



Draft Sustainability Appraisal Report Non Technical Summary Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment)

Amen Corner Supplementary Planning Document

Bracknell Forest Borough Local Development Framework
www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/amencorner

November 2009

1 Non-Technical Summary

The following non-technical summary has been produced as a stand alone document to inform consultees and the general public about the process of Sustainability Appraisal in plain English, avoiding the use of technical terms. The production of a non-technical summary is also a requirement of the EU Directive known as the SEA Directive.

Introduction

Bracknell Forest Council is preparing a collection of planning documents which will guide development in the Borough, known as the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF will advise on how and where housing, shops, offices industry, transport and leisure facilities are located over the next 20 years/

The Amen Corner Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is on of the documents making up the LDF. There are two types of document making up the LDF:

- **Development Plan Documents** (DPDs) which contain policies and proposals; and
- **Supplementary Planning Documents** (SPDs) which contain the detail needed to implement the policies.

The Amen Corner document is an SPD which will formalise guidance to development which will stimulate the regeneration of the site over the coming years.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is required in the UK by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. However, the Planning Act 2008 has removed the requirement for carrying out SA of SPDs. Despite SA being no longer required for SPDs, Bracknell Forest Council has decided to prepare an SA of the Amen Corner SPD. This ensures that social, economic and environmental effects are considered. The SA also incorporates the requirements of the EU strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.

Scoping

A scoping stage is required as part of the SA which involves setting the context for the appraisal by considering current baseline information on the environment, local communities and the local economy, and relevant plans and programmes, including identifying key sustainability issues and problems, and outlining the SA framework which will be used to carry out the appraisal.

The SA framework consists of 24 sustainability appraisal objectives which cover a number of topics. These objectives cover a range social, environmental and economic issues, for example protecting and enhancing human health, conserving and enhancing biodiversity, ensuring high and stable levels of employment and addressing the causes of climate change.

The scoping stage covering the whole of the LDF has been set out in an SA Scoping Report entitled 'Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment) Revised Scoping Report: Bracknell Forest Borough Local Development Framework' (April 2006). Much of the information within the LDF Scoping Report and also the SA Scoping Report of the Core Strategy (Feb 2005) is relevant to the Amen Corner SPD and therefore could be used to inform this SA. However, in order to provide more detailed scope specific to Amen Corner, an additional Scoping Report was produced and consulted upon to supplement the information in the other Scoping Reports - 'Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment) Scoping Report: Amen Corner Area Action Plan Development Plan Document (June 2007).

The SA Scoping Report of the Amen Corner AAP considered which of the SA objectives formulated for the LDF as a whole were applicable to the Amen Corner AAP. It was decided that all of the 24 objectives were relevant. The SA objectives are listed below:

Table 1.1 SA Objectives

Bracknell Forest Council SA Objectives
SA1: To meet local housing needs by ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent, sustainably constructed and affordable home
SA2: To reduce the risk of flooding and harm to people, property and the environment
SA3: To protect and enhance human health and wellbeing
SA4: To reduce poverty and social exclusion
SA5: To raise educational achievement levels

SA6: To reduce and prevent crime and the fear of crime
SA7: To create and sustain vibrant and locally distinctive communities
SA8: To provide accessible essential services and facilities
SA9: To make opportunities for culture, leisure and recreation readily accessible
SA10: To encourage urban renaissance by improving efficiency in land use, design and layout. This includes making best use of previously developed land in meeting future development needs
SA11: To maintain air quality and improve where possible
SA12: To address the causes of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, and ensure BracknellForest is prepared for associated impacts
SA13: To conserve and enhance the Borough's biodiversity
SA14: To protect and enhance where possible the Borough's characteristic countryside and its historic environment in urban and rural areas
SA15: To improve travel choice and accessibility, reduce the need for travel by car and shorten the length and duration of journeys
SA16: To sustainable use and re-use renewable and non-renewable resources
SA17: To address the waste hierarchy by: minimising waste as a priority, reuse, then by recycling, composting or energy recovery
SA18: To maintain, protect and improve water quality in the Borough's water courses including groundwater and to achieve sustainable water resource management
SA19: To maintain and improve soil quality
SA20: To increase energy efficiency, and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources in the Borough
SA21: To ensure high and stable levels of employment
SA22: To sustain economic growth and competitiveness of the Borough
SA23: To encourage 'smart' economic growth
SA24: To develop and maintain a skilled workforce by developing the opportunities for everyone to acquire the skills to find work

Refining Options and Predicting Effects

There are many issues which could of been covered within the Amen Corner SPD. During the evolution of the document, a variety of options were presented for inclusion in the draft document. Different options were considered and tested using the Sustainability Appraisal framework set out in the Amen Corner AAP SA Scoping Report. The results of the options appraisal were presented in the SA Report of the Issues and Options, and are also included in the Draft SA. The options appraisal informed the development of the policies for inclusion in the Amen Corner SPD. The sustainability of the different options were considered in choosing which options to take forward.

