Areas have undergone changes that are not consistent with their character. The main cause of these changes is due to the use of more intensive land management practices, leading to loss of hedgerows, woodlands and orchards, and increased field size.
 - Somerset has a low percentage of woodland cover, below the national county average.

Labour Market, Economy and Regeneration

- 4.23 The key policy framework for labour market, economy and regeneration is shown below. Please see the labour market, economy and regeneration topic paper for more details.

| Policy | Details of relevance to the plan and SA |
|---|---|
| Key International Policy No International policy framework. | ▶ N/A |
| Key National Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>PPG21 Tourism.</i> | ▶ This PPG outlines the economic significance of tourism and its environmental impact, and therefore its importance in land-use planning. |
| Key Local / Regional Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Just Connect! An Integrated Regional Strategy for the South West.</i> • <i>Towards 2015 - Shaping tomorrow's tourism.</i> • <i>South West Regional Economic Strategy.</i> • <i>South West Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action.</i> • <i>Somerset Strategic Partnership Strategic Priorities.</i> • <i>West Somerset Retail and Town Centre Study.</i> • <i>Exmoor Enterprise Parks – A Strategy for Enterprise and Economic Growth in West Somerset.</i> • <i>Western Somerset Economic Development and Access Strategy.</i> • <i>West Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy.</i> | ▶ Regional policy emphasises the need to enhance economic prosperity and quality of employment opportunity whilst addressing deprivation and disadvantage to reduce significant intra-regional inequalities. Emphasis is given to increasing productivity, raising wage levels, improving training, supply of a range of sites and improving communications infrastructure. Tourism strategies emphasis the trends for shorter holidays that have more of an emphasis on the environment and outdoors and the increasing number of older travellers. |

- 4.24 The key issues identified for labour market, economy and regeneration in West Somerset are:
- The economic activity rate of West Somerset is below both the regional and national levels.
 - The number of people claiming work related benefits has increased between 2005 and 2007.
 - A higher % of people in West Somerset have no qualifications and a smaller number are educated to level 4-5.
 - Lack of a good transport system, coupled with distance from higher education institutions means it is difficult for people to access opportunities to develop their skills.
 - West Somerset has experienced a net loss in the number of jobs over time; the district is also a net exporter of labour, with residents travelling outside the district for work.
 - West Somerset has a reliance on employment within declining sectors: agriculture and tourism. Therefore, the economy needs to look at ways to support these sectors, whilst also looking for opportunities to diversify in order to continue to provide employment opportunities and economic growth. The district also needs to look towards marketing the area, to attract new, small businesses, thereby helping to expand the district's economic base. (Western Somerset Economic Development Access Strategy).
 - Knowledge based industries are a good indicator of economic growth; however, overall West Somerset has experienced limited growth in this sector.

- West Somerset has a higher percentage of people working from home compared to Somerset and England.
- There is a lack of available employment land/workspace, industrial and commercial properties.

Biodiversity

- 4.25 The key policy framework for biodiversity is shown below. Please see the biodiversity topic paper for more details.

| Policy | Details of relevance to the plan and SA |
|--|---|
| Key International Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Habitats Directive.</i> • <i>Wild Birds Directive.</i> • <i>Convention on Biological Diversity.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Requires member states to take necessary measures to maintain / restore habitats and species' populations, maintain SPAs and SACs at favourable status and develop national biodiversity strategies. |
| Key National Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wildlife and Countryside Act.</i> • <i>Countryside and Rights of Way Act.</i> • <i>PPS 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.</i> • <i>Working with the Grain of Nature.</i> • <i>Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act.</i> • <i>UK Biodiversity Action Plan.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Allows for notification of valued habitats through SSSIs, requires public bodies to have regard to conservation in all functions and embed biodiversity in all public policy, lists habitats and species of principal importance and requires proactive enhancement through planning. |
| Key Local / Regional Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>South West Biodiversity Implementation Plan.</i> • <i>West Somerset Biodiversity Action Plan</i> • <i>Somerset Biodiversity Strategy: 'Wild Somerset' 2008-2018</i> • <i>West Somerset BAP</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Aims for continued and sustained improvement in the status of species and habitats listed. Includes a number of targets related to (in West Somerset) lowland heath, upland oak woodland, purple moor grass and rush pasture, coastal vegetated shingle, sabellaria alveolata reef, skylark, lesser horseshoe bat and water vole. |

- 4.26 The key issues identified for biodiversity in West Somerset are:
- West Somerset has a large number of sites designated for their ecological value which require protection. Some of these are in an unfavourable condition. However, this is mostly due to inappropriate management although some contribution to condition may be a result of recreational and tourist pressures on sites.
 - The majority of semi-natural habitats have declined significantly in Somerset as a whole.
 - Monitoring effort in Somerset has not been sufficient to determine recent trends and therefore a precautionary approach must be taken to development.
 - The planning strategy should be incorporating an ecosystem approach to planning to consider biodiversity as a whole, not just the 'islands' of designated sites that are scattered across the county. Many important species are found in the wider countryside. Therefore, the value of habitats not designated and habitat networks needs consideration and protection.

