



Local Development Framework: Sustainability Appraisal

Scoping Report

September 2009

Addendum:

Scott Wilson produced the Local Development Framework: Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report in September 2007. However, the Scoping Report did not undergo the statutory 5 week consultation at this time and some contextual amendments were required to reflect key national and regional policy changes (e.g. publication of PPS1 Supplement: Planning and Climate Change, the Climate Change Act 2008, and the Regional Spatial Strategy 'Proposed Changes') prior to publication of the Scoping Report for consultation over a statutory 5 week period from Wednesday 29 April to Wednesday 3 June 2009.

Appendix 1 sets out the comments received over the statutory consultation period, with the Council's response. The Sustainability Appraisal Framework comprising the objectives and indicators, along with the scoring system, are included in Appendix 2.



Local Development Framework: Sustainability Appraisal

Scoping Report

September 2007

Revision Schedule

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

September 2007

Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
01	May 2007	First Draft	Katherine Ricards	Colin Bush	
02	September 2007	Final			Colin Bush

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
1 Introduction.....	1
2 A Spatial Portrait of South Somerset.....	6
3 Context Review (Stage A1)	10
4 Baseline Information (Stage A2).....	20
5 Sustainability Issues (Stage A3).....	28
6 SA Framework (Stage A4).....	33
7 Next Steps	47
8 Further Information	49
Appendix 1 - Scoping Report consultation.....	50
Appendix 2 - Sustainability Appraisal framework.....	58

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Scott Wilson was commissioned in 2006 by South Somerset District Council to assist with the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Local Development Framework (LDF).

1.2 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 1.2.1 SEA is required by European and by English law. It involves the systematic identification and evaluation of the environmental impacts of a strategic action (e.g. a plan or programme). In 2001, the EU legislated for SEA with the adoption of Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the 'SEA Directive'). The aim of the SEA Directive is "to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes, with a view to promoting sustainable development".
- 1.2.2 The Directive was transposed into English legislation by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the 'SEA Regulations'), which came into force on 21st July 2004. The SEA Regulations apply (with some specific exceptions) to plans and programmes subject to preparation and / or adoption by a national, regional or local authority or those prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government and are required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions.
- 1.2.3 SA extends the concept of SEA to encompass economic and social concerns. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA) requires Local Planning Authorities to undertake SA for each of their Local Development Documents (LDDs), including the Core Strategy. SA is, therefore, a statutory requirement for LDFs along with SEA.
- 1.2.4 The Government's approach is to incorporate the requirements of the SEA Directive into a wider SA process that considers economic and social, as well as environmental effects. To this end, in November 2005, the Government published guidance on undertaking SA of LDFs that incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive ('the Guidance'). The combined SA / SEA process is referred to in this document as Sustainability Appraisal (SA).
- 1.2.5 The Guidance advocates a five-stage approach to undertaking SA (see Figure 1.1). Stage A involves gathering an evidence base and defining SA Objectives. The findings of this stage are documented in a Scoping Report. The appraisal is conducted at Stage B and outcome recorded in the Preferred Options SA Report during Stage C. Following statutory consultation (Stage D) the SA Report may require updating to reflect changes made in response to representations. Stage E concerns ongoing monitoring of significant effects.

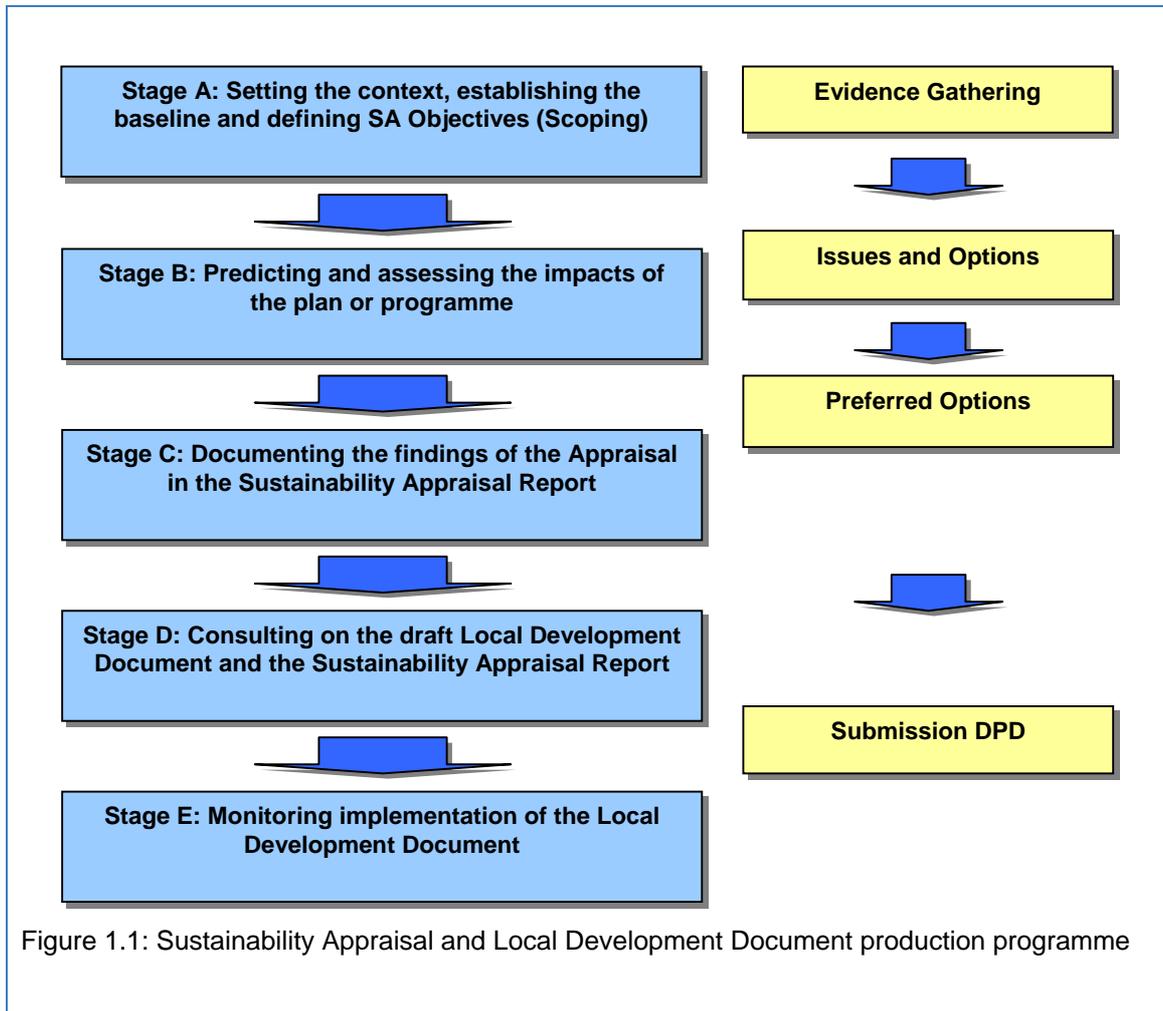


Figure 1.1: Sustainability Appraisal and Local Development Document production programme

1.2.6 According to the Guidance the Scoping report should set out the findings of Stage A (which includes evidence gathering) together with information on what happens next in the process.

1.2.7 Stage A consists of five key tasks as illustrated in table 1.

Table 1:

Stage A key Tasks
A1 – Identify other relevant plans, programmes and sustainability objectives that will influence the LDF
A2 – Collect relevant social, environmental and economic baseline information
A3 – Identify key sustainability issues for the SA / plan to address
A4 – Develop the SA framework , consisting of the SA objectives , indicators and targets
A5 – Produce a Scoping Report and consult relevant authorities on the scope of the appraisal

- 1.2.11 Stakeholders and the public have a vital role to play both in developing planning policy for the District and in contributing to the SA / SEA. According to Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development *"effective community involvement is a key element of the Government's planning reforms. This is best achieved where there is early engagement of all the stakeholders in the process of plan making ... This helps to identify issues and problems at an early stage and allows dialogue and discussion of the options to take place before proposals are too far advanced."*

1.3 Compliance with the SEA Regulations

- 1.3.1 The SEA Regulations set out the process that must be followed. In particular, the SEA Regulations require the preparation of an 'Environmental Report' on the implications of the plan or programme in question and consultation on the scope and level of detail of the assessment. This Scoping Report is intended to facilitate this statutory consultation.

1.4 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

- 1.4.1 The SEA Regulations require the assessment of the likely significant environmental effects on the following environmental issues:

- Air
- Water
- Soil
- Biodiversity (including flora and fauna)
- Population
- Human health
- Climate
- Material assets
- Cultural heritage (including archaeology)
- Landscape
- And the interrelationship between the above factors

- 1.4.2 The SA process extends the assessment process to include likely significant social and economic effects. This Scoping Report will therefore consider the following additional topics:

- Economy
- Employment
- Transport
- Crime and Safety
- Housing
- Waste

1.5 Relevance of the Scoping Report

- 1.5.1 The Scoping Report forms part of the evidence base for the LDF, in that it sets out the scope and level of detail of the SA. It is intended to define the key environmental and sustainability problems for the whole of South Somerset District. It documents the findings from Stage A of the SA / SEA process as well as what happens next in the process. This report will be sent to the three SEA Consultation Bodies¹ and other selected stakeholders for comment.
- 1.5.2 The Scoping Report is the first of three key reporting stages to be produced as part of the SA process and concerns the SA of the following Local Development Documents:
- Core Strategy Development Plan Document (including core development management policies) (DPD)
 - Yeovil Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP)²
- 1.5.3 Details of the production programme for these documents can be found in the Local Development Scheme on the Council website at the following address:
<http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=2093>
- 1.5.4 The second stage is to produce the Sustainability Appraisal Report, with a separate Sustainability Appraisal Report being prepared for each Local Development Document (LDD). The Sustainability Report for each LDD will incorporate the Environmental Report required by the SEA Regulations. This Scoping Report will be revisited at the commencement of each Sustainability Appraisal in order to ensure the information it contains is up to date.
- 1.5.5 The third stage will be the SA / SEA Statement, following adoption of each Local Development Document, setting out the difference the process has made.
- 1.5.6 Specific questions have been included throughout this document to help structure consultation responses. These are listed in full below.
- **Question 1:** Are there any other relevant Plans, Policies, Programmes, Strategies and Initiatives (PPPSIs) not considered in Table 3 that might affect or influence the preparation of the Core Strategy DPD or the development of the SA?
 - **Question 2:** Are there any other key messages to be obtained from the context review?
 - **Question 3:** Do you agree that the baseline information collected is relevant, accurate and of sufficient detail? Do you know of any additional relevant baseline data, which should be added to the list?
 - **Question 4:** Do you agree with the trends identified, both current and for future trends (without the effects of the DPDs)?
 - **Question 5:** Are the targets and indicators used adequate to support the achievement of the SA objectives and aid the collection of baseline data? Are there any additional indicators that should be included?
 - **Question 6:** Do you agree with the list of sustainability issues affecting the District listed at Table 6? Are there any other sustainability issues that should be considered?

¹English Heritage, Natural England, Environment Agency.

²The Local Development Scheme is currently being reviewed, and it is anticipated that the Yeovil Town Centre Area Action Plan will no longer be produced.

- **Question 7:** Do you agree that the SA objectives provide an appropriate framework for the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy DPD? Are they consistent with national and regional sustainability guidance and appropriate or suitable for the District? Should any SA objectives be added, removed or revised, bearing in mind the need to keep the number of objectives manageable?

2 A Spatial Portrait of South Somerset

2.1 Location

- 2.1.1 South Somerset is a large and diverse district, extending nearly 65 kilometres (40 miles) from east to west, with an area of 960 square kilometres (370 square miles). South Somerset borders the other Somerset districts of Taunton Deane, Sedgemoor and Mendip, it also shares borders with the Dorset authorities of North Dorset and West Dorset, the Wiltshire authority of Salisbury and the Devon authority of East Devon. The District is predominantly an area of small communities: some 45% of the population lives in settlements of fewer than 2,500 people and only two towns have more than 10,000 inhabitants. The generally small size of settlements can be beneficial in encouraging a sense of community and enabling participation in local affairs but it also poses challenges in terms of the economic provision of services and facilities.

2.2 South Somerset Today

Population

- 2.2.1 In 2001 the total population of South Somerset was one hundred and fifty thousand, nine hundred and sixty nine (150,969) people. Although it has now been some years since the data was collected and it should be acknowledged that the picture could have changed in the meantime, the census of 2001 still represents the most complete snapshot of the District in terms of its population structure. The mid year estimates are undertaken by the Office for National Statistics, the 2005 mid-years indicate that the population has increased to 156,100. Population projections estimate continued annual growth with rises estimated to be 161,000 at 2010, 166,700 at 2015, and 172,600 at 2020. Population growth is predicted to be a result of immigration.
- 2.2.2 South Somerset has a high proportion of its population aged over 65 years, and in common with the South West as a whole, it is likely to continue to have a somewhat older population age profile than the rest of England.
- 2.2.3 The District has a lower proportion of young people (16-29yrs) compared to regional and national averages. This is anticipated to be because young people have been leaving to pursue higher education and not returning, contributing to a shortage of highly skilled young graduates entering the local workforce. However, this trend does appear to be slowing with an increase in people studying for qualifications locally or via distance learning.
- 2.2.4 South Somerset had a significantly more homogenous population in 2001 than other parts of the UK, with more than 98% of the population describing themselves as white, British.
- 2.2.5 South Somerset experiences higher than average life expectancy for both males and females and a lower than average premature death rate. The general health of the District is favourable.

