



# Sustainability Appraisal Report: NTS

Final

20<sup>th</sup> January 2012

047042498

Prepared for:  
Solihull Metropolitan  
Borough Council

UNITED  
KINGDOM &  
IRELAND



REVISION SCHEDULE					
Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
1	12 <sup>th</sup> January 2012	Draft NTS	Paul Tomlinson Associate	Steve Smith Associate	Steve Smith Associate

REVISION RECORD					
Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by

URS  
15<sup>th</sup> Floor, The McLaren Building  
46 The Priory Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 7LR

## **Limitations**

URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited (“URS”) has prepared this Report for the sole use of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (“Client”) in accordance with the Agreement under which our services were performed (dated 10<sup>th</sup> March 2010 and revised 21<sup>st</sup> July 2010). No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this Report or any other services provided by URS. This Report is confidential and may not be disclosed by the Client nor relied upon by any other party without the prior and express written agreement of URS.

The conclusions and recommendations contained in this Report are based upon information provided by others and upon the assumption that all relevant information has been provided by those parties from whom it has been requested and that such information is accurate. Information obtained by URS has not been independently verified by URS, unless otherwise stated in the Report.

The methodology adopted and the sources of information used by URS in providing its services are outlined in this Report. The work described in this Report was undertaken between April 2010 and January 2012 and is based on the conditions encountered and the information available during the said period of time. The scope of this Report and the services are accordingly factually limited by these circumstances.

URS disclaim any undertaking or obligation to advise any person of any change in any matter affecting the Report, which may come or be brought to URS’ attention after the date of the Report.

Certain statements made in the Report that are not historical facts may constitute estimates, projections or other forward-looking statements and even though they are based on reasonable assumptions as of the date of the Report, such forward-looking statements by their nature involve risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from the results predicted. URS specifically does not guarantee or warrant any estimate or projections contained in this Report.

## **Copyright**

© This Report is the copyright of URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited. Any unauthorised reproduction or usage by any person other than the addressee is strictly prohibited.

## SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT: NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The purpose of the sustainability appraisal report is to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of a plan from the outset. In doing so it will help ensure that decisions are made that contribute to achieving sustainable development.

### Introduction

This is a non-technical summary of the Sustainability Appraisal Report for the Draft Local Plan prepared by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council ('the Council'). The Draft Local Plan sets out twelve challenges facing the Borough. These include, reducing inequalities in the Borough; addressing affordable housing needs; sustaining the Borough's attractiveness; securing sustainable economic growth, protecting key gaps between urban areas and settlements etc.

The Sustainability Appraisal seeks to promote sustainable development through ensuring that social, environmental and economic considerations are appropriately reflected in the plan.

Certain plans must undergo a Sustainability Appraisal incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment - that considers the environmental consequences of the plan<sup>1</sup>. Alongside Sustainability Appraisals, preparation of a plan must also involve:

- **Assessment of impacts on European wildlife sites:** A 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' Screening Report is available from the Council<sup>2</sup>. This report concluded that the Plan does not give rise to adverse effects on habitats of European importance. However the Screening Report recommended further screening as Submission Local Plan policies are developed to better assess the likelihood of impacts from increased recreational pressure upon:
  - Cannock Extension Canal SAC located 19.1km from the Borough;
  - Cannock Chase located 28.3km;
  - Peak District Dales SAC;
  - Bredon Hill SAC.
- **Equalities Impact Assessment:** A Fair Treatment Assessment (an Equalities Impact Assessment) was undertaken on the Emerging Core Strategy that included scoping of the need for an assessment of policies<sup>3</sup>. The Fair Treatment Assessment will be finalised following consultation on the draft Local Plan.

<sup>1</sup> European Parliament & Council of the European Union (July, 2001) *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of certain plans and programmes on the environment* (Official Journal of the European Community – OJ No L197, 21.7.2001, p.30) as implemented by The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004, no. 1633).

<sup>2</sup> SMBC, 2008: Core Strategy Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.  
[www.solihull.gov.uk/Attachments/HRAA\\_Screening\\_SMBC.pdf](http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Attachments/HRAA_Screening_SMBC.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Available by contacting the Council

