



**South Hams
District Council**

**SOUTH HAMS RURAL AREAS
DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD):
ISSUES AND OPTIONS**

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT

June 2007

Prepared by

enfusion



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SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT

<i>date:</i>	June 2007	
<i>prepared for:</i>	South Hams District Council	
<i>prepared by:</i>	Liz Payne Barbara Carroll	
<i>checked by:</i>	Barbara Carroll	

enfusion 
environmental planning and management for sustainability

Treenwood House
Rowden Lane
Bradford on Avon
BA15 2AU
t: 01225 867112
www.enfusion.co.uk

South Hams District Council
**Rural Areas Development Plan Document (DPD):
Issues and Options
Sustainability Appraisal**

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1.0 SUMMARY AND OUTCOMES

Non Technical Summary

This Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report

- 1.1 This SA Report documents the processes of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the South Hams Rural Areas DPD: Issues and Options, as required by planning legislation and Government guidance. SA assists in promoting more sustainable development through an ongoing dialogue and assessment during the preparation of development planning documents. SEA considers the potential impacts of planning proposals on the environment and is a requirement of European legislation. In England, SEA is incorporated into the SA process and consideration of socio-economic issues is dealt with to the same level of detail as environmental.

Sustainability Issues, Problems and Opportunities

- 1.2 During early 2005 a sustainability appraisal scoping process was carried out to help ensure that the SA covered the key sustainability issues that are relevant to the development planning system in South Hams. Relevant plans and programmes were reviewed to develop a wider understanding of the issues and priorities for South Hams, together with a description of the current and predicted social, environmental and economic characteristics of the District. From these studies, the key sustainability problems and issues were identified as affordable housing, local employment, the Sherford New Community, high design standards for development, protection of environmental quality, second homes, car usage, and accessibility.

Method for Appraising the Sustainability of the DPD & Consultation

- 1.3 A Sustainability Appraisal Framework was compiled and included Objectives that aim to resolve the issues and problems identified. It was proposed to use these Sustainability Objectives to test the draft development plan documents as they were being prepared. This approach and the proposals for testing the development planning process was written up into a SA Scoping Report that was sent to a wide range of organisations and also made available on the Council's website. Comments were invited and received from a number of these organisations; this consultation helped improve the Appraisal Framework.

Appraising the Rural Areas DPD Issues and Options Stage

- 1.4 The Core Strategy is the overarching document that sets out the Vision, Objectives and strategic direction for spatial and development control planning in the South Hams area (apart from the Dartmoor National Park).

The Development Control Core Policies provide more detailed advice for use in determining planning applications. The Rural Areas DPD provides an opportunity to address the key issues facing the villages and rural areas of South Hams, principally through the allocations of development sites for specific uses.

- 1.5 The early preparatory stages of the Rural Areas DPD have identified six key specific issues as follows:
- Sites for Housing
 - Sites for Employment
 - Community Facilities and Open Space
 - Environmental Designations
 - Town Centre Zones for Salcombe and Modbury
 - Development Boundary Reviews
- 1.6 The DPD considers the options that might be available for each of these key issues, together with questions to guide the consultation process. The SA Framework was used with professional judgement to assess the compatibility of the options with the objectives for sustainable development that had been identified through the SA scoping process.

SA Findings

- 1.7 Generally the Rural Areas DPD options were found to be compatible with the SA Framework of objectives for sustainable development and planning in the South Hams area. A small number of minor comments were suggested and these have been noted by the Council for consideration alongside the comments received as a result of this public consultation process when preparing the preferred options stage. The SA identified that there were no clear options suggested with regard to town centre zones and the development boundary review; these sections were revised to incorporate the suggestions from the SA in the Issues and Options document that this SA Report accompanies for consultation.

