



South
Derbyshire
District Council

Local Development Framework

SA

South Derbyshire Sustainability Appraisal

Local Green Spaces Plan

**Non-Technical
Summary**



People | Place | Progress

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1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 This document is the non-technical summary of the Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report (October 2018) for the South Derbyshire Local Green Spaces Plan (LGSP). It summaries how the Sustainability Appraisal has been carried out, the main findings and the next steps.
- 1.2 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a process that has been carried out as an integral part of developing the Plan with the aim of promoting sustainable development through the integration of environmental, social and economic considerations. It is required by the Government through legislation and is subject to public consultation and scrutiny in parallel with the LGSP.

2.0 The South Derbyshire Local Plan

The Local Plan Part 1 (LP1)

- 2.1 The Council has prepared its local Plan in a number of parts. The first part (the LP1) comprises the spatial vision and objectives and a spatial strategy that sets out the amount of growth required. It also includes strategic policies together with strategic housing and employment allocations. The LP1 was adopted on the 13th June 2016 and establishes a long-term strategy for growth in South Derbyshire to 2028 to manage development, provide services, deliver infrastructure and create sustainable communities.

The Local Plan Part 2 (LP2)

- 2.2 The LP2 sets out a number of non-strategic policies to guide development management decisions. These cover a range of issues including heritage, retail, local green spaces and development in the countryside, (alongside a review of settlement boundaries that has been undertaken to support this policy). The LP2 also includes non-strategic housing allocations, which will deliver around 700 homes in the plan period. This was Adopted in November 2017.

Local Green Spaces Plan

- 2.3 Once adopted this Plan will set out the location and number of local green spaces in the District (although 86 are currently proposed) and include two policies to control development on designated sites and support enhancements to designated sites including in respect of biodiversity and accessibility.

3.0 Habitat Regulations Assessment

- 3.1 In addition to SA, the Council are also required to undertake a separate form of assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) when preparing the Plan. This assessment known as Habitat Regulations Assessment is required to ensure that a strategy or plan either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would not have a significant effect on a European site.
- 3.2 Where the Plan could affect a European Site the Council is required to undertake an 'Appropriate Assessment'. European sites referred to include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). Within South Derbyshire there is one SAC; the River Mease. There are a number of other SACs and SPAs located in surrounding Districts and Boroughs.
- 3.3 The Plan has been subject to a screening assessment by the planning team to help identify which European Sites could be affected by the proposals included within it. The results of the full screening report have been published on the District Council's website.

3.4 The conclusions from the Habitats Regulation Screening Assessment are:

- There is no likely significant impact on any SPAs or SACs located outside of the District as a result of implementing the LGS Plan.
- There is one local green space located in the catchment of the River Mease. The remainder (85 sites) are located outside of the catchment.
- The site located in the catchment is site 168 (Linton Orchard) and consists of a community orchard located in the southern part of Linton. It lies on the watershed for the catchment and is 4km from the SAC. Given that this LGS Plan seeks to ensure that this site is retained as a community orchard its designation is unlikely to have any effect on the SAC
- The designation of local green spaces will not increase surface water or foul water and would be unlikely to have any effect on water quality within the SAC.
- As the South Derbyshire Local Plan (Parts 1 & 2) have already been identified as having no effect on the SAC, it is unlikely that the adoption of this Plan will act in combination with these, or indeed the plans of neighbouring authorities adopted or under preparation.

3.5 Even though the Plan has been identified as unlikely to have any discernible effect on the River Mease SAC, the Council remains committed to working with the Environment Agency, Natural England, Severn Trent Water and adjoining Planning Authorities to improve water quality in the Mease Catchment.

4.0 Sustainability Appraisal – Purpose and Requirements

4.1 The purpose of the SA is to promote the objectives of sustainable development. This is often defined as:

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”¹.

4.2 The SA allows the Council to create a Plan which is ‘sustainable’ by providing us with an understanding of the likely social, environmental and economic impacts of a Plan from the outset. We can therefore consider how development proposals interact with others in the Plan and also other plans prepared or being prepared by other neighbouring planning authorities. In reviewing these effects, we have an opportunity to try and reduce the effects the Plan could have on the environment, the economy or on society either by selecting less harmful development options, seeking to mitigate the negative effects of the Plan, or wherever possible enhancing the positive effects.

4.3 The SA process is governed by European and national legislation and supported by Government policy, which includes:

- The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.
- The requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC (often known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive) which requires the preparation of an environmental report that considers the significant environmental effects of a plan or programme.