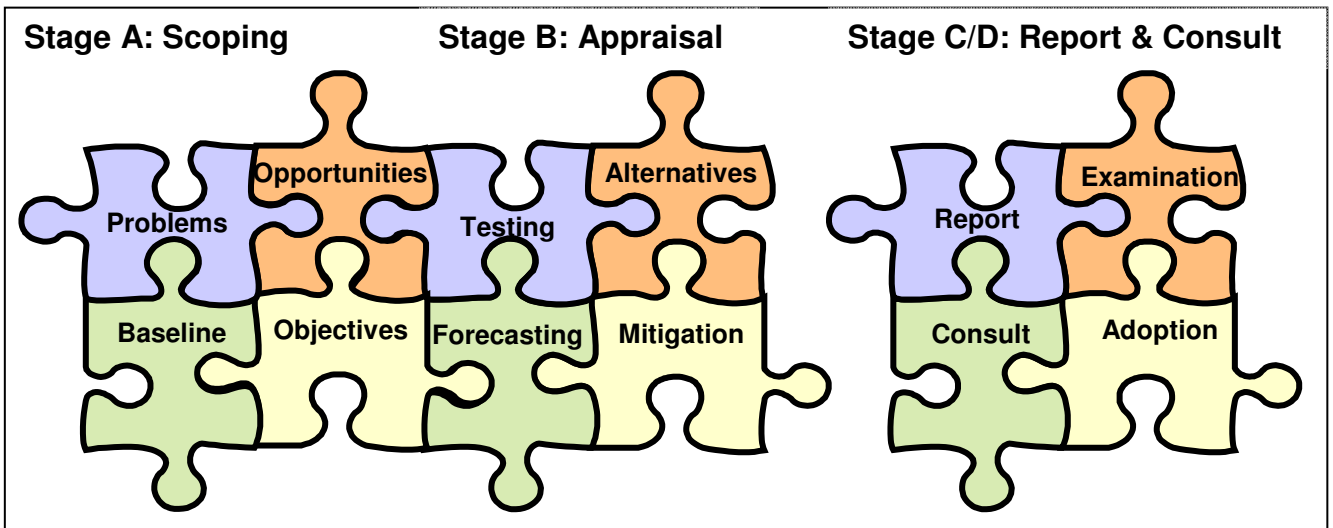
The Sustainability Appraisal process provides information on the effects of the plan to the local community; contributes to the evidence base and aids the plan preparation process.

The SA process comprises five stages:

- **Stage A:** Assemble evidence base and prepare Scoping Report;
- **Stage B:** Appraise plan objectives, options and policies and propose steps to reduce adverse impacts and indicators to monitor the plan’s sustainability;
- **Stage C:** Prepare Sustainability Appraisal Report on the process and findings;
- **Stage D:** Consult on the plan and Sustainability Appraisal Report;
- **Stage E:** Monitor implementation and sustainability effects.

With publication of the Sustainability Appraisal Report and this summary, the appraisal is now in Stages C/D.

### The Appraisal Process



As indicated in the diagram, the scoping process considers the existing baseline and the future without the plan, explores the sustainability problems and opportunities to arrive at a set of sustainability objectives which are then to be used to check how far the plan delivers sustainable development.

### European, National and Local Policies

There are many European and National requirements and policies in place that promote sustainable development. These deal with subjects such as air quality, wildlife, climate change, landscape, renewable energy, sustainable development, transport, waste and water. The Sustainability Appraisal Report provides a review of these requirements identifying where they are relevant to the Submission Local Plan.

National policies deal with sustainable development, the natural environment, gypsies & travellers, public health, flood and water management, noise and other policies. Again details can be found in the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

## Scoping Stage

The scope of the appraisal refers to the issues that the appraisal will focus on and, on this case; the scope was originally defined in a 2008 Scoping Report<sup>4</sup>. Given the passage of time, the scope has been slightly amended to reflect today's situation.

The appraisal has been structured under the following four sustainability 'themes':

- **Theme 1** - Sustainable consumption and production;
- **Theme 2** - Climate change and energy;
- **Theme 3** - Natural resource protection; and environmental enhancement;
- **Theme 4** - Sustainable communities.

Further details of the scoping update and the method of appraisal can be found in chapter 2 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

## Sustainability Objectives

Using the information gained from the 2008 Scoping Report, consultation feedback along with an understanding of the problems, opportunities, and baseline situation, a set of sustainability objectives were developed. These were used to "test" the performance of the Draft Local Plan objectives to judge how far they promote sustainable development. They were also used as a framework against which the Draft Local Plan policies were tested. The sustainability objectives are set out below.

Solihull Draft Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Framework	
<b>Sustainable consumption &amp; production</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To contribute to regeneration and economic development initiatives spatially targeted towards specific community groups:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To provide a quality of life able to help retain well-educated members of the work force.</li> <li>b. To enable the provision of offices and premises able to meet the needs of business start-ups as well as larger businesses attracted by the transport-hub and knowledge-hub that exists.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. To reduce the number of people experiencing difficulties in accessing employment, education and training opportunities.</li> <li>3. To ensure that the location of development makes efficient use of existing physical infrastructure and helps to reduce the need to travel.</li> <li>4. Minimise the use of natural resources, such as land, water and minerals, and minimise waste, increase reuse and recycling and manage within the Borough/Sub-region:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Deliver reductions in the quantity of water used in the Borough.</li> <li>b. Deliver reductions in the waste arising and to move up the waste hierarchy.</li> <li>c. To use previously developed sites where appropriate where there is no net loss of ecological value.</li> <li>d. To promote resource efficiency.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	
<b>Climate change &amp; energy</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Minimise greenhouse gas emissions, reduce energy use, encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy generation:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To deliver quantified reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 that contribute to the national 34% reduction target.</li> <li>b. To encourage reduced energy use, use of distributive energy systems and renewable energy.</li> </ol> </li> <li>6. To assist in the adaptation businesses need to become more resource efficient and also to deliver more sustainable products and services better equipped to a changing market place caused by climate change.</li> </ol>	