Next Steps

- 1.8 This report on the SA incorporating SEA is now presented for public consultation, together with the Issues and Options DPD. Comments received will be reviewed and the SA Report will be revised to take account of any significant changes that are required as a result of the consultation. Any significant changes to the DPD will be further appraised and the revised SA Report will then be submitted with the Preferred Options DPD. Any significant changes to the DPD will be appraised and the revised SA Report will then be published with the Submission DPD for examination in public. A Final SA Report that records the whole SA/SEA process will be published with the adopted DPD.

HOW TO COMMENT ON THIS SA REPORT

If you have any comments on the SA/SEA of the Rural Areas Issues and Options DPD we would be grateful to receive them. Your views are important and the Council needs to receive them by **14 September 2007**. Comments may be sent to the Forward Planning Team by post, fax or email.

Post: Forward Planning Team, South Hams District Council, Follaton House, Plymouth Road, Totnes TQ9 5NE

Fax: Forward Planning, Rural Areas DPD Preferred Options to 01803 861404.

Email: forward.planning@southhams.gov.uk

2.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Rural Areas DPD and the Core Strategy

- 2.1 The aim of the Rural Areas DPD is to seek views on what the rural areas of South Hams should be like in 2016 and the purpose of the document is to apply and develop the policies of the Core Strategy to these Rural Areas. The adopted Core Strategy has been subject to SA/SEA and this is reported in full in the final SA Report accompanying the Submission document Core Strategy in January 2006.
- 2.2 The strategic issues identified for the DPD are:
- Sites for Housing (400 dwellings to be distributed amongst the villages with defined development boundaries)
 - Sites for Employment (3ha of employment land on small sites of no more than 0.5 ha)
 - Community Facilities and Open Space
 - Environmental Designations
 - Town Centre Zones for Salcombe and Modbury
 - Development Boundary Reviews
- 2.3 The spatial planning options proposed to address these issues are the same for housing and employment sites:
- hierarchical
 - needs based
 - area based
 - opportunity based
 - combination
- 2.4 The DPD Issues & Options stage outlines the strengths and weaknesses of each option and invites comments through questions.

The SA/SEA Approach and Methods

- 2.5 This is the SA Report that documents the initial sustainability appraisal under the SA/SEA¹ regulations and in accordance with advice in PPS12, of the issues and options stage of the production of the DPD; it accompanies the DPD Issues & Options for public consultation. This is an early part of the process of public consultation and therefore the sustainability appraisal takes a strategic approach in accordance with SA guidance². The SA seeks to highlight any potential areas of conflict between the DPD and

¹ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

² ODPM, 2005 *Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks*

the SA objectives that should be given consideration when refining the options in light of the results of the consultation. On refining the options a detailed sustainability appraisal will be undertaken.

- 2.6 The SA Framework is presented in Appendix I of this report. The compatibility of the proposed options with the SA Framework objectives was appraised using professional judgement. The results of the SA are presented in Tables 1 and 2 for Housing and Employment Policy and Allocated Sites respectively. A summary and discussion of these compatibility analyses is presented in the following sections 3-7.

3.0 Housing

- 3.1 None of the five proposed options has a strategic impact on economic growth, land and soil quality, quality of the built environment, water or minerals. Indirect impacts will come about for the landscape, employment, biodiversity, historic and cultural heritage, energy, air quality and waste dependant on the location of the development and for these SA objectives the hierarchical option performs better than the other options because of the certainty it offers.
- 3.2 The unknown distribution of development which is inherent in the other four options obviously makes it hard to predict effects but dispersed development inevitably carries potential for car use with knock on effects for climate change and air quality, and implications for access to health and education facilities and services such as waste collection.
- 3.3 In terms of progressing the SA objectives for balanced communities and housing, the needs based approach performs well, followed by the hierarchical and area based approaches. However in terms of access there is potential for conflict within a needs based approach.

4.0 Employment

- 4.1 None of the proposed five options has a strategic impact on balanced communities, housing, land and soil quality, quality of the built environment, water or minerals. Indirect impacts will come about for the landscape, housing, balanced communities, biodiversity, historic and cultural heritage, energy, air quality and waste, dependant on the location of the development, and for these objectives the hierarchical option performs better than the other options because of the certainty it offers. The unknown distribution of development which is inherent in the other four options again makes it hard to predict effects but dispersed development inevitably carries potential for car use with knock on effects for climate change and air quality.