Housing

- 2.2.6 South Somerset is a rural authority, this is illustrated in its population density which is significantly lower than the national and regional averages. In overall terms, South Somerset is not a disadvantaged area. However, there are pockets of deprivation across the District, largely in urban areas. The ranking of 240 on the indices of multiple deprivation (2004) puts South

Somerset in the least deprived 35% of local authorities in the country. In 2001 the equivalent ranking was 230. In 2004, the Yeovil Central, East and West wards were in the top 20 most deprived wards in Somerset.

- 2.2.7 Higher than average house prices combined with lower than average wages means that many South Somerset residents find housing difficult to afford. There are many people who have very specific additional housing needs that must be met. House prices in South Somerset have increased by 63% since 2001 and there is a huge demand for affordable housing especially to retain young people.
- 2.2.8 The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy sets out the number of new homes required for the district and broad location through a focus on Yeovil as a Strategically Significant City or Town (SSCT). The RSS Proposed Changes states that at least 19,700 new dwellings should be built in South Somerset in the period 2006 – 2026, with 6,400 of these within Yeovil's existing urban area, and 5,000 to be located in an area of search around Yeovil.
- 2.2.9 The council through its adopted Local Plan seeks to achieve an annual target of 262 homes per annum, over the 8.75 years to 2011, of which 185 per annum will be required in association with general housing. The recently published South Somerset Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies that 660 new affordable houses are needed each year in the district to meet demand.
- 2.2.10 Homelessness in the district has reduced over recent years following high levels between 2001 and 2003. However there is an issue arising around proportionately higher levels for ethnic minorities and migrant workers choosing to stay on and bring their families to live with them in the district.

Economy and Employment

- 2.2.11 In general terms, the District presents a picture of relative prosperity with a growing economy, unemployment is consistently below regional and national rates and there has been a net increase in new businesses in recent years.
- 2.2.12 The South Somerset economy is diverse, dynamic and healthy, with a high technology cluster of industries. However, there are a number of challenges to be faced in the future; outside of Yeovil, the lack of broadband communications is a real constraint for some businesses.
- 2.2.13 There is a strong manufacturing base and an adaptable and loyal workforce. The manufacturing base has its historic origins in sailcloth, tanning and gloving but today metal manufacturing is important and AgustaWestland dominates employment in the Yeovil area. The number working in manufacturing is more than double the regional and national averages. However, the manufacturing industry has experienced a decline in recent years, a trend that is set to continue. Tourism has developed to be stable and sustainable and provides a very important income for the area. It contributes around £84 million to the local economy and supports many jobs. Farming has suffered through a number of national crises and many farmers now wish to diversify or seek additional income. There is need to diversify the job sector as more than 25% is manufacturing. There is a need to increase the availability of skilled labour in order to retain and attract young people to the district.
- 2.2.14 Local rates of employment are amongst the best in the country overall, and it is growing more rapidly than most (5% between 1999 and 2000). Although no ward in South Somerset ranks in the most deprived 10% in the country, average male income (£22,150 in 2002) is in the lowest quartile in the country. Unemployment rates in the District are therefore low, especially in comparison with the south-west region and the national averages.

Transport

- 2.2.15 Transport and travel patterns reflect the rural nature of large parts of South Somerset and the lack of public transport outside urban areas. At the current rate, it is expected that by 2010 traffic in South Somerset will increase by between 7% and 12%. In Yeovil alone, traffic is around 50% higher than twenty years ago, with between 65,000 and 70,000 cars parked there every week. Even with this high rise in traffic, there are still many people without access to a car. Census data from 2001 shows less people use public transport to get to work in South Somerset than virtually the whole of the UK. However the number of people using South Somerset's railway stations is currently rising, alongside national increases.

Historic Environment

- 2.2.16 South Somerset has a high quality built environment with more conservation areas, eighty-four, than any other district in the county. It also has the second highest number of listed buildings in the county, 354 including 7 on the buildings at risk register. South Somerset has eighteen Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest as listed by English Heritage.

Natural Environment

- 2.2.17 The landscape of South Somerset is varied and of high quality. There is also a wealth of wildlife habitats. Large parts of the District's countryside are protected by national and international designation, together with a greater number of locally designated wildlife sites. South Somerset has parts of three AONBs within the District: Blackdown Hills AONB; Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire AONB; Dorset AONB. A total of 5.2% of the District's land area is designated AONB (4,968ha). The South West contains a significant proportion of the UK's overall resource of important wildlife sites, habitats and species. There are also 39 SSSIs including parts of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site, and Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area (SPA) within the District. This equates to 3.5% of the District's land area (3,390ha).
- 2.2.18 The District is also home to 3 nationally designated nature reserves (Barington Hill, Hardington Moor, parts of the Somerset Levels and Moors), 4 local nature reserves (Bincombe beaches, Crewkerne, Chard Reservoir, Eastfield, High Ham and Moldrums Ground, Penselwood) and 2 country parks (Ham Hill and Ninesprings, Yeovil).
- 2.2.19 The average size of farm holdings within South Somerset is smaller than those for the South West and Nationally. However it is also illustrated that average size of holdings is decreasing across the Country.
- 2.2.20 The Council is responsible for monitoring the quality of air within the District. The local air quality management process determined that there was a need to declare an Air Quality Management Area for Yeovil. This was declared in August 2002. The AQMA is an area comprising the whole of the built-up area of Yeovil, including the airfield, areas identified in the local plan as potentially subject to development and the main road network in and around the town. The AQMA was declared due to high levels of Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).
- 2.2.21 The river quality in South Somerset, in particular the chemical quality of the authorities rivers has declined over recent years, however the biological quality has shown improvement in recent years.
- 2.2.22 In recent years the amount of household waste produced per person in Somerset has decreased, however prior to 05/06 the arisings per person had increased, reflecting increasingly

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

wasteful individual behaviour and purchasing patterns. This recent trend illustrates that the District is meeting the government's objective on waste reduction, although clearly the Council has little direct control over this variable. The waste arisings per person in South Somerset are significantly lower at 16.3 kg/head than the regional and national figures of 23.5 kg/head and 23.1 kg/head in 03/04. South Somerset is performing well against the County waste plans recycling and composting target of 36% of the collected household waste by 2005 – 2006 to be recycled or composted. The Districts 05/06 performance rate was 40%, this is also significantly higher than the regional rate of 31.4% and the national rate of 27%. Figures for reuse and recovery of household waste are not available, nor are statistics for commercial and industrial waste streams.

3 Context Review (Stage A1)

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Stage A involves establishing, amongst other things, the context in which the LDF is being prepared, i.e. the other policies, plans, programmes, strategies and initiatives that influence the content of the LDF (and vice-versa) and the opportunities and challenges they present.

3.1.2 The Guidance states:

“A DPD may be influenced in various ways by other plans and programmes and by external sustainability objectives, such as those laid down in policies or legislation. These relationships should be identified to enable potential synergies to be exploited and any inconsistencies and constraints to be addressed”.

3.1.3 According to the Guidance:

“The review should consider guidance at the international, EU or national level on sustainable development, as well as other policy documents such as Planning Policy Statements. Note should be made of any targets or specific requirements included within them, and what these relate to”.

3.2 Method

3.2.1 The policies, plans, programmes, strategies and initiatives (PPPSIs) have been presented under the general headings of environment, social and economic and overlaps between these categories. This should facilitate the use of the context review as a reference document throughout the SA of the LDF and associated DPDs and SPDs. Table 2 shows which LDD topics fall into which overarching category.

Table 2: LDD Topic categorisation

ENVIRONMENT	ENVIRONMENT	SOCIAL
Air Quality Biodiversity Conservation Rural matters	Waste Development land Flood risk	
SOCIAL	SOCIAL	ECONOMY
Housing Crime Noise Leisure/Recreation/Sport Education	Town centres Outdoor advertisements	
ECONOMY	ECONOMY	ENVIRONMENT
Business & Industry Economy	Tourism Renewable energy & energy efficiency	
ENVIRONMENT	SOCIAL	ECONOMY
General Sustainability For example: Climate change, Transport, spatial planning		

3.2.2 Table 3 lists the PPSIs reviewed for the purposes of the SA. This list has been agreed with the Council during an earlier review of the accompanying Context Review Report.

Table 3: List of relevant policies, plans and programmes, strategies and initiatives reviewed

Environment	
Air Quality Framework Directive (96/62/EC) and Daughter Directives	1996
Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats	1979
Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)	1979
Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals	1979
Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora Directive (92/43/EEC) (Habitats Directive)	1992
Convention on Biological Diversity	1993
Effects of Certain Public and Private Projects on the Environment Directive (85/337/EEC & 97/11/EC)	1985
Kyoto Protocol	Negotiated 1997 ³
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat	1971
Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)	2000
Climate Change: The UK Programme	2006
UK Biodiversity Action Plan	1994
PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas	2004
PPS9 Biodiversity & Geological Conservation	2005
PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control	N2004
The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland	2000
South West Biodiversity Action Plan	1997
South West Biodiversity Implementation Plan	2005
South Somerset Strategy for Nature Conservation	1999
South Somerset Local Biodiversity Action Plan	2008

³ Kyoto Protocol negotiated in 1997, signed in 1998 and came into force February 2005

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

South Somerset Countryside Service Action Plan	2005-2006
Yeovil Air Quality Action Plan	2005
Environment	Social
Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise (the Environmental Noise Directive (END))	2002
Waste Framework Directive (Directive 75/442/EEC, as amended)	1975
Landfill Directive (99/31/EC)	1999
PPS 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste	2005
PPG14: Development on Unstable Land	1990
PPG15: Planning and Historic Environment Circulars 01/2001 and 09/2005	1994
PPG16: Archaeology and Planning	1990
PPG24: Planning and noise	1994
PPS25: Development and Flood risk and Practice Guide	2006, 2008
The Regional Strategy for the South West Environment	2004 - 2014
Somerset Waste Local Plan 2001-2011	2005
The Landscape of South Somerset	1993
South Somerset Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy	2005
Yeovil Country Park: Management Plan	2002-2007
Social	
Sustainable Communities: Homes for all	2005
National Cycle Strategy	1996
PPG17: Planning for Open Space, sport and recreations	2002
PPS3: Housing	2006
Circular 01/2006 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites	2006
The South West Regional Plan for Sport	2004-2008
Somerset Housing Market Assessment (summary and full version)	2006

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

South Somerset Strategic Housing Market Assessment	2009
Somerset Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment	2006
Somerset Crime Reduction and Drugs Strategy	2005-2008
Somerset Education Development Plan Interim Plan	2004 – 2005
Celebrating Somerset's Culture: Somerset Cultural Strategy	2002
Review of Somerset Cycling Strategy	2004
South Somerset Housing and Accommodation Strategy	2004-2007
South Somerset District Council Urban Housing Potential Study	2006
Draft South Somerset Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation	2006
Quality of Life in South Somerset September	2005 update
South Somerset Race Equality Scheme (produced by PCT)	2005-2008
South Somerset Primary Care Trust Patient and Public Involvement Strategy	2005
The Next Level: Strategy for Sport and Active Leisure in South Somerset	2006-2012
South Somerset Sport and Recreation Built Facilities Assessment Report (Draft)	2006
South Somerset District Council Urban Housing Potential Study	2006
Social	Economy
PPS6 Planning for Town Centres	March 2005
PPG19 Outdoor Advertisement Control	March 1992
South Somerset Retail Study	2006
Yeovil Urban Development Framework	2005
The Community Plan for Crewkerne and District	2005
Chard and Area Community Plan	2005
Economy	
Competitiveness White Paper	1998
PPG4 Industrial, Commercial Development & Small Firms	1992
Draft PPS4	2007

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

PPG8: Telecommunications	2001	
Regional Economic Development Strategy for the South West of England	2006-2015	
South Somerset Annual Town Centres/Shopping Survey Update (not published)	2006	
Business Perspective on Property – A Survey of Local Businesses in South Somerset	2001	
Economy	Environment	
Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism DCLG	2006	
PPS22: Renewable Energy	2004	
England Rural Development Programme DEFRA	2003	
Towards 2015 Shaping Tomorrow's Tourism: South West of England Consultation Document	2005	
Regional Renewable Energy Strategy for the South West of England	2003-2010	
Somerset County Council Renewable Energy Strategy	2003-2010	
South Somerset Tourism Strategy	2004-2007	
South Somerset Employment Land Review First Draft	2006	
South Somerset Annual Employment Land Availability Survey Update (not published)	2006	
Environment	Economy	Social
The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development	2002	
Securing the Future: Delivering the UK Sustainable Development Strategy	2005	
Sustainable Communities: Building the Future (ODPM)	2003	
Climate Change Act	2008	
PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development	2005	
PPS: Planning and Climate Change	2007	
PPS12: Local Spatial Planning	2008	
PPG13: Transport	2001	
RPG10: Regional Planning for the South West of England	2001	
The Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the South West of England	2001	