<sup>4</sup>

Available from [http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Attachments/Challenges\\_and\\_Choices\\_Sustainability\\_Report.pdf](http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Attachments/Challenges_and_Choices_Sustainability_Report.pdf)

Solihull Draft Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Framework
<p>7. Manage, maintain and where necessary improve the drainage network to reduce the economic losses from flooding.</p> <p>8. To ensure that development provides for adaptation to urban heating, the effects of high winds and assists in promoting behaviour change.</p>
Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement
<p>9. To enhance the ecological connectivity of non-designated ecological sites and enhance LBAP priority habitats and species.</p> <p>10. To manage the landscape effects of development in recognition of the European Landscape Convention as well as the risks and opportunities associated with measures to address climate change.</p> <p>11. To facilitate the delivery and enhance the quality of areas providing green infrastructure.</p> <p>12. To enhance, conserve and protect buildings, sites, and the setting of historic assets in the urban environment as part of development projects.</p> <p>13. To deliver improvements in townscape and enhance local distinctiveness.</p> <p>14. Minimise air, soil, water, light and noise pollution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To continue to deliver reductions in particulate and nitrogen dioxide levels.</li> <li>b. To manage drainage network to ensure no detriment to surface water quality.</li> <li>c. To reduce the intrusion of urban and highway lighting.</li> <li>d. To deliver reductions in road traffic noise focusing upon those areas identified as First Priority Locations by Defra under the Environmental Noise Directive.</li> <li>e. To conserve soils thereby supporting other objectives.</li> </ul>
Sustainable communities
<p>15. To improve community capital and reduce isolation across the social gradient in the Borough:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ensure that the pattern of development helps reduce imbalances across the Borough.</li> <li>b. Promote employment opportunities and improve access to employment, education and health services.</li> <li>c. Improve the public realm and community facilities.</li> </ul> <p>16. Improve the supply and affordability of housing in those areas of greatest need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ensure supply of housing appropriate to local needs especially in relation to affordability.</li> <li>b. Ensure urban design and layout contributes towards reducing the potential for crime.</li> <li>c. Make provision for the accommodation needs of Travellers &amp; Gypsies.</li> </ul> <p>17. Ensure the Borough's regional assets reflect wider needs and that their development is not compromised.</p> <p>18. To fully integrate the planning, transport, housing, cultural, recreational, environmental and health systems to address the social determinants of health in each locality to reduce health inequalities and promote healthy lifestyles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To design the urban fabric and services to meet the needs of an elderly population particularly one less able to rely upon private transport.</li> </ul> <p>19. Reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>20. Enhance public safety.</p> <p>21. Encourage development with a better balance between jobs, housing and services, and provide easy and equitable access to opportunities, basic services and amenities for all.</p>

## Structure of the Sustainability Appraisal Report

The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report is set as follows:

- **Chapter 1** – Introduction.
- **Chapter 2** – Describes how the sustainability appraisal was undertaken.
- **Chapter 3** – Describes the policies relevant to preparing the Local Plan.
- **Chapter 4** – Presents a summary of the baseline sustainability data.
- **Chapter 5** – Presents the appraisal of the Local Plan policies along.
- **Chapter 6** – Presents the findings of the appraisal of the spatial strategy.
- **Chapter 7** – Documents the findings of the appraisal of the site allocations.
- **Chapter 8** – Presents mitigation and monitoring proposals.

## How the Appraisal was undertaken

Section 5.2 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report provides for the testing of the Local Plan against the Sustainability objectives. The remainder of chapters 5, 6 and 7 consider the effects of the plan by examining the following:

- The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
- The cumulative nature of the effects; and
- The potential for effects to occur upon valued or vulnerable areas.

For each policy, spatial strategy and site allocation, a series of factors were considered including:

- Is it clear what is proposed?
- Who/what is likely to be affected?
- Where is the effect likely to occur?
- What is the magnitude of the impact based on duration, scale, uncertainty, direct, indirect, cumulative, or reversible?

## Significance Criteria

Significance criteria capture duration, geographic scale, probability as well as whether the effect would be direct, indirect or cumulative (see below) with a traffic-light based scoring system and spider web diagrams being used to present the results.



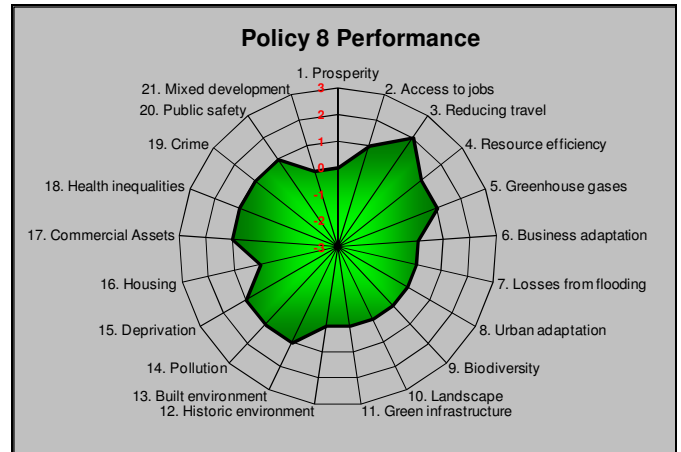
<b>Minor</b>	Cause and effect likely affecting local areas for over 3 years but effects are unlikely to be reversible and do not cause district scale cumulative effects.
	Cause and effect either clearly not clearly established but limited to district wide effects lasting for less than 10 years. Anticipated that effects may or may not be reversible.
	Potential effects of less than 3 years duration at a regional scale which may or may not be reversible.
	Permanent local scale potential or likely direct or indirect effects that may or may not be reversible.