¹ Our Common Future Brundtland Report, World Commission on the Environment and Development, 1987

4.4 This Sustainability Appraisal incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive, by combining the environmentally-focused considerations of SEA with wider social and economic effects.

5.0 Sustainability Appraisal – Context and Objectives

5.1 The context and objectives of the SA were established during an earlier stage (often referred to as the scoping stage) of the SA process. This involved compiling background information in order for SA to be undertaken. The establishment of an evidence base allowed ongoing appraisal work and culminated in a framework of sustainability objectives.

5.2 Key tasks in this scoping exercise involved:

- identifying relevant policies, plans and programmes which could influence the Plan
- collecting baseline information
- identifying key sustainability issues in South Derbyshire
- establishing sustainability objectives.

5.3 This evidence base work was published by South Derbyshire District Council in a Scoping Report in May 2018 after a comprehensive and wide ranging public consultation exercise. The Scoping Report, although a separate document, forms part of the environmental report required by the SEA Directive.

5.4 The Scoping Report has been updated to reflect the comments received back during the scoping consultation and an updated version of the report together with a summary of comments received is available to view on the Council’s website:

6.0 The Sustainability Appraisal Framework

6.1 The SA Framework consists of sustainability objectives which were established during the scoping stage described above; these objectives allow for the effects of the Plan to be described, analysed and compared which forms the basis of the assessment of the Plan.

6.2 Sustainability Appraisal objectives are different in concept and purpose from the objectives of the Plan, though there is a degree of overlap. They are not necessarily intended to be fully achievable, but are more aspirational in nature, and address the full cross-section of sustainability issues.

6.3 The objectives are listed in the following table. The full framework is presented in Section 4 of the main Sustainability Appraisal Report, which includes more detailed ‘decision –making criteria’.

Sustainability Topic	Sustainability Objective
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna*	To enhance biodiversity and geodiversity across the District
Population and Human Health	To provide high quality places to live where residents feel safe.
	To improve the health and well-being of residents
	To improve educational achievement and access to locally valued educational resources
	To promote social inclusion, reduce inequalities and improve local accessibility to recreational resources (including open spaces and sports facilities).

Sustainability Topic	Sustainability Objective
Material Assets	To make best use of existing infrastructure and reduce the need to travel and increase opportunities for non-car travel (public transport walking and cycling)
	To deliver economic growth and diversify and strengthen local urban and rural economies.
	To enhance the vibrancy and viability of the District's urban areas and villages
	To improve the quality of the existing built environment.
Soil, Water and Air	To reuse brownfield land and promote sustainable use of natural resources including soil.
	To reduce water, light, air and noise pollution
Climatic Factors	To reduce and manage the impacts of climate change including flood risk and the District's contribution towards the causes
Cultural Heritage (including architectural and Archaeological Heritage)	To conserve, enhance and improve access to the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings
Landscape	To conserve and enhance the District's landscape and townscape character

7.0 Developing and Refining Policies and Reasonable Alternatives

7.1 The SEA Directive requires assessment of the likely significant effects of implementing the Plan, and "reasonable alternatives". Developing options and alternatives is an important part of both the plan-making and Sustainability Appraisal process. For development plan documents such as the LGSP, the reasonable alternatives are the different options identified during plan preparation that are capable of delivering the Plan objectives.

7.2 Given the duty on authorities preparing Local Plans to contribute to sustainable development, South Derbyshire District Council has sought to develop options early in the plan preparation process. However in respect of broad options for bring forward local green spaces these were considered as part of the LP2 process. In essence however the Council identified three potential options as follows:

- Option 1: Do not designate Local Green Spaces
- Option 2: Support the designation of appropriate greenspace through the Neighbourhood Planning process
- Option 3: Designate appropriate green spaces through Plan process

During the preparation of the LP2 the Council confirmed its intention to designate local green spaces through the local plan process and committed to do this through the preparation of a local green spaces document. SA in respect of these broad options has previously been undertaken by the Council and further broad options appraisal is not required.

8.0 Assessing the Significance of Effects

8.1 The SEA Directive requires an assessment of the "likely significant effects...taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme". It is, therefore, necessary to assess only those effects of the Plan that are likely to be significant, not all possible effects.