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

Just Connect: An Integrated Regional Strategy for the South West	2004-2026
South West of England Regional Spatial Strategy (Draft)	2006-2026
South West of England Regional Spatial Strategy (Draft) Strategic Sustainability Assessment	2006
The Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West incorporating the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes	2008
South West Regional Spatial Strategy Proposed Changes Sustainability Appraisal	2008
Somerset & Exmoor Park Joint Structure Plan Alteration (Deposit Draft June 2004)	1996-2016
Somerset A Landscape for the Future: Vision and Community Strategy Consultation Draft	2004
State of the County – Somerset Community Profile	2003
Somerset Local Transport Plan (LTP)	2001-2006
Somerset LTP2	2006-2011
Somerset LTP2 SEA Statement	July 2006
South Somerset District-wide Car Parking Strategy Study Report Version 5.4 Consultation Draft	2006
South Somerset District Local Plan	2006
South Somerset District Council Corporate Plan	2005-2012
South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy	2008
Improving the Quality of Life in South Somerset: Community Strategy	2003-2006
South Somerset Local Development Scheme	2007

Each PPSI was reviewed, recording the following information:

- Policy / plan / programme / strategy / initiative
- Proponent body
- Status (e.g. statutory, non-statutory)
- Opportunities / synergies / constraints / challenges
- Implications
- Internet link

3.2.3 When considering the context, it is important to recognise three factors:

- No list or review of relevant plans and programmes can ever be exhaustive. This report seeks to identify the key related strategies and distil the key messages from these.
- Plans and programmes often exist in a hierarchy (see Figure 2 for an example). Generally speaking, as the hierarchy descends from international and European plans and programmes to the regional / local level, the implications for the SEA become more specific and precise.

- The context is dynamic and new or revised relevant PPPSs emerge on a regular basis. Of particular relevance is the gradual replacement of Policy Planning Guidance Notes (PPGs) with Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). The Council will keep abreast of any significant changes and the context review will be revised accordingly.

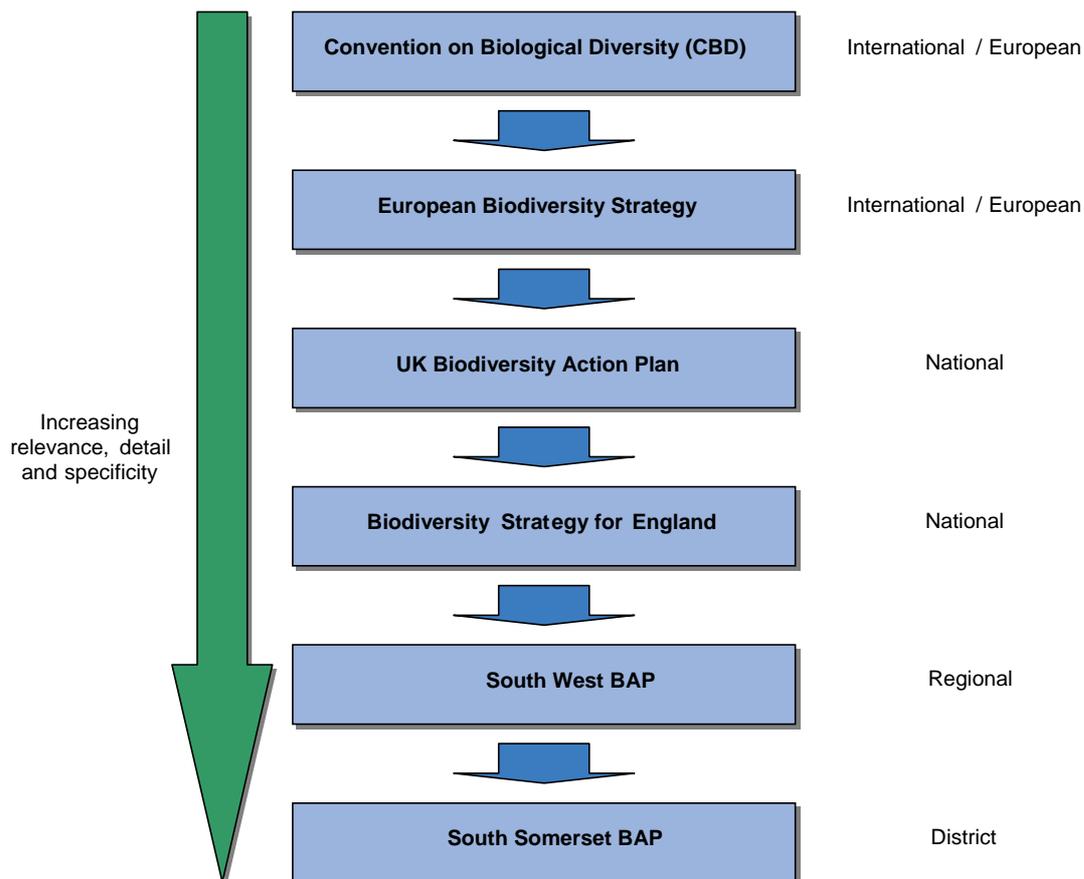


Figure 2: Example of hierarchal relationship between plans and programmes

3.3 Key Messages from the Context Review

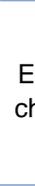
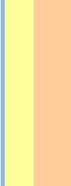
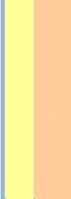
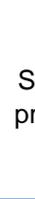
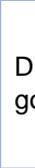
3.3.1 Scott Wilson identified a number of key messages from the context review that should be taken into account in undertaking the SA process (See Table 3). These key messages form part of the evidence base used to determine the key sustainability issues (see Section 4) or suggest ways of addressing sustainability problems. This list of messages is not necessarily exhaustive but focuses on issues identified as significant. The full Context review of the PPPS's is available as a separate document.

3.3.2

Table 4: Key messages from the context review

	Key messages – the DPDs should seek to:	Evidence Source
	Use land efficiently, reusing previously developed land wherever possible, in order to protect key environmental resources (agricultural land, threatened habitats, mineral and historic resources)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas • SSDC Local Plan
	Preserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation • SSDC Strategy for Nature Conservation • SS Biodiversity Action Plan • Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats Council of Europe and UNEP
	Air Quality generally needs to be improved. South Somerset has 1 Air Quality Management Area (Yeovil) as required under the Environment Act 1995.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Quality Framework Directive 96/62/EC and Daughter Directives, • South Somerset Air Quality Management Plan
	Reduce waste arisings and increase the reuse / recycling / recovery of waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPS10 Planning for Sustainable Waste • Somerset Waste Local Plan • SSDC Contaminated Land Strategy
	Manage the location of development in order to reduce the risk of flooding; require sustainable urban drainage systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPS25 Development & flood risk and the Practice Guide
	Increase the supply of housing and provide for a better mix of dwelling sizes, tenure & types with a range of housing densities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPS3 Housing • South Somerset Strategic Housing Market Assessment • SSDC Housing and Accommodation Strategy

Key messages – the DPDs should seek to:	Evidence Source
<p>Provide additional accommodation for Traveller / Gypsy populations as may be needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ODPM Planning for Gypsy and Traveller sites • Somerset Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment and Accommodation Strategy • Draft SSDC Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Strategy
<p>Assist in reducing crime, anti social behaviour and the fear of crime</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somerset Crime and Reduction and Drugs Strategy
<p>Improve schools performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somerset Education Development Plan
<p>Maximise opportunities to improve recreational and sporting facilities and raise awareness of the importance of sport/active lifestyles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation • The South West Regional Plan for Sport
<p>Ensure a higher quality public realm with every new project adding value to public places and enhance viability and vitality of shopping centres</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPS6 Planning for Town Centres • Yeovil Urban Development Framework • The Community Plan for Crewkerne and District • Chard and Area Community Plan
<p>Promote mixed economic development in order to help alleviate economic and social deprivation (and over reliance on dominant industry – MOD)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Economic Development Strategy for the South West of England • Draft PPS4 • SSDC Corporate Plan
<p>Increase the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPS22 Renewable energy • PPS: Planning and Climate Change • Climate Change Act 2008 • Regional Renewable Energy Strategy for the South West of England • Somerset CC Renewable Energy Strategy

Key messages – the DPDs should seek to:	Evidence Source
 <p>Maximise tourism potential whilst minimising impact on the environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCLG Good Practice Guide on planning for tourism • SSDC Tourism Strategy
   <p>Improve access to jobs, services, social areas etc. by modes other than the private car (improve transport choice)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPG13 Transport • RSS Proposed Changes • PPS: Planning and Climate Change • Draft PPS4 • Somerset LTP & LTP2 • SSDC Local Plan • SSDC Together Improving the Quality of Life in South Somerset, Community Strategy
   <p>Ensure a full and appropriate response to climate change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change Act 2008 • PPS: Planning and Climate Change
   <p>Reduce the growth of congestion and pollution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPG13 Transport • Somerset LTP2 • SSDC District-wide Car Parking Strategy
   <p>Seek to make sustainable design and building practice the norm rather than the exception</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development • PPS: Planning and Climate Change • SSDC Local Plan
   <p>Direct development to Brownfield land which has good public/mass transport access</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPG13 Transport • PPS6 Planning for Town Centres • SSDC Local Plan

Question 1: Are there any other relevant Plans, Programmes, Strategies not considered in this context review in Table 3, that you consider might affect or influence the preparation of the emerging Core Strategy DPD or the development of the SA?

Question 2: Are there any other key messages to be obtained from the context review in table 4?

4 Baseline Information (Stage A2)

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The collection of baseline information is a key component of the SA process and a legal requirement under the SEA Directive. Baseline information helps to provide a basis for predicting and monitoring effects and assembling baseline data helps to identify sustainability issues (see Section 4).
- 4.1.2 When collecting baseline data, the aim is to assemble sufficient data on the current and likely future state of the area to enable the DPD's effects to be adequately predicted. A key aim is to ensure that, where possible, each of the SA objectives (see Section 5) will be 'underwritten' with comprehensive and up-to-date baseline information. Baseline information also provides the basis for monitoring effects and helps to identify sustainability problems (see Section 4) and alternative ways of dealing with them.
- 4.1.3 In collecting baseline data, 'gaps' in data coverage are inevitably encountered. The Guidance suggests that where baseline information is unavailable or unsatisfactory, planning authorities should consider how they could improve it for use in assessments of future plans.
- 4.1.4 The Guidance urges a pragmatic approach to the collection of baseline information:
- "In theory, collection of baseline data could go on indefinitely and a practical approach is essential. Where there are gaps, it will be important to record any resulting uncertainties or risks in the appraisal. Provisions should also be made to fill any major gaps for future plans or reviews".
- 4.1.5 The Guidance emphasises that it may be necessary to revisit the collection of baseline information during the SA process as new information and issues emerge. The Council will revisit the baseline information at appropriate instances in the future.

4.2 Indicators

- 4.2.1 Generally speaking, baseline information is collected using indicators. Examples of indicators include the percentage of people in an area describing their health as not good or the number of unfit dwellings in a district or borough.
- 4.2.2 If indicators are monitored over time, the resulting data can reveal trends in performance (i.e. whether something is getting better or worse). Indicator performance can also be gauged in relation to wider geographical areas (e.g. counties or regions) if comparable data is available. Indicator performance can also be assessed in relation to targets where these exist.
- 4.2.3 Indicator data can be very useful for identifying the sustainability problems in an area that the LDF may need to respond to. For example, if an indicator for household recycling showed that the recycling rate was not rising or rising too slowly to meet the target then the DPD could include an appropriate policy response. Trend data is also useful for identifying the implications of the 'business-as-usual' option – i.e. what would happen if no additional action were taken in relation to the indicator – would its performance get better or worse?
- 4.2.4 For each indicator selected, enough data should be collected to answer a series of questions including:

- How good or bad is the current situation? Do trends show that it is getting better or worse?
- How far is the current situation from any established thresholds or targets?
- Are particularly sensitive or important elements of the receiving environment affected (e.g. people, resources, species, habitats)?
- Are the problems reversible or irreversible, permanent or temporary?
- How difficult would it be to offset or remedy any damages?
- Have there been significant cumulative, synergistic or indirect effects over time? Are there expected to be such effects in the future?

