



Subject:	Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal
Date:	19 th January 2016
Reporting Officer:	Phil Williams, Director of Planning and Place
Contact Officer:	Keith Sutherland, Development Planning & Policy Manager

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	In June the report on the proposed plan development programme outlined the requirements for a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to be carried out alongside the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Local Development Plan (LDP).
1.2	In taking forward the LDP Council will need to engage with a wide range of stakeholders and ensure the development of the plan Option, Strategy and Local Policies incorporates an assessment of the potential environmental effects alongside the integration of social and economic considerations.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to consider this report and agree to the commissioning of consultancy support, up to the value of £30,000, towards the carrying out of the required Assessment and Appraisal of the Local Development Plan ensuring that it is developed in accordance with the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The European Directive 2001/42/EC requires Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of a wide range of plans and programmes. The objective of the 'SEA Directive' is to provide for the protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of

	<p>environmental considerations into plan preparation with a view to promoting sustainable development.</p>
3.2	<p>In addition the 2011 Planning Act (Sections 8(6) and 9(7)) requires a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to be carried out for both the LDP Strategy and Local Policies Plan which will incorporate an assessment of the potential environmental effects.</p>
3.3	<p>The purpose of the SA is to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the preparation of the local development plan. The main difference between the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is that former has a wider scope covering the social and economic effects of the LDP as well as the more environmentally focused considerations of the SEA.</p>
3.4	<p>The purpose of the SA is to present the findings of the appraisal and demonstrate that reasonable alternatives and any likely significant effects have been taken into account in the developing the LDP through the various stages. The SA should provide the context to the policy approach and LDP development provide an outline of the measures envisaged to meet the monitoring requirements.</p>
3.5	<p>In order to ensure a robust SA the proposal is to appoint external consultants to advise and work alongside officers as they proceed with the SA /SEA. The process must be undertaken with a degree of confidence, in order to meet the procedural tests of 'soundness' at the Core Strategy and Detailed Plan stages.</p>
3.6	<p>The Council will undertake the SA with review and guidance provided by the consultants. The majority of ongoing work and tasks will be carried out by officers with the consultants brought in at key milestones to advise on, check and verify the work produced in accordance with the latest regulations and published guidance. This process should ensure a transparent, unbiased and robust approach is adopted.</p>
3.7	<p>It is likely that the this appraisal and resulting reports will form important elements of the "test of soundness" as part of the evidence base for the draft plan. The reports will therefore be the subject of detailed scrutiny due to their importance in shaping the proposals within the draft LDP. The appraisal and reporting will be carried out in parallel to the plan development and therefore needs to be both robust and consistent to ensure it</p>

3.8	<p>provides a comprehensive base for the Soundness and Inquiry</p> <p>The process will need to be integrated with the local development plan making and inform the review of the LDP. The process involves the following seven stages;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping Report for preparation of the evidence base to inform the appraisal • Interim Report assessing reasonable alternatives against the framework for the Preferred Options Paper • Assessment of alternatives and any likely significant effects of the draft plan • Appraisal Report to document the appraisal process and findings • Consultation with the stakeholders on the draft plan; • Statement of reasons the plan was adopted and proposed monitoring measures • Monitoring of the significant potential effects and need for remedial action.
4.0	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	None
5.0	Resource Implications
5.1	<p>The cost of carrying out the Strategic Environmental Appraisal during the development of the Local Development Plan and ensuring that it is developed in accordance with the provisions of Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal requirements is likely to be in the region of £25,000 and will be met from existing budgets.</p>