<b>Moderate</b>	Cause and effect likely to occur at a district scale extending between 3-10 years and that are unlikely to be reversible but do not affect regional or national resources.
	Cause and effect can be likely to or certain to occur but there will be district effects that extend for over 10 years that are unlikely to be reversible and do not affect regional or national resources
	Cause and effect not clearly established but potential for effects upon regional or national interests for any duration that may or may not be reversible

<b>Major</b>	Cause and effect directly attributable to change of more than 10 years to the existing conditions likely to occur over a wide area at a district scale that is unlikely to be reversible.
	A potential cause and direct effect with a duration of more than 3 years that may cause cumulative effects upon regional or national interests that is may not be reversible
	A cause and effect is likely or would occur with national or regional interests being affected that may or may not be reversible

### Reporting the Appraisals

The appraisal of each policy, the spatial strategy and site allocations is reported in the following way.



SA Objective	Likely Significant Effects	Rationale
Reducing travel	<b>Mod+ve</b>	The policy has the potential to reduce the travel demands of development and manage the amount of parking provided.

Scoring Symbol	Label
<b>Maj+ve</b>	Major positive outcome
<b>Mod+ve</b>	Moderate positive outcome
<b>Min+ve</b>	Minor positive outcome
<b>Neut</b>	Neutral
<b>Min-ve</b>	Minor negative outcome
<b>Mod-ve</b>	Moderate negative outcome
<b>Maj-ve</b>	Major negative outcome

## Appraisal of the Draft Policies

The appraisal of the Local Plan shows that there have been improvements in addressing the sustainability objectives since the Emerging Core Strategy was published including:

- Measures to improve public health through better planning;
- Planning for the needs of an ageing population;
- Requiring a sustainability appraisal for some major development projects;
- Requiring discussions on local water supply or waste water treatment issues.

The overall the Draft Local Plan policies provide a reasonably effective approach to addressing the sustainability objectives, however, improvements could be made. For example the following sustainability objectives are not as fully addressed as they could be:

- Business adaptation to climate change;
- Designing out crime;
- Housing, retail and employment development on the same site (mixed development);
- Greenhouse gases emissions responsible for climate change;
- Public safety ;
- Biodiversity;
- Housing (building of new and affordable housing).

Also the following policies delivered the lowest performance across the sustainability objectives:

- Policy 1: Supporting economic success;
- Policy 5: Provision of land for housing;
- Policy 10: Natural environment;
- Policy 19: Local services.

Possible enhancement measures under the four sustainability themes include:

Sustainable consumption and production	Climate change and energy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require the preparation of travel plans for each business park dealing with all movement patterns;</li> <li>• Consider transport implications of additional rural housing;</li> <li>• Consider whether the promotion of high density development in high accessibility locations affects open space and natural environment policies;</li> <li>• Examine the relationship between Policy 1 and that of Policy 9;</li> <li>• Review the role of Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document for all major development and clarify its contents;</li> <li>• Consider opportunities to promote waste management technologies via Affordable Solutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All major development proposals within the M42 economic corridor should demonstrate how they could link to local heat or energy networks when viable;</li> <li>• Consider means to avoid potential sterilisation of sites within the M42 economic corridor with a role in distributed heat and energy networks;</li> <li>• Develop strategy for Allowable Solutions in time for its 2016 introduction to reduce uncertainty for developers;</li> <li>• Consider scope for promoting low carbon business clusters;</li> <li>• Consider requiring major development proposals to demonstrate how they have provided for adaptation to climate change;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate within design guides the thermal comfort of those occupying affordable housing particularly those designed for the elderly and those with special needs;</li> <li>• Consider use of development briefs to provide for urban cooling measures;</li> <li>• Consider requiring major development proposals with large parking capacity to set aside dedicated car pool and electric vehicle charging points;</li> <li>• Consider requiring developers providing on-site car parking to demonstrate why renewable energy generation would not be viable;</li> <li>• Include green/brown roofs and SUDs within the Sustainable Construction and Design Supplementary Planning Document</li> </ul>
<p><b>Natural resources &amp; env. enhancement</b></p>	<p><b>Sustainable communities</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether green infrastructure ought to be accommodated alongside promotion of high quality public space within the policies.</li> <li>• Whether the sustainability of each housing phase could be enhanced by specific further guidance;</li> <li>• Site development proposals for North Solihull Regeneration Area could be required to demonstrate net improvement in the quality of open space;</li> <li>• Consider requiring car parking provision to be designed to minimise surface water runoff as well as the promotion of beneficial use of runoff as helps to reduce carbon emissions;</li> <li>• Consider the preparation of a landscape scale plan for the natural environment to define and reduce the impacts of climate change;</li> <li>• Consider requiring all major development proposals to have a positive net impact on biodiversity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linking the benefits of development particularly in the M42 economic gateway with measures to reduce inequalities, such as promoting links between successful business communities and regeneration initiatives;</li> <li>• Require development proposals to deliver designs for key social groups and deliver retail areas attractive for an elderly population;</li> <li>• Encourage development that enhances the local balance between jobs, housing, services and accessibility;</li> <li>• Make consideration of the effects of development proposals upon the viability of all public transport services;</li> <li>• Expand consideration of resilience to climate change to include community resilience as well as issues such as flood risks;</li> <li>• Require developers to demonstrate that the short term implications of good design upon project viability override longer term sustainability objectives.</li> </ul>

