



**Sustainability Appraisal
(incorporating a Strategic
Environmental Assessment)**

Scoping Report

**SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

July 2007

1. SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

An essential consideration when drawing up planning documents is their effect on the environment and people's quality of life, both now and in the future. To help address this, a **Sustainability Appraisal** and a **Strategic Environmental Assessment** have been carried out alongside the preparation of these plans to make sure social, environmental and economic issues are taken into account at every stage.

Sustainability Appraisals (SA) are a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) are required by European Directive EC/2001/42, which was transposed into UK law by the Environmental Assessment Regulations for Plans and Programmes (July 2004). Government guidance, 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks' (ODPM, 2005), has merged this process to allow for a single joint appraisal to be carried out, which meets the requirements of both.

The SA / SEA is also being conducted in line with additional guidance targeted more specifically, for example towards climate change and biodiversity.

Before the production of the planning document starts, a scoping stage is necessary to propose and agree the sustainability appraisal methodology and collate the information needed to carry this out. The appraisal needs to be set within the context of existing plans and policies and an understanding of the current baseline situation is essential to help predict effects and identify key sustainability issues and problems. This relates to Stage A of the ODPM (2005) guidance.

2. AIM OF THE REPORT

This report sets out the extent of and methodology for the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA / SEA) of the Sustainable Resource Management Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This SPD forms part of the Bracknell Forest Local Development Framework (see section 3).

This Scoping Report aims to set out a framework for assessing the SPD against social, environmental and economic objectives. It should be read in conjunction with Bracknell Forest's Local Development Framework Scoping Report which sets out the parameters for SA / SEA of Local Development Documents within Bracknell Forest Borough. The full LDF Scoping Report can be viewed online at www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk or supplied on request from the Borough Council.

The purpose of this more specific scoping exercise is to identify where the broader LDF SA / SEA is relevant to the specific issues addressed in the SPD. This is a consultation document for the statutory agencies with environmental responsibilities in England, along with other relevant bodies with a sustainability remit or a local interest.

3. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The current Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan is being replaced by the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Development Framework (LDF). This is a collection of documents (Local Development Documents) containing policies and proposals to guide future development in the Borough.

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a three year project plan, prepared by the Borough Council, which outlines every Local Development Document that the Council intends to produce over the next three years, along with timetables for their preparation. It will also outline which current Local Plan Policies are to be saved until 2007.

The LDS will include:

- Development Plan Documents (DPDs), which are subject to external examination and therefore carry full statutory weight for determining planning applications; and
- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), which provide additional information to explain policies and proposals in more detail to assist in the preparation of planning applications.

3.1 Sustainable Resource Management SPD

3.1.1 The content of the document

This SPD aims to:

- Provide guidance for the development industry, the Council and the public on how energy efficiency and renewable energy sources can be incorporated into new development
- Ensure new development helps to deliver regional energy targets
- Contribute to national, regional and local climate change objectives
- Provide guidance for the development industry, the Council and the public on how new developments can be constructed in a sustainable way to meet or exceed current best practice standards.

3.1.2 Links to higher-tier SA

ODPM guidance (2005) states that the many different forms of Local Development Document, for example reflecting different scales and levels of detail, necessitate a relatively flexible approach to SA to ensure it is relevant and appropriate. In most cases the SA of DPDs will draw extensively on appraisals undertaken at the higher level (e.g. Core Strategy DPD) and the need for new work may be limited.

For the higher-tier Core Strategy DPD, the Final Sustainability Appraisal Report (Bracknell Forest Borough Council, October 2006) predicts and evaluates the effects arising from submission policies CS10: Sustainable Resources and CS12: Renewable Energy.

The submission policy wording is:

POLICY CS10 – SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES

Development proposals will be accompanied by a Sustainability Statement demonstrating how current best practice in the sustainable use of natural resources has been incorporated.

POLICY CS12 – RENEWABLE ENERGY

Development proposals for five or more net additional dwellings, or for 500 square metres (GEA) or more of floorspace for other development, will be accompanied by an energy demand assessment demonstrating how (potential) carbon dioxide emissions will be reduced by at least 10% and will provide at least 20 per cent of their energy requirements from on-site renewable energy generation.

Development proposals for less than five net additional dwellings, or for less than 500 square metres (GEA) of floor area for other development, will provide at least 10 per cent of their energy requirements from on-site renewable energy generation.

In summary the Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal concluded that requiring a sustainable approach to building has predominantly positive impacts. This will decrease energy consumption with secondary positive impacts on air quality and climate change. Water resource efficiency will be improved and accessible sites which score highly in the EcoHomes (BREEAM) assessment will be preferred. EcoHomes 'Very Good' standard has been shown to produce a 32% reduction on CO₂, a 39% saving in water use and a 25% reduction in waste to landfill, compared to current building regulations (WWF).