5.0 Access to Services

- 5.1 Loss of road across Slapton Line: This issue is raised in this part of the DPD but no options are suggested. The Issues & Options document is seeking community involvement and opinions at this stage. South Hams District Council, AONB Partnership and DEFRA are all involved in this issue and the Slapton Coastal Zone Adaptation Plan (Slapton Line Partnership) with the aim of developing and implementing an innovative and sustainable community-based adaptation programme for the coast at Slapton Sands in South Devon. SA is not relevant here at this stage.

6.0 Community Facilities, Open Space and Environmental Designations

- 6.1 The DPD cannot only allocate land for housing and employment but also community facilities. The document seeks to ensure that there is adequate protection for existing community facilities and to uncover any existing need for further facilities. Furthermore the document seeks the same information with reference to open space and environmental designations.
- 6.2 Ensuring the protection of existing facilities and open space and looking for gaps in provision will assist in meeting the SA objectives with regard to balanced communities, access and health with further indirect benefits for cultural heritage, landscape and biodiversity. Provision of local community facilities will also have a beneficial impact on air quality, energy and climate change through the potential to reduce use of the private car. Open space also acts as carbon sinks and can help improve air quality.
- 6.3 Adequate protection of existing designations, and seeking information to ensure coverage of all important sites, will assist in meeting the SA objectives for landscape and biodiversity.

7.0 Town Centre Zones and Development Boundary Reviews

- 7.1 The Issues and Options document recognises that these issues play a key part in the rural development strategy; it does not offer options at this stage but rather seeks public opinion. The restriction or expansion of these boundaries can have profound implications for the settlements involved. The Town Centre Zones have implications for the social and economic SA objectives whilst the development boundaries have the potential to impact on social, environmental and economic objectives. There is also an inter-relationship between this part of the questionnaire and the rural housing and employment land allocations which is not acknowledged in the document.

8.0 SA Findings and Progression

- 8.1 There is a need to ensure that the needs, or perceived needs, of communities are evidence based and balanced against wider sustainability objectives. This is particularly evident in the assessment of the spatial options for housing allocations. Whilst there may be a demand for rural housing there are clear planning policies and environmental reasons why a demand led or opportunity based approach may be inappropriate as it could lead to dispersed development throughout the countryside.
- 8.2 Although there is an element of uncertainty in the assessment of the impact of each strategy, the hierarchical approach gives greater clarity and ability to predict cumulative impacts and impacts over time. The affordable housing needs of some rural settlements can also be addressed through the implementation of the rural exceptions site policy which is locally needs based and requires illustration of demand through parish surveys and is often a community led process.
- 8.3 The benefits of rural employment opportunities are recognised in the assessment including the contribution to balanced communities and access to services and employment. Again there is a key issue relating to location and the impact there will be on the use of the private car.
- 8.4 Whilst not really presenting options with relation to these issues, protecting and providing community facilities presents the opportunity to reduce use of the car and provide facilities in safe walking and cycling distance and meeting some day to day needs in the immediate locality. Safeguarding open space and environmental designations also contribute to sustainability through protecting the landscape and biodiversity and providing green lungs for settlements.
- 8.5 There are no clear options for assessment on the issues of town centre zones and the development boundary review but it is clear that they both have the potential for significant impacts on sustainability. Detailed assessment of the refined options will be required to ensure compatibility with the Sustainable Community Strategy, the SA objectives and the Core Strategies of the LDF. These issues have significant implications for the Issues and Options document and it was recommended that these matters are made clearer. Whilst the options and implications of the housing and employment allocations are quite widely explored, the relationship between those options and the town centres and development boundaries are not made clear.
- 8.6 The Council received the initial findings of the SA of the Issues and Options stage and revised the DPD to take into account the suggestions with regard to provision of options for town centres and development boundaries. The other suggestions arising from the SA will be considered

alongside other comments received from the public consultation stage of this DPD. The response to the SA was as follows:

Sustainability Appraisal of the Rural Areas DPD Issues & Options Stage - Initial Findings	
Recommendations from the SA carried out by Enfusion	Have taken comments on board ✓ Yes X No Explanation
<p>There is a need to ensure that the needs, or perceived needs of communities, are evidence based and balanced against wider sustainability objectives. This is particularly evident in the assessment of the spatial options for housing allocations. Whilst there may be a demand for rural housing there are clear planning policy and environmental reasons why a demand lead or opportunity based approach may be inappropriate as it could lead to dispersed development throughout the countryside.</p>	<p>All comments have been noted and alongside results of the forthcoming consultation at Issues and Options stage will help inform the approach taken in the preferred options stage of the Rural Areas DPD.</p>
<p>Although there is an element of uncertainty in the assessment of the impact of each strategy, the hierarchical approach gives greater clarity and ability to predict cumulative impacts and impacts over time. The affordable housing needs of some rural settlements can also be addressed through the implementation of the rural exceptions site policy which is locally needs based and requires illustration of demand through parish surveys and is often a community lead process.</p>	
<p>The benefits of rural employment opportunities are recognised in the assessment including the contribution to balanced communities and access to services and employment. Again there is a key issue relating to location and the impact there will be on the use of</p>	

<p>the private car.</p>		
<p>Whilst not really presenting options with relation to these issues, protecting and providing community facilities presents the opportunity to reduce use of the car and provide facilities in safe walking and cycling distance and meeting some day to day needs in the immediate locality. Safeguarding open space and environmental designations also contribute to sustainability through protecting the landscape and biodiversity and providing green lungs for settlements.</p>		
<p>Finally, there are no clear options for assessment on the issues of town centre zones and the development boundary review but it is clear that they both have the potential for significant impacts on sustainability. Detailed assessment of the refined options will be required to ensure compatibility with the Community Strategy, the SA objectives and the Core Strategies of the LDF. These issues have quite far reaching consequences for the Issues and Options paper and it is recommended that this is made clear in the paper. Whilst the options and implications of the housing and employment allocations are quite widely explored, the relationship between those options and the town centres and development boundaries are not made clear.</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>The section(s) in the Issues and Options Paper on Town Centre Zones and Development Boundaries have been revised to take into account these comments.</p>

Table 1: Testing the Housing Policy and Allocated Sites Options for Compatibility with the SA Framework Objectives

		SA Framework Objectives															
Rural Areas DPD Housing Policy and Allocated Sites Options		1. Balanced Communities	2. Access	3. Housing	4. Quality of Built Environment	5. Health	6. Employment	7. Economic Growth	8. Landscape	9. Land and Soil	10. Biodiversity	11. Historic and Cultural Heritage	12. Minerals	13. Energy	14. Air Quality	15. Waste	16. Water
1.	Hierarchical	++/-	++	+/-	0	++	+/-	●	+	●	+	●	0	+	+	+	●
2.	Needs based	+	-	++	0	+	+	●	?	●	?	?	0	?	?	?	●
3.	Area based	?	+	+	0	+	+	●	?	●	?	?	0	?	?	?	●
4.	Opportunity based	?	?	+	0	?	?	●	?	●	?	?	0	?	?	?	●
5.	Combination	+	+/-	+	0	+	?	●	?	●	?	?	0	?	?	?	●

++	Likely to contribute considerably to the achievement of the sustainability objective
+	Likely to contribute somewhat to the achievement of the sustainability objective
-	Likely to conflict somewhat with the achievement of the sustainability objective
--	Likely to conflict considerably with the achievement of the sustainability objective
●	Negligible effect on the achievement of the sustainability objective
0	No identifiable relationship with the sustainability objective
?	Uncertain

Table 2: Testing the Employment Policy and Allocated Sites Options for Compatibility with the SA Framework Objectives