The performance of the Draft Local Plan policies is presented below on the basis of their individual performance against the sustainability objectives. In reality planning policies are frequently applied together acting upon the development proposal as necessary. The collective performance can partly be judged by the overall likelihood of the policies delivering against the sustainability objectives.

An analysis found that approximately 9% of the draft policies were certain to contribute towards the sustainability objective. A further 29% were likely to contribute, with 51% having the potential to contribute. The remaining 11% were unlikely to contribute to the sustainability objectives.

	Policy 1	Policy 2	Policy 3	Policy 4	Policy 5	Policy 6	Policy 7	Policy 8	Policy 9	Policy 10	Policy 11	Policy 12	Policy 13	Policy 14	Policy 15	Policy 16	Policy 17	Policy 18	Policy 19	Policy 20
1. Prosperity	Major Beneficial								Minor Beneficial											
2. Access to jobs	Major Beneficial																			
3. Reducing travel	Major Beneficial																			
4. Resource efficiency	Major Beneficial																			
5. Greenhouse gases	Major Beneficial																			
6. Business adaptation	Major Beneficial																			
7. Losses from flooding	Major Beneficial																			
8. Urban adaptation	Major Beneficial																			
9. Biodiversity	Major Beneficial																			
10. Landscape	Major Beneficial																			
11. Green infrastructure	Major Beneficial																			
12. Historic environment	Major Beneficial																			
13. Built environment	Major Beneficial																			
14. Pollution	Major Beneficial																			
15. Deprivation	Major Beneficial																			
16. Housing	Major Beneficial																			
17. Commercial Assets	Major Beneficial																			
18. Health inequalities	Major Beneficial																			
19. Crime	Major Beneficial																			
20. Public safety	Major Beneficial																			
21. Mixed development	Major Beneficial																			

Major Beneficial

Moderate Beneficial

Minor Beneficial

Neutral

Minor Adverse

Moderate Adverse

Appraisal Performance of the Draft Local Plan Policies

The following issues emerged from the analysis:

- **M42 economic gateway sites:** While development at regional employment sites in the M42 Economic Gateway are guided by Policy 1, they are to “have regard to” the other Draft Local Plan policies. This weakens the case for the application of other policies in these development decisions. Consequently, major development proposals are not being asked to deliver exemplar sustainable development performance. It could be expected that such development delivered high standards of sustainable construction; a high quality public realm enhancing local distinctiveness while also contributing towards the Local Plan objective of reducing inequalities through their procurement, employment and training programmes that could be targeted at assisting in the regeneration of North Solihull.
- **Supporting employment opportunities for North Solihull:** Development within the M42 economic gateway is envisaged to generate funds for the Borough Council which could be used in a progressive manner to encourage business activities, training, education, transport, housing and other public health measures to enhance the abilities of communities in the regeneration areas to access employment opportunities. However, the Draft Local Plan does not set out a clear vision on how inequalities are to be addressed beyond encouraging the retention of small and medium sized enterprises across the Borough. Indeed, it might be argued that development in the M42 economic gateway would attract the businesses offering employment opportunities that the regeneration community may not be best equipped to exploit.
- **Green Belt:** Land in the Green Belt can be used where significant employment opportunities are being created. Where housing is proposed for the Green Belt, such proposals are first to have been considered through a Parish or Neighbourhood Plan and there is to be evidence that people with a local connection have a housing need. Also, this need must not be able to be met through affordable housing provision on an allocated housing site. Finally, the proposed development is to be supported by the Parish Council or Neighbourhood Group.
- **Housing provision:** The provision of affordable housing is a key issue as there are some 11,745 people on the housing waiting list as of April 2010<sup>5,6</sup>. Also, forecasts suggest that between the years 2008 to 2033 some 2,000 households between the ages 65-74 and 5,000 aged above 85+ will create new needs for adapted housing. Allocating housing within urban areas during the early part of the Plan period potentially reduces the need to travel, while towards the end of the Plan period an emphasis upon rural provision and is likely to increase travel needs and adversely affect the natural environment.
- **Transport and accessibility:** The Draft Local Plan requires that all development proposals should have “regard to” transport efficiency and improved highway safety for all users. However, Policy 8 may cause conflict with the requirement to promote

<sup>5</sup> Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented or intermediate – tenure housing which is available at below market price or rent and which is affordable to households whose needs are not met by the market. Contributions will be expected to be made in the form of at least 40% affordable dwelling units on each development site

<sup>6</sup> Communities and Local Government, 2011: Live Tables – Table 600 Rents, lettings and tenancies

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/locallevelstatistics/livetable/>

and encourage sustainable transport modes. Such a “predict and provide” approach to car parking provision may lead to increased traffic, greater delay for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.