4.2.5 Indicator data can in some instances be mapped spatially. Spatial data is particularly useful for identifying constraints and opportunities regarding the location of future development. However, generally speaking, spatial data is not particularly useful for identifying problems since it tends to provide a 'snapshot' of the current situation and, unless spatial changes are carefully recorded over time, does not reveal much in the way of trends.

4.3 South Somerset Baseline

4.3.1 Baseline information is presented in Appendix 2. This includes columns addressing the following:

- Indicator
- South Somerset data
- South West data
- National data
- Target (where one exists)
- Local trend (in relation to past data / larger geographical areas / targets)
- Indicator status (green, yellow, red)
- Commentary
- Source

4.3.2 In order to gauge South Somerset's performance in relation to each indicator there must be a 'comparator' against which the current data can be benchmarked. This comparator can take the form of:

- (i) Trend data for the same indicator – showing the extent of change in South Somerset over time
- (ii) Data for a wider geographical area – showing how South Somerset's performance compares with that of South West region as a whole and the UK
- (iii) An agreed target – showing how well South Somerset is performing in relation to a certain goal

4.3.3 In some instances, an appropriate comparator is not available and indicator status is therefore classified as uncertain / unclear.

- 4.3.4 Some contextual indicators have been included in the baseline dataset. Contextual indicators are not likely to be directly impacted by the plan or programme that is being assessed but provide background information on the state of the broader environment. They may also influence the output indicators that are directly impacted by the plan or programme.
- 4.3.5 South Somerset planning officers undertook the baseline data collection. They determined the local trends and the indicator status to inform this scoping report. Much of the baseline data has been used to provide the spatial portrait of the district in Section 1.

Table 5: Baseline Indicators investigated (or under investigation)

Indicator	Why Chosen
Demographic Structure	
Population	Context Indicator
Population structure - 65 and over	Context Indicator
Population structure – ethnic diversity	Context Indicator
Population structure – social grade	Context Indicator
Percentage of residents satisfied with their local area as a place to live	Measure of overall contentedness of the population
Population Density (persons per ha)	Context Indicator
Socio-cultural Issues	
Crime - violence against the person (rate per 1000 population)	Measure of occurrence of crime
Crime - burglary (rate per 1000 households)	Measure of occurrence of crime
Total crime (rate per 1000 population)	Measure of occurrence of crime
Fear of crime	Measure of perception of crime
Resident worry about crime (%)	Measure of perception of crime
Young people (under 18) on child protection register per 10,000	Measure of child safety
Unemployment Rate – % of economically active population	Measure of number of people without work
Index of multiple deprivation	Measure of deprivation
Homelessness - households accepted as homeless	Measure of extent of homelessness
Homelessness - households in temporary accommodation	Measure of success in tackling homelessness
Population – life expectancy at birth	Context Indicator
Unemployment amongst disabled people	Measure of employment
Conceptions amongst teenage girls (15-17) per 100	Measure of health

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

Fertility Rate (live births per female)	Measure of health
% households with no adults in employment and dependent children	Measure of employment and social conditions
Standardised Mortality Ratio	Context Indicator
Mortality (all ages from accidents per 100,000 population)	Context Indicator
Number of households in fuel poverty	Measure of people having difficulty heating their homes
Percentage of households with no central heating	Measure of deprivation
Number of people claiming disability living allowance	Measure of disabled people having difficulty in meeting everyday bills
Economy	
GDP £ per head (UK = 100)	Measure of relative wealth of the District
GVA per capita (UK=100)	Measure of relative wealth of the District
Average gross weekly earnings	Measure of average income
Economically active people of working age (i.e. those aged 16 to 64 for men or 16 to 59 for women)	Measure of employment
Business registration rate and registrations minus deregulations	Measure of health of the small business sector
Professional occupations - employed workforce 16-74	Measure of the distribution of the workforce among broad categories of job
Managers and senior officials - employed workforce 16-74	Measure of the distribution of the workforce among broad categories of job
Elementary occupations (e.g. labourers, kitchen assistants and bar staff) - employed workforce 16-74	Measure of the distribution of the workforce among broad categories of job
% of Economically active people that work mostly from home	Measure of the distribution of the workforce among broad categories of job
Jobs in the tourism sector – percentage	Measure of the distribution of the workforce among broad categories of job
Average house prices (all properties)	Context Indicator
House price to income ratio	Measure of housing affordability
Benefits recipients (income Support)	Measure of Deprivation
Qualifications – people of working age	Measure of the skill levels of the workforce
GCSE passes – percentage of pupils aged 15 gaining 5+ grades A* to C	Measure of success of school-leavers in examinations
Levels of literacy and numeracy	Measure of the skill levels of the workforce
% people qualified to degree level or higher (16-74)	Measure of the skill levels of the workforce
Percentage of unauthorised absences per school session	Measure of the skill levels of the workforce

% of recruiting firms experiencing difficulty getting staff	Measure of demand for employment
Environment	
Percentage of new employment development on Previously Developed Land (PDL)	Measure of efficiency in re-use of land
Properties at risk from flooding	Measure of success in adapting to climate change
Number of planning applications granted despite Environment Agency Flood Risk objections	Measure of success of avoiding flood plain development
Extent of floodplain	Measure of the impacts of climate change
Extent of sites of nature conservation importance (hectares)	Measure of biodiversity
Area of SSSIs and statutory landscape designation in favourable or recovering condition	Measure of biodiversity
Rivers of Very Good, Good or Fair chemical water quality	Measure of water pollution
% Change in Population of Wild birds 1994-2004	Measure of biodiversity
Extent and condition of key habitats for which BAPs have been established	Measure of biodiversity
Number of days of moderate/ high air pollution and levels of special pollutants	Measure of air pollution
Carbon dioxide emissions per capita	Measure of contribution to climate change
Energy generated from renewable sources	Measure of contribution to climate change
Energy efficiency of housing stock (SAP rating)	Measure of contribution to climate change
Public concern over noise	Measure of perceived noise
Municipal waste arisings	Measure of total municipal waste generated
Household waste – percentage recycled	Measure of success in recycling
Household waste – percentage composted	Measure of success in composting
Total Agricultural land holdings	Measure of land quality
Housing and Built Environment	
Long term vacant properties	Measure of efficiency in use of housing
Over-crowding	Measure of Quality of life
Number of unfit dwellings	Measure of condition of housing stock
Additional provision of affordable housing	Measure of affordability in housing
Public concern over noise	Measure of Quality of life
Percentage of commercial buildings meeting BREEAM Very Good standard	Measure of overall sustainability of housing

Conservation Areas	Measure of built cultural / historic resource
Listed Buildings 'at risk'	Measure of condition of built cultural / historic resource
Historic parks and gardens	Measure of cultural / historic resource
Open/Green space per Capita	Measure of resource availability
Transport and Spatial Connectivity	
Travel to work – modal split	Measure of uptake of sustainable transport options
Average daily motor vehicle flows (thousand vehicle miles per day)	Measure of extent of non-sustainable transport use
Access to a post office / bank	Measure of accessibility of services
Access to food shops	Measure of accessibility of services
Access to a GP	Measure of accessibility of services
Access to green and open spaces	Measure of accessibility of services
Access for disabled people	Measure of accessibility of services
Access to local green space	Measure of accessibility of services
New retail floor space in town centres and out of town	Measure of accessibility of services
Number of residential developments with 20 minutes of key services	Measure of accessibility of services
% of households with access to one or more cars	Measure of extent of non-sustainable transport use
% population with access to 2ha + accessible wood within 500m (%extra with access if existing woods opened)	Measure of resource availability
% population with access to 20ha + accessible wood within 4km (%extra with access if existing woods opened)	Measure of resource availability

4.4 Key messages from the baseline review

- 4.4.1 Current status was judged against a target, where available, or by performance against the London or national average. Where sufficient data existed to suggest a trend the likely future status was derived, again in relation to a target, or the London or national average.
- 4.4.2 It should be noted that many of these indicators represent the performance of the District as a whole and can vary substantially in different parts of the District.
- 4.4.3 Generally speaking, contextual indicators have been regarded as 'unclassifiable' because their performance cannot be meaningfully judged.
- 4.4.4 Data gaps were identified for the following indicators:

- Public concern over noise
- Percentage of new build and retrofit homes meeting Eco Homes Very Good standard
- Percentage of commercial buildings meeting BREEAM Very Good standard
- Average daily motor vehicle flows (thousand vehicle miles per day)
- Number of residential developments with 20 minutes of key services
- Access to local green space
- Access for disabled people
- Access to green and open spaces
- Energy efficiency of housing stock (SAP rating)
- Energy generated from renewable sources
- Area of ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW)
- % Change in Population of Wild birds 1994-2004
- Extent of floodplain and number of developments permitted despite EA objections
- GDP £ per head (UK = 100)
- Unemployment amongst disabled people
- Number of households in fuel poverty

4.5 Future Trends under the ‘business-as-usual’ option

4.5.1 The SEA Directive requires plan or programme proponents to identify:

“The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme”

4.5.2 The baseline spreadsheet identifies, using available data, the current state of the District (in economic, social and environmental terms). The spreadsheet also includes trend data (where available) and the extrapolation of this data can provide clues as to the likely evolution of South Somerset in the absence of the new LDF and the policies and proposals it will include.

4.5.3 Predicting the nature of future trends is fraught with difficulty. These will depend on a wide range of factors including the global and national economic climate and decisions made at the national, regional and District level. Where there is sufficient data available to show a trend, it appears that the following trends are likely to continue:

4.5.4 Contextual indicators:

- The population of South Somerset is forecasted to rise, especially in the 65+age category. This is identified as caused mainly due to in-migration.
- Life expectancy is expected to rise, in line with the regional pattern.
- At the end of the current recession, house prices seem likely to continue to rise, in line with regional and national patterns.

4.5.5 Output Indicators:

- Resident satisfaction with their local area as a place to live is generally high in the district, much greater than the national picture. Lower satisfaction was identified relating to the provision of activities for young people and street cleaning.
- Generally rates for specific crimes are lower than regional and national figures and both burglaries and car crime have fallen in recent years.
- Overall total recorded crime rates are below regional and national levels, and have declined in recent years mirroring trends elsewhere.
- Unemployment is consistently below regional and national rates and there has been a net increase in new businesses in recent years.
- Manufacturing is declining and is set to continue to decline, there is a need for the employment sector to diversify.
- Homelessness in the district has reduced in recent years and should continue to reduce as affordable housing allocations are implemented.
- The working age population have higher than average NVQ qualifications, reflecting the professions of the residents.
- Qualifications for school children in the district are higher than national averages reflecting the future skills base for the districts employers.
- Development on Previously Developed Land (PDL) is meeting national and regional targets but this could potentially decline as available land is used up.
- Biodiversity and Nature Conservation trends are positive with the extent of land given to conservation increasing and future conditions set to improve.
- Household waste arisings are declining and set to continue to decline to meet national objectives.
- Recycling rates are improving and this trend is set to continue.
- Overcrowding in households has declined and is set to decline as availability of properties and conditions improve.
- The historic environment is identified as experiencing good protection and of high quality this trend is expected to continue.
- Accessibility to key services is an identified problem as looks likely to continue to be due to future development predictions.

Question 3: Do you agree that the baseline information collected is relevant, accurate and of sufficient detail? Do you know of any additional relevant baseline data, which should be added to the list?

Question 4: Do you agree with the trends identified, both current and for future trends (without the effects of the DPDs)?

Question 5: Are the targets and indicators used adequate to measure the achievement of the SA objectives and aid the collection of baseline data? Are there any additional indicators that should be included?

5 Sustainability Issues (Stage A3)

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The identification of key sustainability issues facing South Somerset provides an opportunity to define key issues for the LDF and to develop sustainable plan objectives and options for resolving these. The identification of sustainability issues can also provide useful information to inform the SA / SEA process.
- 5.1.2 In light of the SA requirement, economic and social as well as environmental issues should be identified.
- 5.1.3 The Guidance emphasises that any issues identified should, where possible, be supported by evidence in the form of baseline information.

5.2 Key Sustainability Issues

- 5.2.1 Table 6 lists the economic, social and environmental issues facing South Somerset, together with the implications or opportunities for the DPD and the data source.
- 5.2.2 The sustainability issues affecting South Somerset have been identified from:
- The analysis of the relevant plans, programmes and sustainability objectives (Section 3); and
 - The review of baseline data (Section 4).
- 5.2.3 The issues will be further informed by discussions with planning officers and through consultation with the Consultation Bodies and other key stakeholders.