Evaluating Effects

The Amen Corner SPD has been subject to SA. The draft SPD has undergone SA, and suggestions have been made as to what alterations might improve the document. The effects of the recommendations made in the Amen Corner SPD have been assessed against the SA objective, and the results have been recorded in tables showing the likelihood and spatial scale of effects, whether they will be felt in the short, medium and/or long term and the permanence of the effects. The tables are presented in the following manner:

Table 1.2 Assessment Table Approach

SA Objective	Assessment of Effect	Commentary
<p>SA1: To meet local housing needs by ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent, sustainably constructed and affordable home</p>	<p>++</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Likelihood of effect:</p> <p>Spatial scale:</p> <p>Temporary/Permanent:</p> <p>Short, medium, long term:</p>
<p>SA2: To reduce the risk of flooding and harm to people, property and the environment</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Likelihood of effect:</p> <p>Spatial scale:</p> <p>Temporary/Permanent:</p>

SA Objective	Assessment of Effect	Commentary
		Short, medium, long term:
Etc.		

The assessment of effects column is scored using the following scoring system:

Table 1.3 Key

Scoring	Explanation
++	Very positive effect on the SA objective
+	Minor positive effect on the SA objective
0	Neutral
-	Minor negative effect on the SA objective
--	Very negative effect on the SA objective
I	Outcome dependant upon implementation
?	Impact cannot be predicted

A brief summary of the assessment results of the draft Amen Corner SPD is provided below. The full results and scores are available in the SA Report itself .

Table 1.4 Summary Results Table

Development Principle	Predicted effect of the Development Principle
Development Principle AC1 - Vision (The Delivery of Comprehensive Development)	The results of the appraisal of development principle AC1 are fairly mixed, but are positive on the whole, and it is not thought that the scores could be significantly improved. Positive scores have been awarded, particularly against SA21 and SA22 due to the provision of employment land. The negative effects of the development principle on air quality and climate change are thought to be justifiable as there is a need for employment land and new residential development in the borough, and some of the negative effects, such

Development Principle	Predicted effect of the Development Principle
	<p>as increased traffic, will not be new negative effects, but may just be displacing those effects from elsewhere. For example people driving to the site to work may have previously driven to different locations to work. Scores against some of the environmental SA objectives are mixed as there will be positive and negative effects of the development principle. However, it is thought that the SPD overall offers a balance of positive effects to make up for the minor negative effects which may be caused. In any case the site is not considered to be of a particularly high environmental value based on what is known about the site at present; therefore the negative effects are not thought to be highly significant.</p>
<p>Development Principle AC2 - Community Facilities and Other Services and Infrastructure</p>	<p>There are several positive effects of development principle AC2 against the SA objectives as the provision of the infrastructure and facilities listed in the development principle is considered a positive approach and scores well against social, and some economic SA objectives. The effects of the development principle against more environmental SA objectives are not clear as it will depend to a great extent on how this development principle is implemented, and the details regarding the facilities to be provided.</p>
<p>Development Principle AC3 - Design Principles</p>	<p>This development principle scores positively against a number of the SA objectives as it covers quite a broad range of topics. However, there are some objectives which have had no impacts or the effects are unclear as it is not known what effects the development principle will have on them. It is not thought that the development principle requires changing in light of these scores.</p>
<p>Development Principle AC 4 - Green Infrastructure and Landscape Character</p>	<p>The effects of this development principle on the SA objectives are mainly positive, particularly against the environmental objectives, but will also provide social and economic benefits. If a larger amount of space was being protected and stronger language was used in the policy to help protect it, then some ++ scores may have been awarded. However, it is considered that this policy provides an appropriate trade off between ensuring that valuable landscape is protected and enhanced, and allowing development to go ahead which meets peoples' needs.</p>