- **Climate change:** There is a delicate balance needed between delivering the immediate affordable housing and the potential for increased costs to deliver housing adapted to the needs of climate change and increased energy efficiency. However with an increasing number of people experiencing fuel poverty (a state that is unlikely to decline), enhanced energy efficiency will deliver benefits by helping to reduce health inequalities particularly for an increasingly elderly population. Opportunities exist to enhance adaptation to high winds and temperatures of particular benefit to a more elderly population. The climate change policy promotes the development and provision for heat and energy networks. Overall, effectiveness depends upon what actually happens within development proposals to deliver energy efficiency, reduced emissions and adaptation measures.
- **Health and well-being:** A specific policy has been introduced to promote health and well-being that gives important recognition to manner in which housing makes a contribution towards public health. While the number of hot food take-ways is to be managed, the policy does not limit such uses in close proximity to schools and public parks. The main approach to improving health and well-being is through the provision of employment opportunities for the communities experiencing health inequalities. Hence this suggests a targeted approach that strongly links with the wider regeneration agenda, although this is not evident from the Draft Local Plan.
- **Local distinctiveness:** The Draft Local Plan provides several policies where the objective is to protect and enhance local character and distinctiveness.
- **Public safety and crime:** The Draft Local Plan promotes the delivery of design solutions that help to improve public safety and reduce crime.
- **Natural environment:** The policies provide some protection to natural resource and environment sustainability theme with well over half of the 20 policies having some links with the sustainability objectives. Opportunities to provide a strategic landscape scale approach to biodiversity mitigation, allowable solutions, green infrastructure and public health remain to be explored.

**Appraisal of the Spatial Strategy**

The objective of this part of the appraisal is to consider whether the strategy of allocating development in the manner proposed in the Draft Local Plan represents the most sustainable manner in which development could be distributed. It is uncertain whether the spatial strategy contributes towards:

- Closing the inequalities gap across the Borough;
- Maximising provision of affordable housing;
- Reducing the Borough’s greenhouse gas emissions and promote decentralised energy and heating systems;
- Providing a suitable range of housing tenures and sizes;
- Enhancing opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport.

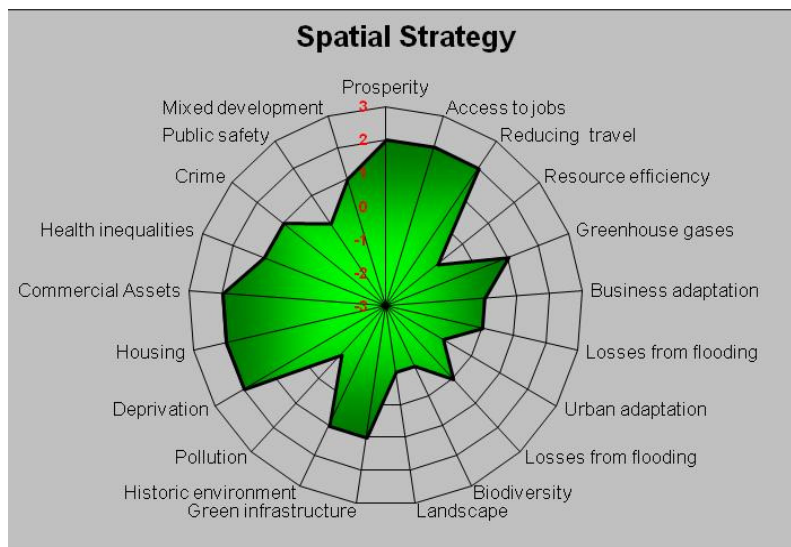
Nevertheless the spatial strategy can be seen to help deliver the following Draft Local Plan objectives:

- Reduce the housing waiting list;
- Support the regional economic assets.

While the spatial strategy delivers many beneficial outcomes, it possibly underperforms on resource efficiency, greenhouse gases, urban adaptation and several environmental aspects.

A challenge exists between the attracting inward car based commuters to the M42 corridor employment sites and the objectives of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing inequalities that would benefit from further consideration.

Opportunities might exist to provide for increased links between the growth of business in the M42 corridor with that of regeneration areas such as North Solihull.



## Appraisal of the Proposed Allocation Sites

This section summarises the sustainability performance of the site allocations for housing/mixed-use and employment/commercial development.