Table 6: Relevant Issues and Implications for the DPDs

	Issue	Opportunity/Implication for the DPDs	Source
Env	South Somerset has 1 Air Quality Management Area (Yeovil) as required under the Environment Act 1995.	Any significant amount of development will create additional emissions. However, there are opportunities to create new developments that are carbon neutral and to create the associated infrastructure for transport, which could include encouraging alternatives to the motor vehicle.	SSDC
Env	South Somerset has as a resource of biodiversity areas, from local importance to proposed European important sites.	The DPD should include policies that offer protection to designated habitats and species and will do this using guidance from PPS9 and evidence from local Biodiversity Habitat and Species Plans. South Somerset, whilst having areas of biodiversity importance, may also have opportunities for eco-tourism, or bio-business. Consideration should be given to sustainable agriculture or other bio-business where possible. Developments should look for opportunities to enhance and protect these areas.	SSDC

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

Env	South Somerset has a good provision of local open spaces	The DPD provides the opportunity to provide new facilities and open space. Where recreational land and facilities are of poor quality or under-used, South Somerset should seek opportunities to improve the value of existing facilities. Also an opportunity to promote accessibility to these facilities for sustainable transport modes.	SSDC
Env	The number of agricultural holdings has increased between 2001 to 2003 but the total area has decreased. This is a trend illustrated across the region and nationally.	The DPD should ensure the preservation and protection of agricultural land as well as maintenance of the districts soils.	DEFRA
Env	Flood Risk is an issue for the district.	The DPD should contain policies for the location of development, which avoid flood risk to people and property. Ensure spatial planning supports flood risk management and emergency planning.	Environment Agency
Env	Chemical quality of the authorities rivers has declined over recent years, however the biological quality has shown improvement in recent years.	This issue needs to be incorporated into the DPDs through linking to land contamination and its remediation, and through management of surface water run-off.	Environment Agency
Env	The number of days of high/moderate air pollution exceeds the national levels. The CO2 emissions per capita compare favourably with national averages and targets.	A key challenge for the DPD is trying to lower emissions of substances through locational and, investment decisions that cause climate change. There are opportunities to embrace carbon neutral developments and alternative transport modes to the motor vehicle.	SSDC
Env	The energy efficiency of existing housing stock and the energy generated from renewable sources needs increasing at a local, national and regional scale.	The DPD should include policies requiring a percentage of the energy to be used in new developments to come from decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy sources.	SSDC
Env	South Somerset has a high quality built environment with more conservation areas than any other district in the county. It also has the second highest number of listed buildings in the county, 354 including 7 on the buildings at risk register.	The DPD can enable the protection of the historic environment, whether individual listed buildings, conservation areas, parks and gardens, battlefields through planning policies and development control. Economic prosperity can secure the use and maintenance of historic buildings.	SSDC
Env	Across the district household waste arisings have decreased over the past 3 years and levels of recycling of household waste have increased.	Waste planning is achieved at the county level; nonetheless SSDC should consider waste and ways of sustainably managing waste in their LDF under the parameters of sustainable development. The DPD should support the Local Waste Plan through encouraging recycling through development control policies.	DEFRA
Env	Transport and travel patterns reflect the rural nature of large parts of south Somerset and the lack of public transport outside urban areas.	The DPD provides an opportunity to integrate different types of transport to benefit the environment, health and wealth of the district.	SSDC

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

	Access to one or more car/van per household is above the national average		
	Achievement of the PDL targets (national and regional)	South Somerset is made up of a variety of areas types, industrial, urban and rural. There is the opportunity to develop a 'joined – up' approach to sustainable development within all these sectors. However, each sector will have its own set of constraints in terms of creating the most viable use of the land, all of which will need to be considered.	DCLG
	Pollution instances are not well documented however noise disturbance records numerous complaints.	Pollution impacts are a material planning consideration. The DPD should set out the criteria against which applications for potentially polluting developments will be considered. It should include development control policies to reflect the particular issue of noise pollution.	SSDC
Soc	Population projections estimate continued annual growth with rises estimated to be 161,000 at 2010, 166,700 at 2015, and 172,600 at 2020. Population growth is predicted to be a result of in-migration.	The DPDs needs to ensure that the increased demand for housing, infrastructure, and community facilities such as schools, healthcare and leisure facilities can be delivered in a sustainable manner.	ONS
Soc	SSDC is a rural authority, this is illustrated in its population density which is significantly lower than the national and regional averages.	The DPDs need to ensure that they deliver housing, infrastructure and community facilities which meet the needs of the population. It needs to recognise the pressure that intensification of use can bring on existing infrastructure, transportation, community and utility services that such intensification brings.	ONS
Soc	Household size in the district is growing at a faster rate than population, reflecting the national trend of decreasing household size.	The DPD needs to recognise the needs of the population whilst managing the national demands.	ONS
Soc	An aging population forecasted to grow significantly in the 65+ age group. This will have considerable effect on services and the local economy.	The DPD needs to deliver community facilities and services that meet the needs of an aging population.	ONS
Soc	There are pockets of deprivation across the District, largely in urban areas. The ranking of 240 on the indices of multiple deprivation puts South Somerset in the least deprived 35% of local authorities in the country. In 2001 the equivalent ranking was 230. In 2004, the Yeovil Central, East and West wards were in the top 20 most deprived wards in Somerset	The DPD needs to ensure that they deliver housing, infrastructure and community facilities which meet the needs of the population	ONS

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

Soc	Homelessness in the district has reduced over recent years following high levels between 2001 and 2003. However there is still homelessness within the district.	The LDF must develop strategies and targets aiming to maximise provision of affordable housing, reduce homelessness and develop the private sector.	ONS
Soc	Crime levels in all categories (violence, vehicular and burglary) is generally lower than regional and national figures and has fallen in recent years. Overall South Somerset is perceived as a safe place to live by its residents although resident safety is lower at night.	The development carried out in South Somerset must take crime factors into account and should be seen as an opportunity to create safer communities and reduce the fear of crime.	Audit Commission
Soc	South Somerset's school children show slightly higher levels of attainment at Key Stage 3 and at GCSEs than regional and national averages.	Proposed development through the LDF will need to consider its impact on the education requirements on current and future residents in order to ensure adequate quality and quantity of education for the District.	DfEE
Soc	Satisfaction with the district as a place to live is high.	Enhancing access to and enjoyment of the countryside can have significant benefits in terms of not only stimulating people's interest in the environment but also promoting healthy habits and fitness.	SSDC
Soc	Provision of affordable housing is a issue for the district	The DPD should set out a strategy for housing provision, including affordable housing.	SSDC
Econ	Average wages in the District are below regional and national rates and have not been growing at the same rate in recent years. Indeed, there was a slight decline in the last year.	The DPD should ensure that policies enable employment opportunities for all, that diversification of the districts economy is facilitated to meet the needs of the districts residents.	ONS
Econ	The employment structure of the district indicates a dependence upon manufacturing, this industry has experienced a decline over recent years. The number working in manufacturing is more than double the regional and national averages.	The DPD should ensure that policies enable employment opportunities for all, that diversification of the districts economy is facilitated to meet the needs of the districts residents.	ONS
Econ	In general terms, the District presents a picture of relative prosperity with a growing economy, unemployment is consistently below regional and national rates and there has been a net increase in new businesses in recent years.	The Core Strategy DPD as a spatial strategy can promote mixed economic development, which would help alleviate economic and social deprivation in areas of need. Increasing investment in infrastructure and regeneration into key villages, towns and market towns is vital to sustain settlements in the long term. The development of the District's transport networks is likely to have a beneficial impact on the economy.	SSDC

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

Econ	The percentage of economically active people of working age has declined over the past three years. This is however a trend illustrated at a regional and national level.	The DPD should ensure that policies enable employment opportunities for all, that diversification of the districts economy is facilitated to meet the needs of the districts residents.	ONS
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Question 6: Do you agree with the list of sustainability issues affecting the District listed at Table 7? Are there any other sustainability issues that should be considered?

6 SA Framework (Stage A4)

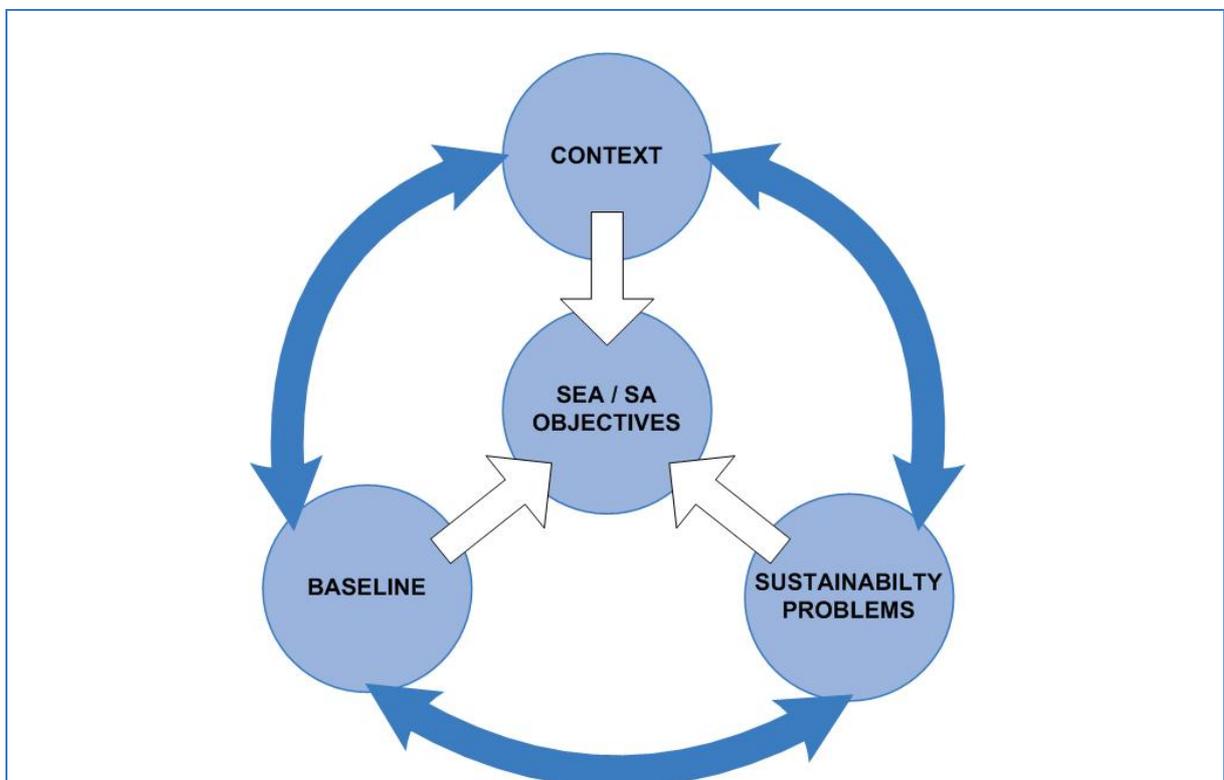
6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 SA is fundamentally based on an objectives-led approach whereby the potential impacts of a plan are gauged in relation to a series of aspirational objectives for sustainable development. In other words, the objectives provide a methodological yardstick against which to assess the effects of the plan. The SA Framework – as the Guidance refers to it – consists of objectives and associated targets (where these exist) as well as indicators (see Section 3).
- 6.1.2 It should be noted that the SA Objectives are distinct from the LDF objectives though they may in some cases overlap with them. SA objectives should focus on outcomes (or ends), not on how the outcomes will be achieved (inputs or means), as LDF objectives will often tend to do. They are an assessment tool, that when taken as a whole, defines the basis for sustainable development in South Somerset, balancing economic, social and environmental needs.

6.2 Developing SA Objectives

- 6.2.1 SA objectives take into account the messages emerging from stages A1, A2 and A3 in the SA / SEA process (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Establishing the SA objectives



South Somerset District CouncilSustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

- 6.2.2 The SA objectives, for the Core Strategy (including core development management policies) DPD, were devised using the criteria for environmental appraisal under the SEA Directive, PPS1, the UK Sustainable Development Strategy (2005), the objectives of the South West Regional Spatial Strategy (draft) and the objectives of the Community Plan, which sets out the aims and aspirations of the community for the District as a whole. This provided the broad scope of the SA objectives. The sustainability issues identified for the District of relevance to the DPDs (Section 3), and the sustainability objectives of the other relevant plans and programmes (Section 2), were used to refine the SA objectives, making them more applicable to the emerging DPDs. This process is shown in Table 8, the SA Framework.
- 6.2.3 SA objectives are distinct from the objectives of the DPD. Good practice suggests that the number of SA objectives should be limited to between 12 and 25, to ensure that they do not make the SA process unmanageable. For this reason, the initial list of possible objectives has been limited to 21 SA objectives. However, further revision may be required following consultation on this Scoping Report or as further sustainability issues are identified or baseline information is collected. The proposed SA objectives in this Scoping Report will, once agreed upon, be the tool used to appraise the likely effects of the emerging policies and proposals of the Core Strategy (DPD).