Development Principle	Predicted effect of the Development Principle
	<p>The change from the Preferred Options policies to this development principle has involved the education element of the earlier versions of the policies being lost, therefore the positive scores against the educational objectives have now been lost. Also, some of the biodiversity aspects of the policy have been lost, such as protection of specific sites like Riggs Copse. However these have been replaced by a point on the creation and/or retention of a range of habitats for biodiversity, and the policy is still likely to have a positive effect on biodiversity. There is also another policy specifically on biodiversity therefore it is not considered important to focus on that in this policy. The education issue has now been included in the biodiversity development principle.</p>
<p>Development Principle AC 5 - Landscape Sensitivity</p>	<p>The scores awarded against this development principle are positive on the whole, but there are unlikely to be any effects against many of the SA objectives. There has been a negative score awarded against SA10. This was due to the fact that this development principle, which includes maintaining a gap between Bracknell and Wokingham Boroughs, could be viewed as an inefficient use of land which could otherwise be used for meeting future needs. However, it is thought that this is a justifiable negative as the development principle scores well against other environmental and social SA objectives which it would not do if this development principle was changed/omitted, for example SA7 regarding distinctive communities.</p>
<p>Development Principle AC 6 - Biodiversity</p>	<p>This development principle is much improved from the preferred options policy AC11, and has also improved over later iterations to include education, and ensure that it applies to biodiversity in general rather than specific areas, so that species which may move around different areas are incorporated. This development principle is not relevant to a large number of the SA objectives therefore there are many 0 scores.</p>
<p>Development Principle AC 7 - Thames Basin Heaths</p>	<p>The effects of this development principle are positive, in particular against SA13 relating to biodiversity, as one of the main aims of this development principle is to conserve and enhance biodiversity. No changes are therefore thought to be necessary to this policy.</p>

Development Principle	Predicted effect of the Development Principle
Special Protection Area	
Development Principle AC 8 - Site Investigation and Pollution Remediation	Most of the effects of this development principle are positive, particularly against the environmental objectives, as the development principle involves remediating pollution of various types. There are some scores of 'I' indicating that the effects will depend on how this development principle is implemented. This is because there are many different ways of dealing with contamination, which can range from leaving it in situ, to significant disturbance involving digging up and removing large amounts of soil. It will need to be ensured that the most appropriate measures are taken at Amen Corner to manage the existing contamination.
Development Principle AC 9 - Housing Provision	Although this development principle is not relevant to many of the SA objectives, there have been a number of positive scores awarded, in particular against SA7 which results from the addition of character zones to the development principle. This has improved the development principle greatly from the version presented in the Preferred Options document, and is supported by very useful guidance in the supporting text to the development principle.
Development Principle AC 10 - North View South View	The predicted effects of this development principle are quite mixed, although several positive scores have been awarded, particularly against economic objectives. Many of the predicted effects are uncertain or will depend on how the development principle is implemented. There are some possible negative effects this is due to the unavoidable impact that the development principle will have on the environment. It is not thought that this development principle requires changing as other policies in this SPD and the Core Strategy complement this development principle to prevent/minimise negative effects on the environment resulting from the new employment land proposed.
Development Principle AC 11 - Employment Provision	Although this development principle has been significantly improved since the Preferred Options stage and again in the SPD, the predicted effects of this development principle are quite mixed. There have been several positive scores awarded, particularly against economic SA objectives, but there are also several negative scores awarded

Development Principle	Predicted effect of the Development Principle
	<p>against several of the environmental SA objectives. This is due to the unavoidable negative impacts that a development on this scale is likely to have on the environment. However, it is not thought that this development principle requires changing as other policies in this SPD and the Core Strategy complement this development principle to prevent/minimise negative effects on the environment resulting from the new employment land proposed.</p>
<p>Development Principle AC 12 - Public Transport and Accessibility</p>	<p>There have been many positive scores awarded for this development principle against social, economic and environmental SA objectives. The best score is against SA15 relating to improved travel choice and accessibility as this development principle will clearly help to meet this objective. The development principle has been amended to ensure that the provision of footpaths/cycleways will involve taking account of their impact on the environment.</p>
<p>Development Principle AC 13 - Site Access and other Highways Works</p>	<p>The scores for this development principle are fairly mixed. There are positive scores against various social and economic SA objectives, but negative scores against several of the environmental objectives. This is because any improvements to roads may encourage people to use their cars which will have a negative effect on the environment. However, it is thought that these negative scores are justifiable as it is unrealistic to expect everyone who uses the Amen Corner development to travel sustainably without a radical change in culture. Road improvements will be an important part of making the development at Amen Corner viable. It is positive that a large number of new roads are not proposed in this SPD, therefore it is only improvements to existing infrastructure that is proposed, rather than a large amount of new infrastructure. The 'I' scores should be considered when the details of the development are being finalised, for example construction methods and materials should be selected to ensure that the impacts on the environment are minimised and resource use is kept to a minimum. Other policies in this SPD compliment this development principle in that they prevent some of the potential negative effects of this development principle.</p>