The candidate sites for housing/mixed-use development are:

- **North Solihull Regeneration Zone:** Nine sites in the Cole Valley and in Marston Green area;
- **Solihull Town Centre** (one site);
- **Shirley:** the 'Powergen' site and the 'Solihull Lodge' site); and
- **South West Rural Housing:** Comprising three sites at: Blythe Valley Park, Dickens Heath and Cheswick Green Mount Dairy Farm;
- **Eastern Rural Housing:** Balsall Common, Kenilworth Road, Hampton in Arden and Dorridge/Knowle

The Solihull Town Centre mixed use site performs well against sustainability objectives as do the Powergen/Solihull Lodge and North Solihull allocations, whilst the rural sites do not perform so well.

There is a strong beneficial performance against the following objectives:

- Prosperity;
- Commercial assets;
- Housing;
- Access to jobs;
- Built environment;
- Health inequalities;
- Mixed development.

In contrast the allocations for housing and mixed use sites perform least well against the following sustainability objectives:

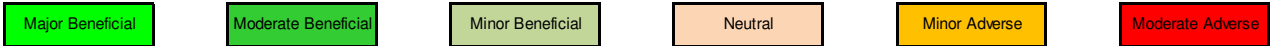
- Landscape;
- Losses from flooding;
- Pollution;
- Reducing travel;
- Greenhouse gases.

For a review of these site allocations, reference should be made to Chapter 7 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report.



## Appraisal of Housing Sites

	North Solihull	Powergen	South Western Rural sites	Eastern Rural Sites	Solihull TC
Prosperity	Major Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial
Access to jobs	Major Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial
Reducing travel	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial
Resource efficiency	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Major Beneficial
Greenhouse gases	Minor Beneficial	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial
Business adaptation	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial
Losses from flooding	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
Urban adaptation	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial
Biodiversity	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial
Landscape	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
Green infrastructure	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
Historic environment	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial
Built environment	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial
Pollution	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
Deprivation	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial
Housing	Major Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial
Commercial Assets	Major Beneficial	Minor Adverse	Major Beneficial	Major Beneficial	Major Beneficial
Health inequalities	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial
Crime	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial
Public safety	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial
Mixed development	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Major Beneficial



The 10 candidate sites for employment related development are:

- **NEC/Birmingham Business Park** (four sites, including the proposed Birmingham Airport runway extension);
- **Shirley** (three sites);
- **Kenilworth Road** (three minerals sites).

The Shirley employment allocations perform well against sustainability objectives, whilst the Kenilworth Road minerals allocations do not perform well. The performance of the NEC/Birmingham Business Park allocation is somewhere in the middle.

There is a strong beneficial performance against the following sustainability objectives:

- Prosperity;
- Access to jobs;
- Business adaptation;
- Commercial assets
- Health inequalities
- Public safety.

## Appraisal of Employment Sites

	NEC Sites	Shirley	Kenilworth Sites
Prosperity	Major Beneficial	Major Beneficial	Minor Beneficial
Access to jobs	Major Beneficial	Major Beneficial	Neutral
Reducing travel	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Minor Beneficial
Resource efficiency	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial	Minor Adverse
Greenhouse gases	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Neutral
Business adaptation	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Neutral
Losses from flooding	Neutral	Minor Adverse	Neutral
Urban adaptation	Minor Adverse	Neutral	Neutral
Biodiversity	Minor Adverse	Neutral	Minor Adverse
Landscape	Moderate Adverse	Minor Beneficial	Minor Adverse
Green infrastructure	Neutral	Minor Beneficial	Neutral
Historic environment	Neutral	Neutral	Minor Adverse
Built environment	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial	Neutral
Pollution	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
Deprivation	Major Beneficial	Moderate Adverse	Neutral
Housing	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Commercial Assets	Major Beneficial	Major Beneficial	Neutral
Health inequalities	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Neutral
Crime	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Public safety	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Neutral
Mixed development	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral



## Key Challenges, Mitigation & Enhancement Measures

The appraisal of the Draft Local Plan has identified several aspects where mitigation measures to improve the performance of the plan in delivering sustainability objectives could be explored.

### Key Enhancement Opportunities:

- Sustain economic success of the businesses in the M42 economic gateway while ensuring benefits flow for all of the Borough's residents;
- Achieve sustainability gains across all four themes without compromising the attractiveness of the Borough for development;
- Manage the consequences of an increasingly elderly population.

The following table provides a summary of the mitigation measures presented in the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

Policies	Spatial Strategy	Housing / mixed use sites	Employment sites
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference should be made to Chapter 5 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote employment suitable for existing residents of North Solihull in the NEC/ Birmingham Business Park;</li> <li>• Support business start-ups within the Regeneration Zone;</li> <li>• Maximise local benefit from the M42 economic gateway;</li> <li>• Ensure housing types and tenures match local needs;</li> <li>• Provide high quality green infrastructure to compensate for the loss of green space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development in North Solihull improve access to local services;</li> <li>• Consider safe pedestrian and cycle routes between housing and village centres;</li> <li>• Use housing to help develop a coherent network of community resources;</li> <li>• Promote sustainable drainage systems to reduce surface water runoff and hence flood risk;</li> <li>• Enhance green infrastructure and promote green roofs;</li> <li>• Consider effects of car-based travel, on village services;</li> <li>• Rural development to avoid damage to the Arden landscape.</li> <li>• Consider opportunities for residents to influence the design of development and community infrastructure;</li> <li>• Promote high sustainable design and construction standards at Blythe Valley.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop measures to encourage new job take up by North Solihull residents;</li> <li>• Control commuting by car;</li> <li>• Promote green roofs;</li> <li>• Develop a landscape scale mitigation strategy to address loss of green field land;</li> <li>• Confirm no significant air quality impacts occur.</li> </ul>

## Monitoring

Regulations require that the significant environmental effects of the Local Plan are monitored. There is also a requirement through the Localism Act 2011 for the Council to report at least once a year on the performance of the Local Plan. Suggestions for monitoring the significant effects of the Local Plan policies are presented below.