Maximising energy efficiency and requiring developments to provide a proportion of renewable energy on-site will have positive impacts on social exclusion (by reducing fuel poverty), air quality, climate change and associated knock-on impacts of climate change, such as flooding. There is also the potential for employment opportunities to expand into an area of new technology.

There may however be cost implications for developers, which could impact on the affordability of housing and the provision of other facilities or infrastructure. In addition, it is important that renewable energy schemes should not be to the detriment of environmental features such as listed buildings, countryside character or biodiversity.

3.1.3 Draft SPD objectives

The draft objectives of the plan are based upon the draft objectives of the Core Strategy DPD, to ensure consistency and appropriate tiering of documents within the LDF. Core Strategy Spatial Objectives F, I, K and L are directly relevant as set out overleaf.

F	To ensure high quality well designed development is delivered in the Borough
I	To maintain and improve the built and natural environment, and to mitigate the effects of new development on the natural and historic environment
K	To promote the sustainable use and disposal of resources
L	To mitigate against and adapt to climate change

4. TASK A1 - IDENTIFYING OTHER RELEVANT PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES

Aim: Identify and review other relevant policies, plans, programmes, and sustainable development objectives that will affect or influence the SPD.

The LDF Scoping Report includes a wide-ranging review of the plans, policies and programmes which are likely to impact on the plans within the Local Development Framework. This SPD scoping has examined this list to establish whether additional documents should be included which are specifically relevant to the production of the Sustainable Resource Management SPD.

Since the Revised LDF Scoping Report was produced various relevant documents have emerged which will impact specifically on this plan and the associated SA. These are set out below:

Guidance	Relation to SPD
Building a Greener Future: Towards Zero Carbon Development. Consultation. DCLG, December 2006.	Sets out how planning, building regulations and the Code for Sustainable Homes can drive change innovation and deliver improvements to the environment.
Planning and Climate Change Supplement to PPS1. DCLG, December 2006	Sets out how spatial planning should contribute to reducing emissions and stabilising climate change and take into account the unavoidable consequences.
Code for Sustainable Homes. DCLG, December 2006	Sets standard for key elements of the design and construction which affect the sustainability of a new home. It is currently a voluntary standard for sustainable homes for home designers and builders as a guide to development, and for home-buyers to assist in their choice of home. The standards should be used as a benchmark in the production of the SPD.

This guidance will inform the production of the Sustainable Resource Management SPD and will be specifically tested through SA objectives: 2, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 (see section 7).

5. TASK A2 - DEVELOP BASELINE INFORMATION

Aim: Collect relevant social, environmental and economic baseline information and produce a characterisation of the SPD area.

A comprehensive amount of baseline data is presented in the LDF Scoping Report. This SPD scoping exercise has identified that this level of detail is sufficient for the Sustainable Resource Management SPD and therefore no additional baseline data is necessary to inform the production of this plan.

6. TASK A3 - IDENTIFYING SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

Aim: Identify key sustainability issues for the SA to address.

The LDF Scoping Report provides information on the significant sustainability issues within Bracknell Forest. This scoping exercise has identified there are no additional issues which must be considered to inform the production of this SPD.

From the higher tier SA detailed above the following are presumed to be the most relevant to the Sustainable Resource Management SPD:

- Protecting the landscape character of the Borough;
- Biodiversity and conservation issues, especially key species and habitats;
- Reduction of waste and increase in re-use / recycling / recovery;
- Reliance on fossil fuels for energy generation;
- Water usage and quality.

7. TASK A4 - DEVELOPING THE SA FRAMEWORK

Aim: Develop the SA framework, consisting of the sustainability objectives, indicators and targets.

Sustainability is a complex issue so 24 sustainability objectives were identified to consider relevant local issues, covering a range of social, environmental and economic impacts. The justification for their selection and a testing for internal compatibility are detailed in the LDF Scoping Report.