8.2 In the SA Report, the social, environmental and economic effects of the 'broad strategic options' and the 'preferred options' are outlined (this Sa work having previously been undertaken during the preparation of LP2). An assessment has also been made of the policies included in the Plan. Prediction of effects involves identifying what changes might occur to the sustainability baseline over time – these changes are then evaluated for their likely significance, in terms of their probability, duration, frequency, geographical area and size of population likely to be affected. However, it is not always possible to accurately predict sustainability effects when considering plans,

especially where uncertainties exist or data gaps are uncovered that make evaluation difficult this has been acknowledged within the appraisal.

9.0 Likely Significance of Effects of the South Derbyshire LP2

9.1 The SA Report has acknowledged that effects, both positive and negative, are likely. These are summarised as follows:

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

9.2 Site designation will safeguard existing local green spaces sites and could support enhancements to existing sites including through changes to management, new planting or habitat creation, or supporting the designation of sites as Envirobank receptor sites. Of the 75 sites proposed all have varying degrees of potential for biodiversity enhancements, although those with the greatest potential are considered to be sites at the Mease Meadow and Hilton Memorial Meadow in Hilton and the ponds to the rear of Aston Hall, Aston on Trent.

Population and Human Health

9.3 Most green spaces are well related to existing communities as those dislocated from the communities they serve have been discounted from designation at an early stage. All are considered to have safe access to and from the site. A number of sites are located close to existing schools or youth groups such as the scouts and have been designated as they are known to be used by these organisations. Such sites include the Catherine Jonathon Playing field in Egginton, Sandy Pits Lane, Etwall, and Walton Playing Field. Just over a third of proposed green spaces are identified as having beneficial effects in respect of health and wellbeing. Sites most likely to deliver such benefits are those which contribute to local formal or informal sports provision, or provide community space for local interest groups such as older person clubs or slimming clubs.

Material Assets

9.4 All sites proposed for designation are publically accessible to some extent as previously highlighted. No sites more than 800m from the communities they serve (or 1200m where a playing field) have been proposed for designation. Almost all sites are within or adjacent to existing communities although a limited number of more isolated sites have been proposed. These include the Holy Well, Wards Lane, Melbourne and Ashby Road, Grass Triangle, Ticknall. However both these sites are accessible by public footpaths (Holy Well), or a metalled footway (Ashby Road Grass Triangle). Opportunities exist to potentially improve public access on many sites.

9.5 A significant number of sites make a positive contribution to the local built environment. Sites in urban areas are often located in densely developed areas and provide important green gaps within housing estates or employment areas. In more rural areas many green spaces help preserve the character of the Districts villages by providing green spaces along key transport routes, or within the historic core of settlements.

9.6 A number of sites are gateways to tourism and leisure facilities located within the District, for example sites around the entrance to Calke Abbey in Ticknall. It is also likely that local green spaces designation could in some instances help support access grant funding to enhance spaces for the benefit of local communities, or help support the ongoing use of community spaces such as community halls or events such as bonfire displays or well dressing festivals by safeguarding key sites used by local communities.

Soil, Water and Air

- 9.7 Almost all of the proposed sites are greenfield and designation could help to restrict development to those necessary for the site to continue to meet local community needs. Site designation is likely to restrict the nature and extent of new development and would therefore be likely to restrict the potential for sites to have any additional impacts in respect of noise, air or light pollution.
- 9.8 In respect of water quality a number of sites are adjacent to, or include watercourses, however the protections offered by the designation, including restrictions on the nature of new development allowed will help ensure that sites do not contribute to increased surface water flows. In respect of the River Mease Special Area of Conservation (SAC), there is only a single site located within the catchment (site 168 Linton Orchard). This is a small site which consists of a community orchard which itself is located around 4km from the SAC. Given the scale, nature and location of this designation the Plan will not have any adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC.

Climatic Factors

- 9.9 Most sites will not have any effect in respect of flood risk. However a small number of sites either include area set aside for flood defences or surface water attenuation, for example Mease Meadow, Hilton and Appletree Meadow, Etwall, or have potential to accommodate flood defences in the future (Catherine Jonathon Playing Field).

Cultural Heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage)

- 9.10 The Plan is unlikely to have any significant effect on the architectural and archaeological heritage of the District, but could have a number of locally important effects. In particular sites in Aston on Trent, Etwall, Findern, Melbourne, Repton, Milton, Ticknall, Shardlow, Walton on Trent and Willington will have beneficial effects where sites are located close to conservation areas or nearby listed buildings.

