



**South Hams  
District Council**

**SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL /  
STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL  
ASSESSMENT of  
SOUTH HAMS CORE STRATEGY**

**SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT**

**January 2006**

Prepared by

*enfusion*



# SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL / STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT of SOUTH HAMS CORE STRATEGY

## SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT

*for and on behalf of Enfusion Ltd*

<i>date:</i>	<i>January 2006</i>	
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**CORE STRATEGY DOCUMENT  
SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT**

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## 1.0 SUMMARY AND OUTCOMES

### NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This Report documents the processes of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the South Hams Core Strategy (Submission Document) as required by planning legislation and Government guidance. SA and SEA assist the Council through helping to integrate sustainability considerations into the Core Strategy. The purpose of the Core Strategy is to set out the long-term spatial vision for the South Hams and the strategic policies to deliver that vision. It also sets a Framework for other development planning documents. The Council commissioned Enfusion to progress the SA and SEA work in January 2005.

During early 2005 a Scoping process was carried out to help ensure that the SA covered the key sustainability issues that are relevant to the land use planning system in the South Hams. Relevant plans and programmes were reviewed to develop a wider understanding of the issues and priorities for South Hams, and information about the current and future social, environmental and economic characteristics of the District was compiled. 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.

A Sustainability Appraisal Framework was compiled setting out Sustainability Objectives that aim to resolve the issues and problems identified. The information compiled during the Scoping process was then 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 helped improve the Appraisal Framework.

The Framework of objectives was used to test the sustainability of the emerging Core Strategy. This was undertaken at each stage of the preparation of the Core Strategy – and included a comparative appraisal of Core Strategy Options, and detailed appraisal of the Core Strategy Objectives, Spatial Strategy and Strategic Policies. Where it was considered that there were opportunities to enhance the sustainability of the emerging Policies, recommendations were made and these were primarily with respect to housing land and previously developed land, affordable housing, protected landscapes, coastal preservation, design, renewable energy and infrastructure provision.

Some of the recommendations were progressed within the 'Preferred Options' version of the Document (published in June 2005), with additional recommendations being progressed within the 'Submission' Document (being published with this Report, in January 2006). This demonstrates that the SA process has genuinely influenced the plan progression. The results of the SA indicate that, on the whole, the emerging Core Strategy will make a significant

contribution to the progression of Sustainable Development Objectives for the South Hams.

## **THE DIFFERENCE THE SA PROCESS HAS MADE**

- 1.1 Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy (or elements thereof) has been undertaken at several key stages during its development. At each stage, recommendations have been made regarding measures (preferred options, or revisions/additions to the wording of objectives and policies) for the progression of sustainability to be incorporated within the Core Strategy. The paragraphs below summarise the way in which these recommendations have influenced the Core Strategy, or signpost the reader to sections of the Report where more detail regarding recommendations and their progression, with reasons, can be found.

### **Spatial Strategy Options**

- 1.2 Section 5 presents a summary of the recommendations resulting from comparative appraisal of the sustainability effects of sets of options considered for the Spatial Strategy (mainly focusing upon the accommodation of new dwellings and employment land). All of the SA recommendations regarding the most sustainable options for the Spatial Strategy have been incorporated in the Core Strategy Preferred Options document.
- 1.3 It is considered that the Core Strategy for South Hams is particularly proactive in addressing key sustainability issues relating to an existing lack of affordable housing in the District – a problem which will only get worse without a strong lead to address the shortages. By exceeding the Structure Plan requirement for new dwellings, alongside a requirement for a substantial percentage of new dwellings to be affordable, South Hams District Council is demonstrating a willingness to recognise issues identified as priorities for the sustainability of the District and genuinely work towards redressing them.

### **Core Strategy Objectives**

- 1.4 Section 6 presents a summary of the recommendations regarding the Core Strategy Objectives, whilst Appendix VIII details the progression or otherwise of these recommendations. The majority of SA recommendations regarding the Core Strategy Objectives have been progressed within the Core Strategy Submission Document. For example, the Core Strategy objectives now seek to ‘secure high quality, locally distinctive, sustainable economic development’, to ‘re-use existing buildings where appropriate’, and to ‘promote development which will help to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and the emissions of greenhouse gases’.