Bracknell Forest Borough Council Sustainability Objectives	Can this objective be delivered by the SPD?
1. To meet local housing needs by ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent, sustainably constructed and affordable home	Yes
2. To reduce the risk of flooding and harm to people, property and the environment	Yes
3. To protect and enhance human health and wellbeing	Yes
4. To reduce poverty and social exclusion	No
5. To raise educational achievement levels	No
6. To reduce and prevent crime and the fear of crime	Yes
7. To create and sustain vibrant and locally distinctive communities	No
8. To provide accessible essential services and facilities	Yes
9. To make opportunities for culture, leisure and recreation readily accessible	Yes
10. 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	Yes
11. To maintain air quality and improve where possible	Yes
12. To address the causes of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, and ensure Bracknell Forest is prepared for associated impacts	Yes
13. To conserve and enhance the Borough's biodiversity	Yes
14. To protect and enhance where possible the Borough's characteristic countryside and its historic environment in urban and rural areas	Yes
15. To improve travel choice and accessibility, reduce the need for travel by car and shorten the length and duration of journeys	Yes
16. To sustainably use and re-use renewable and non-renewable resources	Yes
17. To address the waste hierarchy by: minimising waste as a priority, reuse, then by recycling, composting or energy recovery	Yes
18. To maintain and improve water quality in the Borough's water courses and to achieve sustainable water resource management	Yes
19. To maintain and improve soil quality	Yes
20. To increase energy efficiency, and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources in the Borough	Yes
21. To ensure high and stable levels of employment	No
22. To sustain economic growth and competitiveness of the Borough	No
23. To encourage 'smart' economic growth	No
24. To develop and maintain a skilled workforce by developing the opportunities for everyone to acquire the skills needed to find work	No

As many of the LDF sustainability objectives are relevant to this SPD the Sustainability Appraisal Framework detailed in the LDF Scoping Report is directly applicable. Therefore, the SA Framework table has not been reproduced in this document.

8. TASK A5 - CONSULTING ON THE SCOPE OF SA

Aim: Produce a Scoping Report and consult relevant authorities, the public and other key stakeholders on the scope of the appraisal and the key issues and possible options for solutions

This report is based specifically on the SA / SEA of the Sustainable Resource Management SPD, however because much of this document relies heavily upon and refers back to the information presented in the generic LDF Scoping Report, responses are welcomed on both documents.

The LDF Scoping Report (April 2006) has already been through three separate consultation processes and the comments received have been incorporated into the working document. This document will continue to be updated as additional comments are submitted throughout the development of the Local Development Framework and associated Sustainability Appraisal consultations.

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (Regulation 12(6)) defines certain timescales for consulting the statutory bodies on a Scoping Report. This requires the responsible authority's give the consultation body a period of **5 weeks** from the date it receives the Scoping Report.

Statutory Consultation Body
Natural England
The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (English Heritage)
Environment Agency

In accordance with the Sustainability Appraisal Guidance (2005), and as outlined in PPS12, other appropriate social and economic consultees will be contacted at various stages throughout the SA process. This consultation procedure is integrated into the Statement of Community Involvement.

The Scoping Report is also available to the public via the Council's website.

Consultation seeks to:

- Ensure the SA is comprehensive and robust enough to support the SPD during the later stages of full public consultation.
- Advise on the appropriateness of the sustainability objectives.
- Advise on the appropriateness of the key sustainability issues.
- Advise on the comprehensiveness of the baseline data.

8.1 Consultation Questions

The following questions should be used to guide the formation of a consultation response:

- 1) Are there other relevant policies, plans, programmes or sustainable development objectives that will affect or influence the SPD?
- 2) Do you agree that the baseline data collected is appropriate to the LDF and more specifically the SPD?
- 3) Do you have, or know of, any additional relevant baseline data which should be added to that already listed?
- 4) As far as you are aware, are there any inaccuracies or anomalies in the data presented?
- 5) Do you agree that these are the key sustainability issues for Bracknell Forest?
- 6) Are you aware of any issues which, in your opinion, should be added, or any that should be removed?
- 7) Are the objectives suitable in the context of Bracknell Forest?
- 8) Are there any additional objectives that should be included or should any be removed?
- 9) Do the indicators provide a relevant measure for the associated objective? If not then please suggest additional indicators.
- 10) Do you have any comments on the suggested targets?
- 11) Do you have any further comments on the information in the Sustainability Appraisal Framework?

Please return any comments on the above questions or any other relevant issues by Friday 10 August 2007 to:

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9. RELEVANT REFERENCES

Bracknell Forest Borough Council (April 2006) Local Development Framework Revised SA Scoping Report.

Bracknell Forest Borough Council (October 2006) Final Sustainability Appraisal Report. Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Submission).

European Commission (2001) Directive 2001/42/EC "on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment".

ODPM (2005) A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.

ODPM (2005) Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks.

Environmental Assessments of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Statutory Instrument 2004 no. 1633).

Countryside Council for Wales; English Nature; RSPB; Environment Agency; Levett-Therival; South West Ecological Surveys; Oxford Brookes University. (June 2004). Strategic Environmental Assessment and Biodiversity: Guidance for Practitioners.

Countryside Council for Wales; English Nature; Environment Agency; UK Climate Change Programme, CAG, Levett-Therival; Environmental Change Institute. (May 2004). Strategic Environmental Assessment and Climate Change: Guidance for Practitioners.