Table 7: Developing the SA Objectives

SEA Directive	UK Sustainable Development Strategy	SW RSS/ Somerset Structure Plan	Other Plans and Programmes	Key Sustainability Issues for South Somerset	Proposed SA Objectives
SOCIAL					
Population,	<p>Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society Meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal wellbeing, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunity for all.</p>	Support communities that meet people's needs (SWRSS)	PPS3, Sustainable Communities Plan, PPS1, South Somerset Together (Community Strategy)	<p>Population projections estimate continued annual growth with rises estimated to be 161,000 at 2010, 166,700 at 2015, and 172,600 at 2020. Population growth is predicted to be a result of in-migration.</p> <p>An aging population forecasted to grow significantly in the 65+ age group.</p> <p>There are pockets of deprivation across the District, largely in urban areas</p> <p>Higher than average life expectancy for both males and females and a lower than average premature death rate</p>	<p>To meet the challenge of a growing and aging population.</p> <p>To reduce poverty and social exclusion</p>

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

SEA Directive	UK Sustainable Development Strategy	SW RSS/ Somerset Structure Plan	Other Plans and Programmes	Key Sustainability Issues for South Somerset	Proposed SA Objectives
Housing		Provide affordable housing to all, which is adaptable to future needs, reflects local distinctiveness and meets the needs of the community	PPS1, PPS3, Meeting Part M and Designing Lifetime Homes, South Somerset Together (Community Strategy), South Somerset Housing Needs Study, South Somerset Housing and Accommodation Strategy, South Somerset Strategic Housing Market Assessment	Household size in the district is growing at a faster rate than population, reflecting the national trend of decreasing household size. Homelessness in the district has reduced over recent years, however it is still an issue.	To provide affordable and decent housing adaptable to future needs of the community

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

SEA Directive	UK Sustainable Development Strategy	SW RSS/ Somerset Structure Plan	Other Plans and Programmes	Key Sustainability Issues for South Somerset	Proposed SA Objectives
Human Health		<p>Improve Health (SWRSS)</p> <p>To improve the health and well-being of the population of the SW</p> <p>To reduce the inequalities in health between the least and most advantaged people and communities in the region by improving the health of the least healthy people</p> <p>To improve the key determinants of health such as reducing poverty and unemployment</p>	<p>PPS1, South Somerset Together (Community Strategy), South Somerset PCT Patient and Public Involvement Strategy</p>	<p>There are pockets of deprivation in the district.</p>	<p>To improve the health and well being of the community including enhanced access to health care facilities.</p>

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

SEA Directive	UK Sustainable Development Strategy	SW RSS/ Somerset Structure Plan	Other Plans and Programmes	Key Sustainability Issues for South Somerset	Proposed SA Objectives
		<p>Lifelong learning will support sustainable communities</p> <p>Learning organisations will set an example as businesses, in establishing sustainable policies and practices</p> <p>Learning gains commitment to sustainability and trains in sustainability skills</p>	<p>PPS1, South Somerset Together (Community Strategy), Somerset Education Development Plan</p>	<p>South Somerset's school children show slightly higher levels of attainment at Key Stage 3 and at GCSEs than regional and national averages.</p>	<p>To improve the education and skills of the population. Through lifelong learning.</p>
<p>Crime and Safety</p>		<p>Provide a safe environment in which people feel secure</p>	<p>Somerset Crime Reduction and Drugs Strategy, South Somerset Together (Community Strategy)</p>	<p>Crime levels in all categories (violence, vehicular and burglary) are generally lower than regional and national figures and have fallen in recent years.</p>	<p>To reduce crime and anti social behaviour and the fear of these.</p>

SEA Directive	UK Sustainable Development Strategy	SW RSS/ Somerset Structure Plan	Other Plans and Programmes	Key Sustainability Issues for South Somerset	Proposed SA Objectives
ENVIRONMENTAL					
<p>Biodiversity (including flora and fauna)</p>	<p>Living Within Environmental Limits Respecting the limits of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity – to improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations.</p>	<p>Protect and enhance habitats and species</p> <p>Promote biodiversity as a regional asset</p> <p>Food & farming: Promote high quality local food and drink Improve the viability of mixed family-run farms</p> <p>Raise the skills and aspirations of the farming and food workforce</p> <p>Reconnect farmers and food producers with local communities</p> <p>Enhance the quality of farmland landscapes and habitats</p> <p>Maintain and improve environmental quality and assets (SWRSS)</p>	<p>UK Biodiversity Action Plan, PPS1, PPS9, PPG17, SW BAP, A Strategy for Nature Conservation in South Somerset, South Somerset Together (Community Strategy), South Somerset Local BAP</p>	<p>The number of agricultural holdings has increased between 2001 to 2003 but the total area has decreased.</p> <p>South Somerset has parts of three AONBs: Blackdown Hills AONB; Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire AONB; Dorset AONB; and 39 SSSIs including parts of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site, and Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area (SPA).</p> <p>It also contains 3 nationally designated nature reserves, 4 local nature reserves and 2 country parks.</p>	<p>To conserve and enhance biodiversity and the natural environment.</p>

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

SEA Directive	UK Sustainable Development Strategy	SW RSS/ Somerset Structure Plan	Other Plans and Programmes	Key Sustainability Issues for South Somerset	Proposed SA Objectives
Cultural Heritage,		<p>Cultural heritage: Encourage increased access to, and participation in, cultural activities across the SW, capitalising on the latest developments in ICT</p> <p>Ensure the SW remains a region of diverse and distinct cultural landscapes and townscape. Endow the region's creative capabilities and maximise their social and economic benefit.</p>	PPS1, PPS6, PPG13, PPG15, Sustainable Communities Plan, South Somerset Together (Community Strategy), celebrating Somerset's Culture: Somerset Cultural Strategy	South Somerset has a high quality built environment with more conservation areas than any other district in the county. It also has the second highest number of listed buildings in the county, 354 including 7 on the buildings at risk register.	To reinforce local distinctiveness, local environmental quality and amenity through the conservation and enhancement of the built and cultural heritage.

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

SEA Directive	UK Sustainable Development Strategy	SW RSS/ Somerset Structure Plan	Other Plans and Programmes	Key Sustainability Issues for South Somerset	Proposed SA Objectives
Climate		<p>To minimise greenhouse gas emissions and respond to the risks, challenges and opportunities presented by climate change.</p> <p>Promote efficient use of affordable energy whilst reducing energy demand</p> <p>Increase role of renewable energy and Combined Heat and Power (CHP) whilst reducing the adverse environmental impacts of all forms of energy production</p> <p>Reduce risk to society and the environment from climate change and sea level rise</p>	<p>PPS1, PPS: Planning and Climate Change, PPS23, PPS22, PPG24, PPS25, Sustainable Communities Plan, Regional renewable energy strategy, Somerset CC renewable energy Strategy, South Somerset Together (Community Strategy)</p>	<p>Improve the energy efficiency of existing housing stock and the energy generated from decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy sources.</p>	<p>To implement strategies that help mitigate global warming and adapt to unavoidable climate change within the district.</p> <p>To encourage sustainable construction materials and methods.</p> <p>To minimise the need for energy, increase energy efficiency and to increase the use of renewable energy.</p>

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

SEA Directive	UK Sustainable Development Strategy	SW RSS/ Somerset Structure Plan	Other Plans and Programmes	Key Sustainability Issues for South Somerset	Proposed SA Objectives
Air		<p>To ensure that our natural resources are used sustainably, with minimum environmental damage and waste generation, so as to reduce pollution and protect the quality of the region's environment.</p> <p>Reduce pollution and improve water, land and air quality</p> <p>Ensure water, land, minerals, soils, forestry and other natural resources are used efficiently and with least environmental damage Minimise consumption of natural resources (SWRSS)</p>	<p>PPS1, PPS23, PPS22, PPG24, PPS25, Sustainable Communities Plan, South Somerset Together (Community Strategy), Yeovil Air Quality Action Plan</p>	<p>The number of days of high/ moderate air pollution exceeds the national levels. The CO2 emissions per capita compare favourably with national averages and targets.</p>	<p>To improve air quality.</p>

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

SEA Directive	UK Sustainable Development Strategy	SW RSS/ Somerset Structure Plan	Other Plans and Programmes	Key Sustainability Issues for South Somerset	Proposed SA Objectives
Waste		Promote wise use of waste resources whilst reducing waste production and disposal	PPS10, Somerset Waste Local Plan	Across the district household waste arisings has decreased over the past 3 years and levels of recycling of household waste have increased.	To promote sustainable waste management through waste minimisation, maximisation of recycled and reused material and seek to recover energy from waste material.
Water		Minimise the risk of flooding to people and places	PPS23, PPS25	<p>In the south west region 100,000 properties are at risk of flooding.</p> <p>A proportion of the district is at risk of flooding.</p> <p>Water/ river quality – chemical quality of the authorities rivers has declined over recent years, however the biological quality has shown improvement in recent years.</p>	<p>To manage and reduce the risk of flooding.</p> <p>To maintain and enhance water quality (ground and surface) and make efficient use of water.</p>

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

SEA Directive	UK Sustainable Development Strategy	SW RSS/ Somerset Structure Plan	Other Plans and Programmes	Key Sustainability Issues for South Somerset	Proposed SA Objectives
Soil			PPS23, South Somerset Contaminated land strategy	<p>Agricultural land holdings are decreasing in number.</p> <p>PDL completions are above national and regional averages.</p> <p>There are a number of recorded contaminated land sites in the district.</p>	To protect and enhance soil quality and reduce land contamination.
Landscape		<p>Protect and enhance the region's urban and rural landscapes</p> <p>To provide access to meet people's needs with least damage to communities and the environment.</p>	PPS7, South Somerset Together (Community Strategy), The Landscape of South Somerset,		To protect and enhance the valued landscape and townscape of South Somerset.

SEA Directive	UK Sustainable Development Strategy	SW RSS/ Somerset Structure Plan	Other Plans and Programmes	Key Sustainability Issues for South Somerset	Proposed SA Objectives
ECONOMIC					
Economy	<p>Achieving a Sustainable Economy Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy which provides prosperity and opportunities for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them (polluter pays), and efficient resource use is incentivised.</p>	<p>Economic development: Increase the circulation of wealth within the region. Develop greater integration within key economic sectors Ensure necessary infrastructure to support a more sustainable economy. Encourage community involvement in local economies. Develop the economy in ways that meet people's needs (SWRSS) Tourism: To promote a tourism and leisure industry that conserves and enhances the environment and recognises the region's distinctiveness.</p>	PPS1, PPG4, Draft PPS4, PPS6, Sustainable Communities Plan, Regional Economic Development Strategy for the SW, South Somerset Together (Community Strategy)	<p>Average wages in the District are below regional and national rates and have not been growing at the same rate in recent years The percentage of economically active people of working age has declined over the past three years.</p>	<p>To support a strong, diverse, vibrant and sustainable local economy to foster balanced economic growth. To foster a strong tourism industry which is socially and environmentally responsible.</p>

South Somerset District Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Somerset Local Development Framework

SEA Directive	UK Sustainable Development Strategy	SW RSS/ Somerset Structure Plan	Other Plans and Programmes	Key Sustainability Issues for South Somerset	Proposed SA Objectives
Employment		<p>Business & work:</p> <p>Ensure all people have quality work opportunities both paid and unpaid Create more businesses and encourage existing ones to grow</p> <p>Reduce the incidence of unemployment, low pay and tackle income inequality across the region Increase the number of social economy businesses</p>	PPG4, Draft PPS4, PPS6, Sustainable Communities Plan, Regional Economic Development Strategy for the SW, South Somerset Together (Community Strategy), South Somerset tourism strategy	<p>The employment structure of the district indicates a dependence upon manufacturing, this industry has experienced a decline over recent years. The number working in manufacturing is more than double the regional and national averages.</p> <p>The South Somerset working age population show a lower than average proportion achieving a first degree level but a higher the national average proportion achieving a NVQ level 3.</p>	To provide jobs for all with a diverse range of employment opportunities.
Transport & accessibility			PPG13, Somerset Local Transport Plan, Somerset LTP2, Somerset Cycling Strategy	Transport and travel patterns reflect the rural nature of large parts of south Somerset and the lack of public transport outside urban areas.	To promote traffic reduction and encourage more sustainable alternative forms of transport.

Question 7: Should any SA objectives be added, removed or revised, bearing in mind the need to keep the number of objectives manageable?

7 Next Steps

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 This report is a working draft that documents the findings from Stage A and discusses what happens next. It is being sent to the three SEA consultation bodies – Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency – and other key stakeholders for consultation.

7.1.2 The SA Guidance states that stakeholder consultation at Stage A is particularly important:

“Consultation at this stage helps to ensure that the SA will be comprehensive and robust enough to support the DPD during the later stages of full public consultation and examination”. In particular, the Guidance suggests, “Sustainability objectives and indicators and targets should be developed with input from key stakeholders and ideally should be open to wider comment and discussion”.

7.2 Next Steps

7.2.1 Following statutory consultation, Stage B in the SA process involves assessing the various options put forward against the SA objectives. In addition, Stage B will include:

- Testing the plan objectives against the SA Framework
- Developing and refining options
- Predicting and assessing effects
- Identification of mitigation measures
- Developing monitoring proposals
- Reporting the conclusions in a Sustainability Appraisal Report

7.2.2 This assessment will be undertaken on the basis of professional judgement and will be informed by evidence obtained from the context review, the collection of baseline information and the identification of sustainability problems. Geographical Information Systems (GIS) will be used where appropriate in the assessment process.