Sustainable consumption & production	Climate Change and Energy
<p><b>Employment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of small business opened per year served by high frequency bus service.</li> <li>• Workforce engaged in new technology, low carbon and care services.</li> <li>• Number of jobs located particularly in North Solihull.</li> <li>• Qualifications in the younger members of the workforce.</li> <li>• Percentage of young unemployed.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Greenhouse Gas Emissions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual emissions of greenhouse gases.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Population:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of people content with their environs.</li> <li>• Travel to work patterns.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Energy Use and Renewable Energy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy saved and generated by major developments.</li> <li>• Amount of energy used by street lighting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Accessibility:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of jobs served by high frequency bus service.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Employment Resilience:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population employed in businesses resilient to climate change.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Material Assets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area of greenbelt land taken for development.</li> <li>• Amount of household waste.</li> <li>• Management of waste higher up the waste hierarchy.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Resilience to Adverse Weather Conditions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area of “cooling” features within main public areas.</li> </ul>
Natural Resource Protection & Env. Enhancement	Sustainable Communities
<p><b>Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Soil Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of developments improving biodiversity.</li> <li>• Number of development negatively affecting wildlife.</li> <li>• Length of culverts opened.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Deprivation and Social Exclusion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of jobs in Solihull filled by local residents.</li> <li>• Percentage of Areas within 20% most deprived areas.</li> <li>• Percentage of people satisfied with their local area.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Landscape, Open Space, Green Infrastructure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of trees planted.</li> <li>• Number of trees removed for development.</li> <li>• Number of projects improving the Arden Landscape.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Housing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of affordable homes.</li> <li>• Number of housing for the elderly.</li> <li>• Number of gypsy and traveller pitches available.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Historic Environment &amp; Townscape:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of projects improving the historic environment.</li> <li>• Number of projects detracting from the historic environment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Public Health:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of development aiding an ageing population.</li> <li>• Number of people who consider being in good health.</li> <li>• Percentage of people undertaking physical activity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Water Quality:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Length of culverts made open watercourse</li> </ul>	<p><b>Crime and Safety:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total crime per 1000 people.</li> <li>• Proportion of residents feeling safe after dark.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Culture &amp; Recreation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of residents satisfied with recreation and open space provision.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Regional Assets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floorspace consented per year.</li> <li>• Time to determine a planning application affecting regional assets.</li> </ul>

Associated with the spatial strategy the following monitoring opportunities have been identified:

- Whether employment growth in the M42 corridor increased employment opportunities for North Solihull residents;
- Amount of commuting into the Borough;
- Whether the housing mix meets the needs of North Solihull residents;
- Amount of Green Belt land taken.

Alongside the monitoring measures proposed for the Local Plan policies, the following are suggested to address the sustainability of the site allocations. It is envisaged that most will be relevant to individual site development proposals. The proposed monitoring measures are:

- Housing waiting lists for residents of North Solihull;
- The characteristics of employment generated within the Birmingham Business Park cluster;
- Retail and employment mix within Solihull Town Centre;
- Traffic congestion in Solihull Town Centre;
- Proportion of residents at Blythe Valley Park that work in the Business Park;
- Use of planning brief/conditions and planning obligations to ensure Blythe Valley is a flagship development;
- Use of public transport from rural settlements;
- Proportion of jobs within the NEC / Birmingham Business Park that are taken by residents of the North Solihull Regeneration Area;
- Proportion of jobs within the Shirley Employment Sites that are taken by residents of the North Solihull Regeneration Area;
- Transport choices taken by employees at the NEC / Birmingham Business Park and Shirley Employment Sites.

## Consultation Questions

It would assist the appraisal process if responses could be made to the questions presented below.

### Consultation Questions

- Do you agree with the appraisal findings?
- Are there any significant issues that ought to be addressed that have been omitted?
- Do you have any views that ought to be considered before the formal examination stage?
- Do you have any views on the monitoring of sustainability effects of the Plan?

## Next Steps

The timetable for the remaining stages of the Local Plan process is set out below:

- Consultation – January to March 2012;
- Submission – July 2012;
- Examination – November 2012;
- Adoption of Core Strategy – May 2013.

## Consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal Report

This six week consultation period is available for the public as well as Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage to comment upon its findings and conclusions.

Any comments should be addressed to:

David Simpson  
Development Plans Team Leader  
Places Directorate  
PO Box 19, Council House  
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council  
Solihull B91 9QT

Tel: 0121-704-6395