Having carried out a thorough appraisal of all the development principles of the Amen Corner SPD, it has been concluded that the policies as they stand are sustainable and do not require alteration. Many positive scores have been awarded, and a few very

positive scores have been awarded . Only a few minor negative scores have been given against some of the development principles, all of which are considered to be justifiable. No secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects have been identified.

Mitigation

Only minor changes are required to the SPD to result in more positive scores, once these are made, no mitigation is thought to be necessary.

Consultation

The SA has been consulted upon at the Scoping Stage, and this document is the next stage of consultation. There have been three formal stages of consultation and public participation throughout the appraisal process. Details of comments made and the changes made as a result of these are provided in the draft SA Report for the Amen Corner SPD.

Monitoring

The success and effectiveness of the Amen Corner SPD will be monitored by the continued collection of baseline data according to identified indicators as set out in the LDF Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Report.

Future Stages

The table below lists the various outputs of the SA and shows what stages have completed and when.

Table 1.5 Stages of the SA

SA Output	Stage	Date
Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report	Completed	June 2007
Sustainability Appraisal Report (Issues and Options)	Completed	November 2007
Sustainability Appraisal Report (Preferred Options)	Completed	May 2008
Final Sustainability Appraisal Report of Draft Submission of the Amen Corner AAP	Completed	February 2009
Draft Sustainability Appraisal Report of Amen Corner SPD	Completed - this report	October 2009

Final Sustainability Appraisal Report of Amen Corner SPD	To be completed	
Monitoring of the Amen Corner SPD	To be carried out	Ongoing

As can be seen from the table above, this report is the draft SA report of the Amen Corner SPD. It is a *draft* SA Report because the SPD itself is still in draft. The next stage will be to prepare an SA report for the final SPD. Monitoring of the SPD will take place as part of the monitoring of the whole LDF.

Copies of this booklet may be obtained in large print, Braille, on audio cassette or in other languages. To obtain a copy in an alternative format please telephone 01344 352000.

Nepali

यस प्रचारको सक्षेपं वा सार निचोड चाहिं दिइने छ ठूलो अक्षरमा, ब्रेल वा क्यासेट सूनको लागी । अरु भाषाको नक्कल पनि हासिल गर्न सकिने छ । कृपया सम्पर्क गनुहोला ०१३४४ ३५२००० ।

Tagalog

Mga buod/ mga hango ng dokumentong ito ay makukuha sa malaking letra, limbag ng mga bulag o audio kasette. Mga kopya sa ibat-ibang wika ay inyo ring makakamtan. Makipag-alam sa 01344 352000

Urdu

اس دستاویز کے خلاصے یا مختصر متن جلی حروف، بریل لکھائی یا پھر آڈیو کیسٹ پر ریکارڈ شدہ صورت میں فراہم کئے جا سکتے ہیں۔ دیگر زبانوں میں اس کی کاپی بھی حاصل کی جا سکتی ہے۔ اس کے لیے براہ مہربانی ٹیلیفون نمبر 01344 352000 پر رابطہ کریں۔

Polish

Streszczenia lub fragmenty tego dokumentu mogą być dostępne w wersji napisanej dużym drukiem, pismem Brajla lub na kasecie audio. Można również otrzymać kopie w innych językach. Proszę skontaktować się z numerem 01344 352000.

Portuguese

Podemos disponibilizar resumos ou extractos deste documento em impressão grande, em Braille ou em audiocassete. Podem também ser obtidas cópias em outros idiomas. Por favor ligue para o 01344 352000.

Design, Environment and Transport Team,
Spatial Policy
Environment, Culture and Communities
Bracknell Forest Council
Time Square
Market Street
Bracknell
RG12 1JD