### **Core Strategy (Preferred Options) Policies**

- 1.5 The SA of the Core Strategy (Preferred Options) Policies was undertaken in two stages to ensure an iterative approach whereby the findings of the SA were genuinely able to influence the emerging Core Strategy.

- 1.6 Appendix V details and section 6 summarises the initial recommendations regarding the Core Strategy Policies. The progression or otherwise of these recommendations, with reasons, is detailed in Appendix VIII.
- 1.7 Appendix VI details and Section 7 summarises the assessment of likely implications for sustainability and subsequent recommendations resulting from a more detailed SA of the Core Strategy policies at a more advanced stage of Core Strategy development. The progression or otherwise of these recommendations, with reasons, is presented in Appendix IX and summarised in section 7 of this report. Following the detailed SA, a number of minor modifications to the Core Strategy were advised. South Hams District Council were then able to progress the majority of the SA recommendations within the Core Strategy Submission Document.

### **Core Strategy (Submission Document) Policies**

- 1.8 Further changes were made to the Core Strategy in the light of consultation on the Preferred Options. Certain policies were deleted from the Core Strategy and certain policies added for inclusion within the Core Strategy Submission Document. Substantively modified aspects of the draft version of the Core Strategy Submission Document were appraised in detail (during December 2005). The matrices and recommendations resulting from the SA of the modified/new Policies are presented in Appendix VII and summarised in section 8 of this report.
- 1.9 The Council were able to take into account the recommendations within the Core Strategy Submission Document. A summary of progression or otherwise of each recommendation, with reasons, has been provided in Appendix X, with a summary in section 8 of this report.

### **HOW TO COMMENT ON THE REPORT**

- 1.10 If you have any comments on the SA and SEA of the Core Strategy Submission Document we would be grateful to receive them. Your views are important and the Council needs to receive them by 4pm on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2006. Comments should be sent to the Forward Planning Team by post, fax or e-mail.
- Post: to the Forward Planning Team, South Hams District Council, Follaton House, Plymouth Road, Totnes TQ9 5NE
  - Fax: marked Forward Planning, Core Strategy Preferred Options to 01803 861404.
  - E-mail to: [forward.planning@southhams.gov.uk](mailto:forward.planning@southhams.gov.uk)

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

### PURPOSE OF THE SA AND THE SA REPORT

- 2.1 In accordance with the Planning Act (2004)<sup>1</sup>, Local Development Documents (LDDs) must be subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The SA process assists Local Authorities to fulfil the requirement of “*contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development*” in spatial and land use plan making.
- 2.2 In preparing LDDs, Local Authorities are also required to carry out Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with European and UK legislation.<sup>2&3</sup> The UK Government has prepared Guidance on undertaking SA of LDFs<sup>4</sup>. This advises that an integrated approach to SA and SEA should be pursued, so that the SA process incorporates the SEA requirements. This involves extending the breadth of (predominantly environmental) issues required to be considered under SEA to cover the full range of aspects (including social and economic aspects) for sustainability.
- 2.3 SA assists in promoting sustainable development through integrating sustainability considerations into plan making. It is an iterative, ongoing process and integral to plan making. SEA considers the effects of the emerging LDDs on the environment. It must predict and evaluate the significant effects of Plan alternatives and propose measures to offset any adverse effects identified. SA/SEA also includes measures to monitor the sustainability impacts of the LDF during its implementation.
- 2.4 This is the SA Report which documents the SA and SEA process. It is being published for consultation with the Core Strategy Submission Document in accordance with SEA Regulations and SA Guidance. Further information regarding what an SA Report is required to include is presented in paragraphs 2.9 – 2.19.

### CORE STRATEGY CONTENTS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.5 The purpose of the Core Strategy is to set out the long-term spatial vision for the South Hams and the strategic policies to deliver that vision. The contents and the objectives of the Core Strategy Preferred Options document are set out below. However, this report should be read in conjunction with the Core Strategy itself, which provides additional detail regarding the Core Strategy content.