5 Assessing the Effects of the Plan

Introduction

- 5.1 The purpose of the scoping stage of SA is to provide a means by which the sustainability of the plan can be assessed. This is done through the application of a SA framework. The SA framework provides a way in which sustainability effects can be described, analysed and compared. It consists of objectives which may be expressed in the form of targets, the achievement of which should be measurable using identified indicators. The sustainability objectives are distinct from the objectives of the plan, though they may in some cases overlap with them (ODPM, 2005). The selection of objectives / indicators within the SA framework has come from objectives which were suggested by the review of other plans, programmes, policies and objectives, the baseline review and topic papers and a brief review of SA objectives and indicators used in other recently published SA reports in other areas of the country.
- 5.2 Particular care has been taken to ensure that the objectives help to guide the appraisal team in identifying the links between actions taken in the plan and the effect on the environment and sustainability. To ensure this, the appraisal objectives have been supplemented by the addition of appraisal questions. The appraisal questions are phrased slightly differently to indicators that may be used to monitor the state of the environment. For example, a monitoring indicator such as “Quality of SSSIs” would not be particularly helpful at the appraisal stage. However, an appraisal question such as “Would the plan lead to avoidance of net loss, damage or fragmentation of SSSIs” is more helpful as it presents the links between the action taken in the plan and the state of the environment. However, more traditional indicators will be included at the monitoring stage and these will be linked to the appraisal questions and the potential impacts of the plan.

SA Framework

- 5.3 The SA framework is shown in Table 4. Many objectives were suggested through the consultation and document review. Not all of these have been included. Since the previous scoping report was published in 2006, some have been rationalised and others have been modified / omitted in order to ensure that the most relevant objectives have been included and to provide a relatively succinct and practical set of SA objectives.

Table 4: SA framework

| SA Objectives | Appraisal questions. Will the plan lead to... |
|--|--|
| Air and Noise | |
| Reduce impacts on tranquility from noise and visual intrusion. | Potential changes in areas currently identified as tranquil areas? |
| Reduce the need to travel and facilitate modal shift (particularly with regard to reducing the impact of traffic during the peak summer months). | 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 |
| Climate and Energy | |
| Reduce greenhouse gas emissions | A change in CO2 emissions per person? |
| Improve adaptation for unavoidable climate change including consideration of the location of development. | 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)? |
| Increase energy efficiency and the amount of energy generated from renewable sources. | A change in numbers of renewable energy projects? Better adaptation of development to the effects of climate change? |
| Crime | |
| Reduce anti social behaviour and fear of crime | A reduction in fear of crime and the level of anti social behaviour |
| Public infrastructure | |
| 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)? |
| Population and Social Inclusion | |
| To develop and maintain a balanced and sustainable population structure which good access to services, facilities and homes for all sectors of the society | The development and maintenance of a balanced and sustainable population structure within the 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? |
| Soils and Geology | |
| 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 |

| SA Objectives | Appraisal questions. Will the plan lead to... characteristics? |
|---|--|
| Waste | |
| To reduce waste generation and disposal, increase recycling and achieve the sustainable management of waste | <p>A reduction in the amount of waste generated by development and land use change?</p> <p>Encouragement for development to use re-cycled materials and make provision for recycling / composting in all new development?</p> |
| Water | |
| <p>Maintain and continue to improve the quality of ground/river/coastal water.</p> <p>Reduce risk of flooding including coastal flooding.</p> <p>Improve efficiency of water use.</p> | <p>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?</p> <p>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)?</p> <p>Development which corresponds with EA flood risk and alleviation advice especially as regards building on the floodplain?</p> <p>Development likely to affect the ecological status of groundwater and surface water?</p> <p>An increase in the use of SUDS?</p> |
| Cultural Heritage | |
| 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. | <p>Development that affects listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens?</p> <p>Development being steered to where it can be accommodated in less sensitive areas?</p> <p>Distinctive development that is well related to the natural environment and characteristic scale, form materials and detailing of the settlement and contributes to a sense of place?</p> <p>The enhancement 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> |
| Human Health | |
| To improve the health and well being of the population and improve access to health services for all. | <p>Healthier lifestyles?</p> <p>Improved access to healthcare?</p> |
| Landscape | |
| <p>Ensure that special and distinctive landscapes, and the features within them, are conserved and enhanced.</p> <p>Enhance the form and design of the</p> | Provide the AONB with the highest level of policy protection, make appropriate provision for their economic and social wellbeing and reflect AONB Management Plan objectives? |

| SA Objectives | Appraisal questions. Will the plan lead to... |
|---|---|
| <p>built environment.</p> <p>Ensure provision is made to incorporate green infrastructure into spatial planning.</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> |
| Labour Market, Economy and Regeneration | |
| <p>Improve sustainable economic activity within West Somerset enabling regeneration of key areas.</p> | <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> |
| Biodiversity | |
| <p>Protect and enhance biodiversity at all levels.</p> <p>Maintain, restore and enhance populations of focal species.</p> <p>Increase the land area of UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitats within the district.</p> <p>Maintain and improve the conservation status of selected designated and non-designated nature conservation sites.</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 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?</p> <p>Development which includes the integration of ecological conditions?</p> |