		SA Framework Objectives															
Rural Areas DPD Employment Policy and Allocated Sites Options		1. Balanced Communities	2. Access	3. Housing	4. Quality of Built Environment	5. Health	6. Employment	7. Economic Growth	8. Landscape	9. Land and Soil	10. Biodiversity	11. Historic and Cultural Heritage	12. Minerals	13. Energy	14. Air Quality	15. Waste	16. Water
1.	Hierarchical	+/-	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	0	0
2.	Needs based	+	-	0	0	+	++	+	?	?	?	0	0	?	?	0	0
3.	Area based	+	?	0	0	?	+	+	?	?	?	0	0	?	?	0	0
4.	Opportunity based	+/-	?	0	0	?	?	+	?	?	?	0	0	?	?	0	0
5.	Combination	+/-	?	0	0	?	?	+	?	?	?	0	0	?	?	0	0

++	Likely to contribute considerably to the achievement of the sustainability objective
+	Likely to contribute somewhat to the achievement of the sustainability objective
-	Likely to conflict somewhat with the achievement of the sustainability objective
--	Likely to conflict considerably with the achievement of the sustainability objective
●	Negligible effect on the achievement of the sustainability objective
0	No identifiable relationship with the sustainability objective

APPENDIX I: SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (sa) FRAMEWORK

	SA OBJECTIVE	DECISION-AIDING QUESTIONS
1	Balanced Communities <i>SEA topic: Population</i>	
	Promote community viability and balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote mixed use, mixed housing type and mixed tenure developments ▪ Encourage regeneration and enhancement of viable communities ▪ Enable independent lifestyles for the elderly and those with disabilities ▪ Provide sites for community services and facilities (education, health, recreation, social care etc) ▪ Provide sites for business and employment within communities ▪ Enable people to live near to where they work. ▪ Promote social inclusion and community ownership
2	Access <i>SEA topic: Population and Human Health</i>	
	Enhance access to jobs, education, services, cultural and leisure facilities for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance access, particularly in rural areas ▪ Promote accessible jobs, services and facilities such as shops, schools, banks, health centres, community centres, libraries, sports and leisure facilities, especially in under-served localities and Sherford New Community ▪ Improve quality and capacity of public transport, particularly in new developments ▪ Encourage integrated public transport ▪ Provide for basic services within walking distance of residents ▪ Reduce isolation of minorities and people with limited mobility ▪

3	Housing <i>SEA topic: Population and Human Health</i>	
	Ensure that all have access to a range of good quality housing to meet their needs, particularly affordable housing for identified local needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restrict second home ownership ▪ Provide dwellings to allow local residents, including young people, to remain within their communities
4	Quality of the Built Environment <i>SEA topic: Population and Human Health</i>	
	Enhance the form and design of the built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure new development is located in line with sustainable principles ▪ Promote high density in new development wherever appropriate ▪ Insist upon high design quality and respect for local character, distinctiveness and surrounding environment in new development ▪ Protect and enhance the quality of green and open spaces
5	Health <i>SEA topic: Population and Human Health</i>	
	Provide a healthy and safe environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision of space for informal recreation ▪ Design out crime and fear of crime in local communities ▪ Contribute to a safe, secure built environment ▪ Encourage safe provision for walking and cycling ▪ Prevent unacceptable levels of noise, light, odour and air pollution, through application of the precautionary principle
6	Employment <i>SEA topic: Population and Material Assets</i>	
	Promote a range of quality employment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote reuse of redundant agricultural buildings for employment ▪ Encourage provision of jobs accessible to residents ▪ Promote a year-round working countryside