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<sup>1</sup> Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

<sup>2</sup> EU directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes

<sup>3</sup> Environmental assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI No 1633)

<sup>4</sup> *Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents: Guidance for Regional Planning Bodies and Local Planning Authorities* ODPM, November 2005

## 2.6 Contents

- Foreword
- The New Planning System
- The Role of the Core Strategy
- Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives
- Spatial Strategy
- Strategic Policies
- Monitoring and Implementation Framework
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Consultation and Community Involvement

## 2.7 Vision

### **The Vision for the South Hams LDF:**

- *Meeting communities' needs locally*
- *Securing sustainable development*
- *Promoting the regeneration of market towns and villages and rural diversification*
- *Prioritising developments for affordable homes and new jobs*
- *Protecting and enhancing the area's precious environmental heritage*
- *Delivering the sustainable development of the Sherford new community*

## 2.8 Objectives

The strategic objectives for the LDF are set out under four key themes:

- Housing
- Economy
- Accessible services
- Environment

The LDF **strategic objectives** in relation to housing are to:-

- SO1:** Provide affordable housing to meet the needs of local communities;  
**SO2:** Through the provision of housing to help ensure that all residents of the district have the opportunity of a decent home;  
**SO3:** Secure high quality, locally distinctive, sustainable housing developments;

**SO4:** Promote mixed use, mixed type, mixed tenure schemes; and  
**SO5:** Provide for housing at the highest densities suitable for the site.

The LDF **strategic objectives** in relation to the economy are to:

**SO6:** Regenerate the district's towns, villages and their hinterlands, and re-use existing buildings where appropriate;  
**SO7:** Provide for business growth and development supporting indigenous growth, growth sectors, and providing year round sustainable, well-paid employment;  
**SO8:** Secure high quality, locally distinctive, sustainable economic development including tourism;  
**SO9:** Improve the district's economic infrastructure; and  
**SO10:** Maintain and develop a prosperous countryside, encouraging sustainable development including rural regeneration and diversification.

The LDF **strategic objectives** in relation to accessible services are to:

**SO11:** Reduce rural isolation;  
**SO12:** Support the role of market towns, especially the town centres, and other local centres;  
**SO13:** Retain existing and promote new local services, facilities and amenities;  
**SO14:** Development that generates a high number of trips must be located where it is accessible to sustainable transport.

The LDF **strategic objectives** in relation to the environment are to:

**SO15:** Conserve and enhance the quality of the district's countryside and coastal landscapes;  
**SO16:** Conserve and enhance the district's geological resource and the diversity and abundance of wildlife habitats and species;  
**SO17:** Conserve and enhance the historic and archaeological character and features of the district;  
**SO18:** Provide for recreational use and enjoyment of the district's towns, villages, countryside and coast;  
**SO19:** Achieve development which is of a high quality, respects its location and is compatible with the sustainable management of land, soil, air and water; and  
**SO20:** Promote development which will help to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and the emission of greenhouse gases.

## **COMPLIANCE WITH THE SEA DIRECTIVE/REGULATIONS**

2.9 The SEA Regulations set out certain requirements for reporting the SEA process, and specifies that if an integrated appraisal is undertaken (ie SEA is subsumed within the SA process, as for the SA of this Core Strategy), then the sections of the SA Report that meet the requirements set out for reporting the SEA process must be clearly signposted. Consequently the requirements for

reporting the SEA process are set out below, and the section of the report that progresses each requirement indicated.