QUESTIONS FOR CONSULTEES

- **Do the SA objectives provide a reasonable framework through which to address the likely significant environmental / sustainability effects of the plan?**

6 Next Steps

- 6.1 The consultation on this scoping report will run from 29th May to 10th July 2009 and comments should be sent to:

Martin Wilsher, Planning Officer, West Somerset Council, 20 Fore Street, Council Offices
Williton, Somerset, TA4 4QA,

Tel: (01643) 703704

Fax: (01984) 633022

Mwilsher@westsomerset.gov.uk

- 6.2 Specific questions have been asked in each section of the Scoping Report to help guide responses. These are repeated below:

QUESTIONS FOR CONSULTEES

- Are any significant data missing or misrepresented?
- Are there any additional problems, opportunities or issues that need to be considered in the development of the plan?
- Do the SA objectives provide a reasonable framework through which to address the likely significant environmental / sustainability effects of the plan?
- How would you or your organisation like more to be involved in the rest of the SA process?
- Do you have any comments to add specifically relating to Williton?

- 6.3 The appraisal process will continue with the development of each LDD. The next formal output for the LDF will be an issues and options report for the Core Strategy. The issues and options will be assessed against the SA framework and a commentary provided on their sustainability effects. This will help to guide West Somerset Council in their selection of the preferred option for each LDD. The assessment of these preferred options will then be reported in a Sustainability Report (which will incorporate the statutory Environmental Report as required by the SEA Regulations).

QUESTIONS FOR CONSULTEES

- How would you or your organisation like more to be involved in the rest of the SA process?

Annex 1: Consultees (2006 Scoping Report)

Stakeholders

A list of key stakeholders was drawn up for the purposes of the scoping consultation, all of whom were invited to the workshop. The list consisted of:

- Representatives from various departments of Somerset County Council;
- Representatives from various departments of West Somerset Council;
- Representatives from neighbouring district councils: Taunton Deane Borough Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Mid Devon District Council, North Devon District Council.
- Representatives from the following statutory and other public agencies:
 - English Heritage
 - English Nature
 - Environment Agency
 - Countryside Agency
 - Civil Aviation Authority
 - Government Office for the South West of England
 - South West of England Regional Development Agency
 - South West of England Regional Assembly
 - Regen South West
 - South West Tourism
 - Dorset and Somerset Strategic Health Authority
 - Somerset Primary Care Trust
 - Somerset Public Health Network
 - Somerset and Avon Constabulary
 - Exmoor National Park Authority
 - Quantock Hills AONB
 - Learning and Skills Council
 - Business Link Somerset
- Representatives from the Local Strategic Partnerships
- Representatives from parish councils: Williton PC, Watchet PC, Sampford Brett PC, Nettlecombe PC, Old Cleeve PC, West Quantoxhead PC
- Representatives of the following non-governmental organisations and community groups:
 - Council for the Protection of Rural England

- South West Protected Landscapes Forum
- Association for the Severn Estuary and Relevant Authorities
- Somerset Wildlife Trust
- Somerset Environmental Records Centre
- Somerset Learning Partnership
- Forum 21
- Representatives of the following private organisations
 - Wessex Water
 - West Somerset Business Network

Scoping Workshop

The following people attended the scoping workshop on Monday 24th April 2006:

- David Alford, (pollution control) West Somerset Council
- Cllr Brewer, West Somerset Council
- Ian Bright, (renewable energy) Somerset County Council
- Paul Browning, (strategic planner) Somerset County Council
- Larry Burrows, (environment) Somerset County Council
- Phil Cookson, Exmoor National Park
- Insp Nic Crocker, Avon and Somerset Police
- Sgt Neil Dillon, Avon and Somerset Police
- Chris Edwards, Quantock Hills AONB
- Cllr Fox-Huntley, West Somerset Council
- Mike Highfield, (noise) Somerset County Council
- Cllr Hill, West Somerset Council
- Peter Hughes, (community safety) West Somerset Council
- Angela Lamplough, Forum 21
- Steve Membery, (historic environment) Somerset County Council
- Ian Moore from the Genesis Project, representing the Somerset Learning Partnership
- Cllr Palmer, West Somerset Council
- Cllr Ross, West Somerset Council
- Mrs Sansom, West Quantoxhead Parish Council
- Tineke Tammes, (Local Strategic Partnership) West Somerset Council
- Nick Wall, (historic environment) Somerset County Council
- Sandra Wilson, West Somerset Business Network