

## Sustainability Appraisal Summary

### What is sustainability?

Sustainability is a process of making decisions which balance economic, social and environmental factors for positive benefit. Sustainability doesn't have to be difficult to understand. It is about treating the earth as if we intended to stay and making sure that future generations inherit the earth in a good state.

### What is Sustainability Appraisal?

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a tool used to appraise planning policy documents in order to promote sustainable development. Social, environmental and economic aspects are all taken into consideration.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a compulsory requirement under the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and the 2001/42/EEC European Directive. This means that Stafford Borough Council must carry out a Sustainability Appraisal.

### What is the LDF?

The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the new Local Plan, a folder of documents, which includes all the local planning authority's development plan documents. An LDF is usually comprised of:

- Development Plan Documents (which form part of the statutory development plan)
- Supplementary Planning Documents (these may cover a range of issues and provides further detail of policies and proposals in a 'parent' Development Plan Document).

The Stafford Borough LDF is comprised of the 3 following documents:

- Core Strategy Development Plan Document
- Allocations and Site Specific Policy Development Plan Document
- Development Management Development Plan Documents

Details of the timetable of production for these 3 documents can be found in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) on the Boroughs [website](#).

### What is the Sustainability Appraisal Framework?

The Sustainability Appraisal Framework is a tool to appraise planning policies. The framework is made up of objectives, indicators and targets tailored to the key sustainability issues for Stafford Borough. Planning policies are looked at under these targets and indicators in order to understand how they will contribute towards the sustainable development of the Borough.

### What are the main stages of Sustainability Appraisal?

There are 5 stages to the SA process

**Stage A** Setting the context, objectives, baseline and scope for the SA (Scoping Stage). This stage highlights how planning policies will be appraised, and is set out in what is called the Scoping Report.

## Sustainability Appraisal Summary

**Stage B** Developing and refining plan options. This stage uses the framework set out in the Scoping Report to appraise planning policy options. The SA Commentary Report will highlight which option is most sustainable and also how it can be improved.

**Stage C** Appraisal of the social, economic and environmental effects of the plan. This stage is similar to Stage B, it appraises the preferred planning policy and will state if the policy could be improved to be more sustainable. This is set out in a document called the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

**Stage D** Consulting on the plan and the SA Report - At this stage we will ask people if they think the SA is correct, or if they think the policy could be made more sustainable.

**Stage E** Monitoring the implementation of the plan - It is important for planning policies to be monitored, to make sure they are sustainable and to check there are no negative impacts.



## Sustainability Objectives

The following objectives will be used to appraise planning policies. Under each objective there are a number of indicators and targets. These can be found in the [SA Reports](#).

### Economic Objectives

- To create high, stable and equitable levels of employment
- To ensure high and stable level of economic diversity and competitiveness that recognises social and environmental issues
- To sustain the vitality and viability of Stafford Borough's towns and villages, and their communities
- To support the needs of the local rural economy and communities.
- To reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change such as the risk of flooding, on public wellbeing, the economy and the environment

### Social Objectives

- To ensure that everyone has the opportunity of a decent and affordable home
- To improve opportunities for access for all to work, education, health and local services
- To reduce and prevent crime and reduce fear of crime
- To reduce the impact of noise and light pollution
- To improve health, safety and well-being across the whole community

## Sustainability Appraisal Summary

### Environmental Objectives

- To reduce societal contributions to climate change
- To protect and enhance biodiversity
- To protect, enhance and, where necessary, restore designated landscape areas and town character, scenic beauty, local distinctiveness, historic and cultural character
- To protect and conserve soil
- To protect and enhance water quality of the Borough's rivers whilst maximising their carrying capacity through achieving sustainable water resource management

### Community Objectives

- To create a sense of community identity and belonging
- To ensure tolerance, respect and engagement with people from different cultures, backgrounds and beliefs recognising their rights and responsibilities
- To ensure that all individuals and groups in society have the opportunity to effectively engage in issues relating to their community
- To encourage a strong, inclusive, community and voluntary sector
- To engender a sense of civic and neighbourhood values, responsibility and pride

## Sustainability Issues

Within Stafford Borough there are the following sustainability issues:

### Economic

- Decline in manufacturing industry resulting in job losses
- Opportunities for tourist related economy
- Slight increase in VAT business start ups in Stafford
- Decline in agricultural industries
- Vacant units within the town centres

### Social and Community

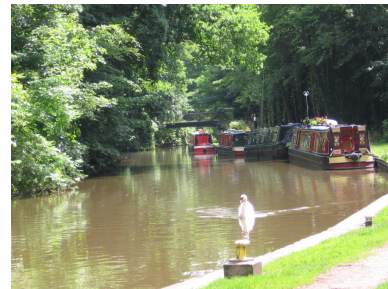
- High levels of deprivation in some areas of the Borough, such as Stafford town
- High number of empty homes across the Borough, the majority of which are empty for more than 6 months
- Slight increase in number of homeless households in recent years
- Low level of provision of affordable housing compared with rising house prices and special needs housing
- Lack of access to services and facilities in some parts of the Borough
- The level of outdoor space provision is much lower than the national target

### Environmental

- Loss of biodiversity
- Quality of SSSI's is improving, but still below the national target

## Sustainability Appraisal Summary

- Whilst river biology and chemistry have improved over the last decade, both are still below the national average
- High percentage of new homes are being delivered on Previously Developed Land
- Stafford's Biomass energy project will provide renewable energy and opportunities for further renewable energy development in the future.
- Climate change and adaptation for it
- Increased use of the car
- Flood risk in the Borough (particularly in Stafford town centre)



### How can I get involved?

You can get involved in any of the stages of sustainability appraisal, in particular we seek comments on the:

- Key Sustainability Issues
- Sustainability Appraisal Framework
- Sustainability Appraisal Objectives
- Appraisal of development strategy options

If you would like to make any comments, view any of the SA documents or require any further information please contact forward planning by [e-mail](#) or call 01785 619591