- 2.10 An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans
- Section 2 of this report sets out the contents and main objectives of the Core Strategy. The relationship with other relevant plans is summarised in Section 4 and Appendix I of this report.
- 2.11 The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan
- Section 4 of this report summarises the relevant baseline conditions for sustainability (including the state of relevant environmental aspects) in the South Hams. Appendix II sets out this information in more detail. The likely evolution of current conditions ('trends') is also summarised in Section 4 and detailed in Appendix II where available.
- 2.12 The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected
- Where relevant and available, information regarding particular areas has been included in Appendix II. Good practice guidance specifies that the contents and level of detail of information required should be relevant to the particular plan being assessed. The role of the Core Strategy is to set out a strategic spatial strategy and strategic policies – and does not therefore deal with site specific issues. Accordingly, the baseline information is provided at a scale which remains strategic but relevant at the District level.
- 2.13 Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
- Section 4 of this report summarises existing sustainability problems (including environmental problems) for the South Hams.
- 2.14 The environmental protection objectives relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation
- Appendix I of this report provides the summary of objectives for sustainability in the South Hams (including environmental objectives), and the implications of these objectives for the LDF.
- 2.15 The likely significant effects on the environment including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic,

short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

- The SA Framework of objectives presented in Section 4 of this report shows which of the issues listed by the SEA Regulations are progressed by which SA objectives. This assures that all of the issues are considered during the assessment of each part of the Core Strategy, since each part of the Core Strategy is assessed against each SA objective.
  - The likely sustainability effects of implementing the Core Strategy (including environmental effects) is summarised in sections 5 (Spatial Strategy options), 6 (Initial Appraisal of Core Strategy (Preferred Options) Objectives and Policies), 7 (Detailed Appraisal of Core Strategy (Preferred Options) Policies), and 8 (Detailed Appraisal of Core Strategy (Submission Document) Policies) of this Report, and detailed in Appendices IV, V, VI and VII respectively. Where possible, an indication of whether effects are likely to be cumulative, short, medium and long-term etc has been included.
- 2.16 The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan
- Where significant adverse effects, including environmental effects, have been predicted, the SA has sought where possible to identify means of offsetting these effects. These are provided in the form of recommendations in the appraisal matrices (Appendices IV, V, VI and VII) and summarised in sections 5 (Spatial Strategy options), 6 (Initial Appraisal of Core Strategy (Preferred Options) Objectives and Policies), 7 (Detailed Appraisal of Core Strategy (Preferred Options) Policies), and 8 (Detailed Appraisal of Core Strategy (Submission Document) Policies) of this Report.
- 2.17 An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties encountered in compiling the required information
- Justification for the different options considered for the Spatial Strategy is provided alongside the matrix based assessment of options in Section 5 of this Report. Details of how the assessment was undertaken are provided in Section 3 of this report (appraisal methodology), and difficulties encountered in compiling information are summarised in Section 4 of this Report.
- 2.18 A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring
- Measures envisaged concerning the monitoring of the sustainability effects (including environmental effects) of implementing the Core Strategy are provided in Section 9 of this Report.
- 2.19 A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings

- The non-technical summary is set out at the beginning of this report in Section 1.

### 3.0 APPRAISAL METHODOLOGY

#### Summary of Appraisal Methodology

##### *Preliminary Work*

- 3.1 Preliminary SA work which identified issues for sustainability was undertaken by South Hams District Council during 2004. An Appraisal Framework was developed and used by the Council during 2004 to carry out a draft SA of the Issues & Options Report for the Core Strategy. (This SA Report is available on the Council's website [www.southhams.gov.uk](http://www.southhams.gov.uk)). The Council published a draft Issues and Preferred Options Report on the Core Strategy in October 2004.

##### *Scoping the Key Sustainability Issues*

- 3.2 Enfusion Ltd was then commissioned in January 2005 by South Hams Council to progress the SA work. A Scoping process was undertaken during early 2005 to help ensure that the SA covers the key sustainability issues that are relevant to the development planning system in the South Hams. This included the development of an SA Framework of objectives (presented at the end of section 4 of this report) to comprise the basis for appraisal. A Scoping Report was prepared to summarise the findings of the Scoping process. This was published in April 2005 for consultation with stakeholders. The Report is also available on the Council's website. Responses to this consultation (and how they were taken into account) are summarised in Appendix III.

##### *Appraising the Core Strategy*

- 3.3 The appraisal of the content of the Core Strategy was then undertaken by Enfusion. Systematic appraisal of the Core Strategy options, objectives and policies was progressed using matrices to record the likely sustainability effects of the option or policy against each objective in the SA Framework.