Landscape

- 9.11 All sites are likely to have a minor beneficial effect in respect of landscape or townscape character. This is because designation will further safeguard important gaps or amenity land in the District's urban areas and villages. However on a small number of sites designation was considered likely to have more significant effects where landscape were considered to be more significance, including because of the potential to help safeguard the setting of heritage assets.

10.0 Mitigation Measures

The policies included in both the LP1 and LP2 already seek to reduce the effects of development, However the Council has sought to include a number of policies in it the LGSP to ensure that the Plan will not give rise to undue impacts and where appropriate seek enhancements to the quality of local green spaces. Together these policies will seek to minimise potential adverse effects of development and improve the performance of the Plan by ensuring improved management of sites through the inclusion of a policy to:

- protect the openness and essential qualities of spaces including through the control of the scale, design and location of new development
- protect biodiversity on sites and include policy to support enhancements including through improved management and new habitat creation as well as through supporting the designation of spaces as envirobank receptor sites so biodiversity losses elsewhere in the District can be offset by improvements to appropriate local green space sites.
- support development that can contribute towards community cohesion, for example by making sites more usable
- makes provision for signage or advertisements on spaces used for leisure or tourism uses
- support improvements to accessibility within and to and from local green spaces

11.0 Overall Sustainability of the LGSP

11.1 The SA Report has investigated the likely significant effects of implementing the LGSP and it has indicated that for the most part impacts are unlikely to be significant. However where effects are likely these will be managed through compliance with existing planning policy requirements and through the use of policies in the emerging LGSP to deliver improvements to the condition of designated sites and to manage the nature and scale of future potential developments on designated sites.

12.0 Consultation

12.1 Comments on the sites or policies proposed in the Draft Plan should be made in writing to and consultation forms to complete are available online at www.south-derbys.gov.uk/localgreenspaces, at the District Council Offices in Swadlincote or at all South Derbyshire Libraries.

Completed representation forms should be sent to:

Planning Policy
South Derbyshire District Council
Civic Offices
Civic Way
Swadlincote
DE11 0AH

E-mail: Planning.policy@south-derbys.gov.uk

If you have any questions regarding consultation responses, please contact the Planning Policy Team on 01283 595749

Please submit your comments by 5pm on Monday 19th November 2018.

12.2 Comments received during the consultation on the interim draft of the SA Report will be considered by the Council and the plan amended ahead of a further consultation and submission to the Planning Inspectorate.

13.0 Monitoring Requirements

13.1 The SEA Directive requires the significant environmental effects of plans and programmes to be monitored, in order to identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to take appropriate action where necessary.

13.2 The monitoring undertaken on the LGSP will help to:

- monitor the significant effects of the plan.
- track whether the plan has had any unforeseen effects.
- ensure that action can be taken to reduce / offset the significant effects of the plan.
- provide baseline data for future sustainability appraisals, and
- provide evidence of how the environment / sustainability criteria of the area are evolving.

13.3 The requirements of the SEA Directive focus on monitoring the effects of the plan. This equates to both the plan's significant effects and also unforeseen effects. It may be difficult to implement monitoring mechanisms for unexpected effects, or to attribute such effects to the implementation

of the Plan when they occur, as often other plans, projects or programmes could all effect the quality of environment, economic performance or the social aspects of the plan.

- 13.4 It is good practice for the monitoring of significant sustainability effects to be integrated with other monitoring of the Local Development Framework. For this reason, the Council will report significant sustainability effects as part of its existing monitoring regime. Proposed indicators are included in the SA Framework. These have been drawn from the baseline information and key sustainability issues identified within the SA Scoping Report and are identified to monitor potential significant adverse effects highlighted in the main report

14.0 Next Steps

- 14.1 Following the Consultation on the Draft Plan it is likely that the allocations and policies in the Plan will be subject to further change to reflect the responses received back by the Council. The SA will need to be further updated to reflect the changes made and will be published for six weeks alongside the Pre-submission Local Plan which is likely to take place in early 2019.
- 14.2 Following the Pre-submission consultation the Council will review any comments made on the Plan and will submit the Pre-submission Plan alongside any proposed modifications to the Secretary of State for Examination. The Secretary of State will then appoint an inspector to examine the Plan. Examination is likely to take place in summer 2019. The role of the Inspector during the examination process will be to consider the soundness of the LGSP, using the SA as part of the evidence base.
- 14.3 If any significant changes are made to the LGSP as a result of the examination process that may lead to additional significant effects not already covered in the SA it will be further updated, prior to Plan Adoption.



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