7.3 Sustainability Appraisal Reports

7.3.1 Sustainability Appraisal Reports will be produced for each LDD to record the findings of the SA. They will comprise the following sections:

- Summary and outcomes
- Background
- Appraisal Methodology
- Sustainability objectives, baseline and context
- Plan issues and options
- Plan policies
- Implementation

7.3.2 The level of detail of the reports cannot at this stage be determined, as it will depend on the nature of options assessed. However the reports will consider:

- Probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects
- Cumulative nature of the effects
- Trans-boundary nature of the effects
- Risks to human health or the environment
- Magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)
- Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; intensive land-use; or effects on areas having a recognised national, Community or international protection status

8 Further Information

- 8.1.1 Further information on the LDF preparation process and the SA / SEA process can be obtained from:

Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) - Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements/planningpolicystatements/pps12>

- 8.1.2 The following website provides more general information on SA and SEA:

Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) – Introduction to SEA, SEA regulations, SEA guidance

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/sustainabilityenvironmental/>

- 8.1.3 For further information on the South Somerset LDF and consultation process, please refer to the following documents:

- South Somerset Local Development Scheme

Appendix 1 – Scoping Report Consultation

The Scoping Report was subject to a statutory five week consultation period from Wednesday 29 April to Wednesday 3 June 2009. The following table sets out the consultation comments received, and the Council’s response. These comments will be used to inform the Sustainability Appraisal report that will be produced alongside local development documents, initially the core strategy.

Consultation comments – English Heritage	Council’s response
As the process proceeds, we will be looking for evidence that the SEA/SA process informs development of the strategy, fully justifies the case for any damage to the historic environment, and ensures appropriate mitigation and enhancement is provided.	Noted.
The historic environment should be given equal weight as is given to other environmental considerations, particularly the natural environment. Indeed some aspects of the historic environment are also important components of the natural environment e.g. historic parks and gardens, ancient woodland and other landscape/archaeological features.	Agree that the historic environment is a key element of the wider environment – a specific objective on the historic environment has been added.
Welcome the issue of Cultural Heritage including archaeology as a separate item within the scoping report. The historic environment should be treated as an holistic entity with all aspects of heritage and historic assets considered.	Noted.
Baseline data collection and indicators: this must be considered in order to establish the current status of the historic environment and assess any potential impacts. The main data sets can be accessed via the Historic Environment Records held by Somerset County Council. Key aspects include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All designated historic assets, including Historic Parks and Gardens, Battlefields; • Non designated features of local historic interest; • The character of the wider landscape and townscape; • The potential for as yet unrecorded archaeological interest. 	Accept that these aspects of the historic environment should be considered, and the data sets should be used to inform the Sustainability Appraisal.
The landscape section includes a section on historic landscape character assessment that is welcomed by English Heritage.	Support noted.
Some additional issues to consider in the sections on Environmental and Sustainability Problems and Proposed SA/SEA Objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reusing the historic environment, particularly buildings, lies at the heart of creating sustainable communities; • The historic environment adds value to regeneration projects and is a proven source of employment and helps underpin the local economy; 	These are all useful contextual considerations outlining the benefits of the historic environment – accordingly, the proposed SA objective has been amended to explicitly refer to the historic environment: “Conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment”.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An attractive environment can assist in attracting external investment as well as maintaining existing businesses; • Heritage is a fundamental element that contributes towards local character and distinctiveness; • The historic environment is a powerful focus for community action; • A renewed focus on the historic environment can increase community cohesion and greater social inclusion; • The historic environment is a local educational resource; • Local environments that are understood and valued tend to be better looked after. 	
<p>Section 2.2.16 on the Historic Environment is very short and lacking information. It fails to mention any Scheduled Ancient Monuments or sites of local archaeological interest.</p>	<p>Accept that more contextual information should be provided regarding the historic environment in South Somerset – an indicator on loss or damage to Scheduled Ancient Monuments has been added.</p>
<p>There is a general lack of archaeology being mentioned after page 3 e.g. Table 6: archaeology is absent.</p>	<p>The historic environment in general is considered in Table 6, although it is accepted that reference to archaeology specifically should be incorporated – an indicator on loss or damage to Scheduled Ancient Monuments has been added.</p>
<p>Table 4: lack of reference to PPS1 as evidence source for good design under ensuring higher quality public realm.</p>	<p>Agree that PPS1 should be included here.</p>

Consultation comments - Natural England	Response
<p>Natural England is here to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the well being and enjoyment of people, and the economic prosperity it brings.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Qu. 1: As far as we are aware there are no further plans, programmes strategies for consideration that may affect the emerging core strategy or the development of the SA.</p>	<p>Agreement noted.</p>
<p>Qu. 2 - To emphasize key messages: The Environment: NE supports the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity and we would want areas that are suitable for creation of new priority habitats to be identified. We support the protection of landscapes in the areas of outstanding natural beauty in South Somerset although all landscapes are important to people and biodiversity. Housing: Natural England supports the delivery of accessible quality greenspace for all housing development schemes. The developments should be well designed to contribute to local landscape character. Health: There isn't a key message on Human Health.</p>	<p>The biodiversity and geodiversity comments reflect Government policy in PPS9. Agree that all landscapes are important, so delete “valued” from landscape objective. The RSS includes the South West Nature Map, which identifies areas with potential for habitat creation on a landscape-scale that will be used to inform the Sustainability Appraisal.</p> <p>Agree with the point on housing.</p> <p>Consider that human health is implicit within the key messages: “maximise opportunities to improve recreational and sporting facilities and raise awareness of the importance of sport/active lifestyles” and “Improve access to jobs, services, social areas etc. by modes other than the private car</p>

	(improve transport choice)".
Qu. 3: agree with the baseline information collected.	Support noted.
Qu. 4: agree with the trends but note there is not a trend on health. NE supports the National Health Service by encouraging healthy exercise routines through walking your way to health regime.	Partially agree – there is a trend relating to life expectancy, but other trends relating to health could potentially be incorporated such as levels of activity and obesity.
Qu. 5: the targets and indicators are adequate to measure the achievement of the SA objectives. Add a human health indicator?	Table 5 includes two health measures (conceptions among teenage girls and fertility rate), but agree other indicator added: "number of Super Output Areas (SOAs) within the 10% most deprived SOAs in Somerset for health and disability (IMD)".
Qu. 6: agree with the sustainability issues raised.	Support noted.
Qu. 7: agree that the SA objectives provide an appropriate framework for the SA of the Core Strategy DPD.	Support noted.

Consultation comments – Environment Agency	Response
<p>Qu. 1. The following plans and strategies should be considered as part of preparation of the Core Strategy / SA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Somerset Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1; • Catchment Flood Management Plans; • Water Framework Directive: a consultation on the Draft River Basin Management Plan South West River Basin District (December 2008); • Future water: the government's water strategy for England (February 2008); • Water Resources Strategy for England and Wales – Water for People and the Environment (March 2008); • Water company draft Water Resource Management Plans (2008); • Pitt Review. 	<p>Agree that these plans and strategies should be included as relevant in considering flooding and water resources in the Sustainability Appraisal.</p>
<p>Qu. 2. The plan should incorporate and promote Green Infrastructure. Managing the risk of flooding key message should be linked to South Somerset's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1.</p>	<p>Agree that Green Infrastructure should be promoted – this has been incorporated into the Sustainability Appraisal Framework. Agree that the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment should be added as an evidence source.</p>
<p>Qu. 3. The baseline information section highlights relevant data sources, and the Environment Agency can provide baseline data. Details of this can be on our website.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Qu. 4. Climate Change trends should be included within this section. The government indicates that the main trends for the UK are likely to be hotter, drier summers and warmer wetter winters, with more extreme events such as floods, drought and sea level rise. Therefore environmental conditions will change and development will need to mitigate for the / their impact through the DPD policies.</p>	<p>Agree that climate change trends should be incorporated – the recently published UK Climate Projections 2009 provides the most up to date trend data and will inform the Sustainability Appraisal. Climate change is covered in the SA Objective "reduce contribution to climate change and vulnerability to its effects".</p>
<p>Qu. 5. We would recommend that the following baseline indicators should be considered for inclusion within the SA:</p>	<p>Useful recommendations that will be included in the Sustainability Appraisal framework as appropriate.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area of green infrastructure created; • No. of planning applications/residential units refused on flood risk grounds; • No. / area of developments incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems; • No. of houses meeting Code for Sustainable Homes (rating 3 and above); • No. of residential units incorporating water efficiency measures. 	
<p>Qu. 6. Consideration must be given expansion of the biodiversity issue or creation of a new issue to promote Green Infrastructure. Green infrastructure could provide significant opportunities within your district. Flood risk is highlighted as an issue for the district and it states that the Environment Agency will be the source for this topic. However, we wish to highlight that this should also include your Authority as you have produced the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1.</p>	<p>Agree that Green Infrastructure should be explicitly considered – the SA Framework now includes reference to promotion of Green Infrastructure. Agree that the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is a key information source for flood risk.</p>
<p>Qu. 7. We can confirm that the SA objectives provide an appropriate framework for the Core Strategy. Our recommended alteration and additions to the SA objectives are in italics below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity and / or Water: <i>To conserve and enhance green infrastructure.</i> • Water: <i>To manage and reduce the risk of flooding to people, property and the environment.</i> • Water: <i>To meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.</i> 	<p>Green Infrastructure has been incorporated as sub-questions within the SA Framework, although not as a specific objective as it will be implicit within other objectives (e.g. biodiversity, landscape, health and well being, climate change adaptation) – SA objectives should focus on the outcomes, not how they will be achieved. The expanded suggested amendment to the flooding objective has been incorporated as a sub-question. The additional objective concerning the Water Framework Directive is implicit within the objective that seeks to improve and maintain water quality; and has not been added in order to keep the number of objectives to a manageable number.</p>

Consultation comments – The Highways Agency	Response
<p>Context: Any proposed development within South Somerset should take account of the potential impact on the Strategic Road Network. The Agency is primarily interested in the M5 and the A303, a section of which runs west to east through the district. The Strategy should take into account the need for greater integration between transport and land use planning with a focus on sustainable transport.</p>	<p>Noted and agreed.</p>
<p>Spatial Portrait: Current travel patterns throughout South Somerset are reflective of the rural nature of large parts of the district and the notable lack of public transport outside the urban areas. Therefore, the Agency supports any strategies and policies that seek to increase both the provision and use of public transport and other sustainable modes of travel.</p>	<p>Noted and agreed.</p>
<p>Table 3 – include reference to the following policy and guidance documents: DfT Circular 02/2007 <i>Planning and the Strategic Road Network</i>; DfT <i>Guidance on Transport Assessment</i>; PPS12 <i>Local</i></p>	<p>PPS12 is already included in Table 3. Agree that the other suggested documents should also be considered.</p>

<i>Spatial Planning; and Delivering a Sustainable Transport System, DfT Nov 2008.</i>	
Key Messages: Support the need to provide additional accommodation for gypsy and travellers. Support improving access to jobs, services, social areas etc by modes other than the private car and reducing congestion and pollution.	Support noted.
Sustainability issues and objectives: Table 7 – the objective for transport and accessibility should promote sustainable patterns of development, which integrate residential areas with employment, education and service opportunities to increase the opportunity for internalised trips and increase the viability of sustainable modes of transport.	Sustainability Appraisal objectives should focus on outcomes, not how they will be achieved, therefore the suggestions are incorporated within the sub-questions to the transport objective, rather than amendments to the objective itself.
The 2008 Regional Network Report identifies stress levels of 130% by 2026 for the A303 west and north of Yeovil; the Agency wishes to be consulted on any emerging development that is likely to compound these stress levels.	Noted; significant development will take place in and around Yeovil up to 2026 and therefore stress levels on the A303 are likely to be compounded – further discussion with the Highways Agency required.
Henstridge Airfield (major employment site near South Somerset/North Dorset border) is an area of concern that has been highlighted in recent LDF responses to North Dorset.	Noted.
In summary, the Agency supports the publication of an updated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, taking into account changes in relevant legislation and Government guidance, and agrees that the content is a positive approach to assist in DPD preparation.	Support noted.