##### *Spatial Strategy Options*

- 3.4 During the development of the Local Plan Review, detailed options were considered and consulted upon, and these remain relevant for the LDF and in particular the Core Strategy. The options considered during the development of the Core Strategy were subject to SA. Preferred options for the progression of sustainability in the South Hams were recommended. Ideally this options appraisal would have taken place during the preliminary SA work undertaken during 2004, in advance of the publication of the Issues and Options Report. It was decided to undertake appraisal of Spatial Strategy options during the development of Core Strategy policies, with the potential to revisit aspects of the Spatial Strategy should the preferred options resulting from the SA conflict with the preferred options being developed in the Core Strategy. In the event, each of the preferred options resulting from the SA corresponded with the preferred options being progressed within the Core Strategy. The matrices and

recommendations resulting from the SA of the options for the Spatial Strategy are presented in Appendix IV and summarised in section 5 of this report.

#### *Core Strategy Objectives*

- 3.5 The appraisal of the Core Strategy objectives was undertaken during May 2005. Recommendations resulting from the SA were presented to South Hams such that recommended changes could be incorporated within the emerging Core Strategy. The outcome of this appraisal is detailed in Appendix V and summarised in section 6 of this report. The progression or otherwise, with reasons, of SA recommendations regarding the Core Strategy objectives is detailed in Appendix VIII.

#### *Core Strategy Policies*

- 3.6 The appraisal of Core Strategy policies (including Spatial Strategy and Strategic Policies) was undertaken during three main stages. An initial SA of draft policies for the Core Strategy Preferred Options was undertaken at a relatively early stage in their development (during May 2005). Recommendations resulting from the SA were then presented to South Hams, such that recommended changes could be incorporated within the emerging Core Strategy in a genuinely iterative manner. The outcome of the appraisal is detailed in Appendix V and summarised in section 6 of this report. South Hams Council then provided a summary of whether the initial SA recommendations regarding the Core Strategy policies could be progressed within the Core Strategy, with reasons. This is provided in Appendix VIII.
- 3.7 A modified version of the Core Strategy Preferred Options was then appraised in more detail (during June 2005). The matrices and recommendations resulting from the SA of the options for the Spatial Strategy and Strategic Policies are presented in Appendix VI and summarised in section 7 of this report. Again, a summary of progression or otherwise of each recommendation, with reasons, has been provided by South Hams Council, and is presented in Appendix IX, with a summary in section 7 of this report.
- 3.8 Further changes were made to the Core Strategy in the light of consultation on the Preferred Options. Certain policies were deleted from the Core Strategy and certain policies added for inclusion within the Core Strategy Submission Document. Substantively modified aspects of the draft version of the Core Strategy Submission Document were appraised in detail (during December 2005). The matrices and recommendations resulting from the SA of the modified/new Policies are presented in Appendix VII and summarised in section 8 of this report. The Council were then able to take into account the recommendations within the Core Strategy Submission Document (being published with this report). A summary of progression or otherwise of each recommendation, with reasons, has been provided by South Hams Council, and is presented in Appendix X, with a summary in section 8 of this report.

*This Report*

- 3.9 This Report – including the findings of the Scoping Process and the SA of the different emerging elements of the Core Strategy, has been prepared during January 2006 (building upon the Sustainability Appraisal Report published with the Core Strategy Preferred Options), for publication with the Core Strategy Submission Document on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2006, in accordance with requirements for SA and SEA.

**CONSULTATION****Notification of SA Process and Information Requests**

- 3.10 In January 2005, during the SA Scoping process, Enfusion contacted key stakeholders (including the four statutory SEA consultees) to inform them that the SA process was being undertaken, and to notify them that they would be receiving the Scoping Report for comment in April 2005.
- 3.11 Enfusion were required as part of the Scoping process to supplement information collated as part of the preliminary SA work, in order to collate baseline information of a sufficient scope and level of detail to allow the likely significant effects of the plan upon sustainability to be identified during subsequent assessment. In recognition of the need to ensure that sustainability concerns of particular stakeholders are properly understood and given rigorous consideration in Plan development, we requested that stakeholders (listed in section 4.9) provide any information, targets, relevant planned actions etc they considered might be relevant for the SA process. Several stakeholders responded with relevant plans and information which were included in the Review of Plans and Programmes (see Appendix I) and the Baseline information (see Appendix II).