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support provision of employment to allow young people to remain within their communities ▪ Support indigenous growth of small and micro businesses
7	Economic Growth <i>SEA topic: Population and Material Assets</i>	
	Promote sustainable economic development that can capitalise on the local distinctiveness of the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taking advantage of Objective II and Regional assistance from SWRDA ▪ Encourage growth of indigenous companies ▪ Encourage diversification into key growth sectors, including the environmental sector ▪ Provide for the needs of businesses (range of premises, services, infrastructure, skilled workforce) ▪ Enhance the vitality of town, district and local centres and encourage their commercial renewal ▪ Provide for the purchase of goods and use of services locally
8	Landscape <i>SEA topic: Landscape</i>	
	Ensure that special and distinctive landscapes, and the features within them, are conserved and enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preserve and where possible enhance diverse landscape character and value ▪ Maintain a high quality of undeveloped coastal landscapes ▪ Protect and enhance the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Dartmoor National Park ▪ Maintain and enhance hedgerow cover and traditional field boundaries
9	Land and Soil Quality <i>SEA topic: Soil and Water</i>	
	Maintain and improve the quality of land and soil in the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote high density development ▪ Actively promote the re-use of previously developed land ▪ Remediate contaminated land ▪ Protect the best and most versatile agricultural land

10	Biodiversity <i>SEA topic: Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora</i>	
	Protect and enhance the diversity and abundance of semi-natural habitats and indigenous species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote ecologically based land management ▪ Protect and enhance valuable wildlife habitats and species, both those statutorily designated and those of local value ▪ Avoid habitat fragmentation ▪ Protect and enhance those species and habitats identified in the Devon BAP and the National BAP ▪ Protect and enhance the biodiversity value of the Coastline, including estuaries
11	Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage <i>SEA topic: Cultural Heritage</i>	
	Protect and enhance cultural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect and enhance valued architecture, both buildings (including listed buildings) and their settings ▪ Support locally-based cultural resources and activities ▪ Protect and improve historical and archaeological environment (landscapes, site, buildings and settings), including Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) ▪ Protect the important geology of South Hams district ▪ Protect and enhance Conservation Areas
12	Minerals <i>SEA topic: Material Assets</i>	
	Encourage efficient exploitation of mineral resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contribute to the supply of minerals while protecting local communities and the environment ▪ Minimise demand for primary minerals and aggregates ▪ Recycle local stone, where possible, to reinforce local character

13	Energy <i>SEA topic: Material Assets and Climatic Factors</i>	
	Encourage energy efficiency, and promote the generation and use of energy from renewable sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Avoid exacerbating climate change by reducing energy usage (including through design of new development, and sustainable location of development to encourage accessibility by means other than the car) ▪ Support the generation and use of renewable energy, while protecting local communities and the environment ▪ Promote energy efficiency by locating development in such a way as to minimise the number of trips made by private car ▪ Promote energy efficiency in the design of new development
14	Air Quality <i>SEA topic: Air, Climatic Factors and Human Health</i>	
	Protect and improve local and global air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain or improve local air quality ▪ Reduce the number of trips made by private car ▪ Reduce CO₂ emissions ▪ Consider the longer term effects
15	Waste <i>SEA topic: Water, Soil, Human Health and Population</i>	
	Encourage minimisation, reuse and recycling of waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage provision for local community recycling and waste management facilities, including on new developments ▪ Promote minimisation, reuse and recycling of construction materials and waste
16	Water <i>SEA topic: Water and Climatic Factors</i>	
	Protect and enhance the water environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take into account the predicted effects of climate change ▪ Protect and improve freshwater,

		<p>estuarine and coastal water quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider the close relationship between water quality, quantity and flood risk management ▪ Increase efficient use and reuse of water resources ▪ Promote sustainable coastal and flood risk management that provides for climate change, where appropriate, in new developments ▪ Promote Sustainable Drainage Systems
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Symbols used in this matrix are to be interpreted as follows:

++	Likely to contribute considerably to the achievement of the sustainability objective
+	Likely to contribute somewhat to the achievement of the sustainability objective
-	Likely to conflict somewhat with the achievement of the sustainability objective
- -	Likely to conflict considerably with the achievement of the sustainability objective
•	Negligible effect on the achievement of the sustainability objective
0	No identifiable relationship with the sustainability objective
?	Level of effect on the achievement of the sustainability objective unclear