Consultation comments – South Somerset District Council’s Environmental Protection Team	Response
Table 3: include the adopted County Wide Air Quality Strategy.	This is a relevant strategy that should be added to the ‘environment’ section.
Table 4: disagree with wording of para on air quality – most of SSDC air quality is very good, only hot spots in Yeovil that have lead to the declaration of the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). Amend to “air quality in parts of Yeovil needs to be improved”.	Agree with the proposed amendment.
Table 4, evidence source column: amend to read “South Somerset Air Quality Action Plan” and include Air Quality strategy also.	Agree with the proposed amendment.
Page 24 and 42, indicator for air quality: this is not a very good indicator for local air quality. Air quality indicators are notoriously difficult as air quality varies so much across the district; it is meaningless to give a one figure summary. Also exceedences in South Somerset relate to ozone which is controlled nationally, not locally. The AQMA was declared for nitrogen dioxide, so the indicator does not relate to the AQMA.	Accept that deriving air quality indicators is difficult due to the focussed nature of the issue in South Somerset. Indicators are therefore amended to “Number and extent of Air Quality Management Areas (SSDC); Number of days of air pollution – exceeding 40µg/m ³ in Yeovil AQMA (SSDC).”
Suggest using baseline data set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy: “Nitrogen Dioxide	Number of days of air pollution – exceeding 40µg/m ³ in Yeovil AQMA (SSDC) included as an indicator.

is 40.7 µg/m³ at monitoring location Yeo 502; District target is maintaining at or below 40 µg/m³ by 2011". Otherwise the other thing we suggested was to use the number of diffusion tubes within the AQMA that exceed 40µg/m³. Diffusion tubes are put out around Yeovil at key points to measure NO2.	
Page 30, pollution instances line: should we include other nuisance as well as noise? Should the noise contours around Yeovilton, Merryfield and Westlands be specifically mentioned?	Agree; other types of pollution have been incorporated into the objective "Minimise pollution (including air, water, land, light, noise) and waste production". Therefore, propose a generic objective to minimise all aspects of pollution. Yeovilton, Merryfield and Westlands can be mentioned within the SA Report as areas where noise is a particular issue.
Page 42: in the last two columns there is no reference to other pollution issues, although it is in column 3. Suggest objective "mitigate against the impact of potentially polluting development, particularly noise" which would tie in with the wording in table 3, pg 30.	Agree; other types of pollution have been incorporated into the objective "Minimise pollution (including air, water, land, light, noise) and waste production".
Page 42: proposed SA objectives column could cross-reference an objective from Air Quality Strategy by adding "and maintain good air quality where it exists".	Maintaining air quality has been added as a sub-question to the relevant objective.
Page 42, air quality: the number of days did not exceed national levels last year.	Agree with the proposed amendment.
Page 44: amend the row on soil to read "...recorded potentially contaminated sites..." as there are no sites yet declared contaminated, but many potentially contaminated.	Agree with the proposed amendment.

Consultation comments - Wessex Water	Response
Qu. 1: PPS23 and PPS25 appear appropriate when related to water and waste functions, including for foul and surface water disposal.	Noted.
<p>Qu. 2 - Key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These policies will allow the Council and Wessex Water to develop and agree site specific drainage strategies for Foul and Surface Water disposal; • Surface Water Management Plans will identify high risk areas vulnerable to flooding and inform development planning; • The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems will assist in managing catchment flood risk; • Climate change will affect rainfall patterns, flood forecasting and design standards; • No development proposals within Sewage Treatment Works buffer zones should be considered without a risk of assessment of odour nuisance and poor air quality; • Water resources are considered with long term planning and Wessex Water has prepared a 25 year plan for OFWAT; • Wessex Water is willing to participate in any 	Comments are noted. The consultation draft Floods and Water Bill outlines that county councils will be responsible for producing Surface Water Management Plans, in liaison with district councils and other relevant stakeholders.

appraisal work required for development proposals.	
Qu. 3: the information provided appears relevant and no further data relating to water and waste services appears necessary.	Support noted.
Qu. 4: declining household trends are noted and are considered when capacity planning is carried out for future demand.	Noted.
Qu. 5: the targets and indicators appear to satisfy the objectives of the Sustainability Appraisal and no additional indicators are considered necessary.	Support noted.
Qu. 6: the list of sustainability issues reflects water quality and flooding issues and no further issues appear to be necessary.	Support noted.

Consultation comments – Devon County Council	Response
No particular comments to make at this stage as the document appears to cover all of the key requirements, and is suitably compact whilst covering the proper points. A comparison with Torbay’s SA Scoping Report (also currently out for consultation) outlined that the same issues were addressed in different but similar ways.	Noted.

South West Regional Assembly:

Consultation noted, will endeavour to respond if deemed appropriate – *no response subsequently received.*

List of bodies consulted on the SA Scoping Report:

Statutory environmental consultation bodies

- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- English Heritage

National/Regional/Local government (neighbouring authorities)

- Government Office for the South West
- South West Regional Assembly
- Somerset County Council
- Dorset County Council
- Mendip District Council
- Taunton Deane Borough Council
- Sedgemoor District Council
- Wiltshire Council
- North Dorset District Council
- West Dorset District Council
- East Devon District Council
- Devon County Council

Other outside bodies

- South West Regional Development Agency
- Somerset Wildlife Trust
- Somerset Environmental Records Centre
- RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds)
- Campaign to Protect Rural England (Somerset branch)
- Community Council for Somerset
- Somerset Chamber of Commerce

- Wessex Water PLC
- South West Water
- Highways Agency

Internal bodies – for information

- Human Resources & Performance (for audit and performance re: information / indicators)
- Environmental Health, Strategic Housing and Environment (for pollution, housing & waste)
- Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Planning and Transport
- Director (Economic Vitality)
- Head of Building and Development Control.

Appendix 2 – Sustainability Appraisal framework

The Sustainability Appraisal framework comprises the SA objectives and indicators. Following consultation (see Appendix 1), and a review of further guidance⁴ published since the original Scoping Report, the SA objectives and indicators have been amended. The table below sets out the SA framework that will be used in the appraisal of local development documents, followed by the appraisal template and scoring system that will be applied.

SA Objective	Questions: will the policy / proposal / strategy help to...?	Indicators (source)
1. Improve access to essential services and facilities	<p>...ensure high levels of accessibility to shops, schools, health/leisure facilities and other key services by walking, cycling, and public transport?</p> <p>...reduce social exclusion?</p>	<p>Number of Super Output Areas (SOAs) in South Somerset where 'Road distance to GPs, Hospitals, Primary Schools and Post Offices' is in worst 20% nationally (Indices of Multiple Deprivation);</p> <p>Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling (% of parishes covered by Demand Responsive Transport) (LAA NI 175).</p>
2. Reduce poverty and social exclusion	<p>...benefit particularly deprived areas?</p> <p>...encourage active involvement of local people in community activities?</p> <p>...maximise opportunities for all members of society?</p> <p>...maximise opportunities within the most deprived areas?</p> <p>...reduce fuel poverty?</p>	<p>Number of SOAs in South Somerset which are within the 20% most deprived nationally – overall weighted score (IMD);</p> <p>Number of SOAs in South Somerset that rank within the most deprived 20% nationally for income (IMD);</p> <p>Tackling fuel poverty - people receiving income based benefits living in homes with low energy efficiency rating (LA NI 187);</p> <p>% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area (LAA NI 1);</p> <p>Number of benefit recipients (Nomis).</p>
3. Provide sufficient housing to meet identified needs of the community	<p>...increase the range, quality and affordability of housing for all social groups?</p> <p>...reduce homelessness?</p>	<p>Net additional homes provided (LAA NI 154);</p> <p>Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (LAA NI 155);</p> <p>House price to income ratio (Land Registry);</p> <p>Number of homeless in the district (SSDC);</p> <p>Provision of gypsy and traveller sites in relation to identified need (SSDC).</p>
4. Improve health and well being	<p>...improve access to high quality health facilities?</p>	<p>Number of SOAs in South Somerset where 'Road distance</p>

⁴ Local Development Frameworks: Guidance on Sustainability Appraisal, Planning Advisory Service, December 2007.

	<p>...reduce health inequalities? ...encourage healthy lifestyles through, for example, open space and green infrastructure provision?</p>	<p>to GPs, Hospitals, Primary Schools and Post Offices' is in worst 20% nationally (Indices of Multiple Deprivation); Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6 (LAA NI 56); Adult participation in sport (LAA NI 8); Healthy life expectancy at age 65 (LAA NI 137); Number of SOAs within the 20% most deprived nationally for health and disability (IMD).</p>
5. Improve education and skills of the population	<p>...improve qualifications and skills of young people and adults? ...promote life-long learning that is accessible to all? ...provide an increased supply of skilled workers to the economy?</p>	<p>Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 (GCSE) or higher (LAA NI 163); Working age population qualified to at least Level 4 (Degree) or higher (LAA NI 165).</p>
6. Reduce crime and fear of crime	<p>...reduce anti-social behaviour? ...reduce actual levels of crime? ...reduce the fear of crime?</p>	<p>Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police (LAA NI 21); Serious acquisitive crime rate (LAA NI 16); Number of SOAs within the 20% most deprived nationally for crime and disorder (IMD). % of residents who feel safe/very safe whilst outside (daytime and night time) (BMG Quality of Life survey).</p>
7. Support a strong, diverse and vibrant local economy	<p>...foster balanced economic growth? ...provide jobs for all with a diverse range of employment opportunities? ...ensure accessibility to work by walking, cycling and public transport? ...promote town and local centre vitality and viability? ...improve business development and enhance competitiveness? ...assist businesses in finding appropriate land and premises? ...promote sustainable tourism opportunities?</p>	<p>Average earnings of employees (LAA NI 166); Overall employment rate (LAA NI 151); Proportion of employees in different sectors (Census); VAT registration rate (LAA NI 171); VAT registered businesses in the area showing growth (LAA NI 172); Travel to work – modal split (Census); Proportion of retail, office and leisure development completed in town centre (SSDC: Core Output Indicator).</p>
8. Reduce the effect of traffic on the environment	<p>...reduce the need to travel? ...increase proportion of journeys made by non-car modes? ...reduce road traffic accidents? ...reduce the growth of congestion?</p>	<p>Travel to work – modal split (Census); Killed or seriously injured on South Somerset's roads (LAA NI 47).</p>

<p>9. Protect and enhance the landscape and townscape</p>	<p>...protect and enhance the landscape and townscape and its local distinctiveness? ...reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land? ...promote visual amenity? ...protect and enhance natural landscapes within the urban area, including recreational open space and green corridors?</p>	<p>% of new homes built on previously developed land (SSDC); Average density of new housing development (SSDC); % of new developments meeting 'Building for Life' criteria (SSDC: Core Output Indicator).</p>
<p>10. Conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment</p>	<p>...conserve and enhance the cultural heritage, archaeological sites and remains, listed buildings?</p>	<p>Number of listed buildings lost / 'at risk' (English Heritage, SSDC); Number of Conservation Area appraisals / Management Plans prepared (SSDC); Total area covered by conservation areas, historic parks and gardens (SSDC); Total number of archaeological sites (SCC).</p>
<p>11. Reduce contribution to climate change and vulnerability to its effects</p>	<p>...promote energy efficiency? ...encourage renewable energy? ...reduce carbon dioxide emissions? ...incorporate the principles of sustainable construction? ...make efficient use of water? ...consider the need to adapt to climate change?</p>	<p>Per capita CO2 emissions (LAA NI 186); Renewable energy capacity installed (SSDC: Core Output Indicator); Adapting to climate change (LAA NI 188).</p>
<p>12. Minimise pollution (including air, water, land, light, noise) and waste production</p>	<p>...improve and maintain air and water quality? ...minimise noise and light pollution, odour and vibration? ...minimise pollution of land and soil (including minimising loss of best and most versatile agricultural land)? ...reduce waste production and increase reuse, recycling and recovery of waste?</p>	<p>Number and extent of Air Quality Management Areas (SSDC); Number of days of air pollution exceeding 40µg/m³ in Yeovil AQMA (SSDC: SCS); River quality (% of very good, good or fair) (EA); Residual household waste per year (LAA NI 191); Household waste recycled and composted (Somerset Waste Partnership, NI 192).</p>
<p>13. Manage and reduce the risk of flooding</p>	<p>...minimise the risk of flooding to people and property? ...promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS)?</p>	<p>Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flooding or water quality grounds (EA; Core Output Indicator).</p>
<p>14. Conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity</p>	<p>...protect and enhance wildlife habitats and sites of geological conservation interest? ...conserve and enhance species diversity, in particular avoiding harm to protected species? ...promote Green Infrastructure?</p>	<p>% of SSSIs in favourable or recovering condition (Natural England); Health of Natural Environment 'basket of measures' (LAA LPI (6)); Number/area of Local Wildlife Sites/BAP Priority Habitats in South Somerset (Somerset</p>

		Environmental Records Centre).
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Sustainability Appraisal template:

Objective	Questions: will the policy / proposal / strategy help to...?	Score	Comment
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Scoring:

- ++ Significant positive effect
- + Positive effect
- Negative effect
- Significant negative effect
- 0 Neutral
- ? Uncertain effect

Nb. Options can be appraised against each other, the business as usual option (where appropriate), and the SA framework. When appraising options, it is necessary to address various 'impact dimensions' including secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects. Reference should also be made to any uncertainties or assumptions, such as taking into account that it may not be possible to fully implement options and the potential implications of this. After identifying the likely effects, the 'impact dimensions' will need to be taken into account when evaluating the significance of the effects.