**Consultation on the Scope of the SA**

- 3.12 The SEA Regulations and SA Guidance require that consultation on the scope of the SA should be undertaken with the four statutory SEA consultees (Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature, Environment Agency). It was decided to consult with stakeholders more widely than statutorily required, in order to broaden the predominantly environmental focus of the statutory consultees to reflect the full remit for sustainability. The following stakeholders were consulted:
- Caradon District Council
  - Countryside Agency
  - Dartmoor National Park Authority
  - Defra
  - Devon County Council
  - English Heritage
  - English Nature
  - Enterprise South Devon
  - Environment Agency

- Government Office for the South West
  - Job Centre Plus
  - Learning & Skills Council Devon & Cornwall
  - Plymouth County Council
  - Scott Wilson Ltd
  - South Hams Council for Voluntary Service
  - South & West Devon Primary Care Trust
  - South West Regional Assembly
  - South West Regional Development Agency
  - South West Water
  - Teignbridge District Council
  - Torbay Council
  - Tor Homes
  - West Devon District Council
- 3.13 The aim of the Scoping consultation was to ensure that all the relevant issues were identified and discussed at an early stage of the process so that they could then be addressed during the SA and plan making. The Scoping Report included a series of questions asking consultees to comment on particular aspects of the information, including the proposed SA Framework of sustainability objectives, and potential Sustainability Indicators and Targets.
- 3.14 The Scoping Report was sent to the relevant stakeholders, and was available for consultation for a period of five weeks (21 April to 26 May 2005). The following stakeholders responded to the Scoping Consultation:
- English Nature
  - English Heritage
  - Countryside Agency
  - South West Regional Development Agency
  - Scott Wilson Ltd
- 3.15 A Summary of the responses received to the Scoping Consultation, and the response and/or action progressed to address the comments is provided in Appendix III. Stakeholders made suggestions relating to indicators for monitoring the sustainability effects of implementing the LDF, which have been taken into account in Section 9 of this report. A small number of changes were also made to the SA Framework of objectives and decision aiding questions, as set out below. (The development and purpose of this SA Framework is described in Section 4, along with the Framework itself).
- 3.16 Objective 10 (Biodiversity)
- Amend decision aiding question 4 as follows:  
  
Protect and enhance those species and habitats identified in the Devon BAP **and the National BAP**
  - Additional decision aiding question as follows:

**Protect and enhance the biodiversity value of the Coastline, including estuaries**

## 3.17 Objective 11 (Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage)

- Amended objective as follows:

Protect and enhance **historic** and cultural resources

*Preferred Options Consultation***Consultation on the Core Strategy (Preferred Options) SA Report**

3.18 An SA Report was published for public consultation along with the Core Strategy Preferred Options document in June 2005, documenting the SA/SEA process and the appraisal findings and recommendations. It was available on the Council's website ([www.southhams.gov.uk](http://www.southhams.gov.uk)) and sent to statutory consultees and the wider group consulted on the SA Scoping Report.

3.19 Six responses were received regarding the SA Report. A Summary of the responses received to the consultation, and the response and/or action progressed to address the comments is provided in Appendix III. For example, the Environment Agency requested that there is more reference made to biodiversity and BAP targets in the Core Strategy. It also suggested a minor change to highlight the importance of the consideration of the need for coastal and flood risk management. Comments received from the Totnes and District Sustainability Group related to the proposed targets and indicators for on site renewable energy and energy efficiency. Taylor Woodrow Developments also submitted a number of comments in relation to the location of the outstanding housing requirement in the PUA. Other comments were received from English Nature, South Hams Sustainability Group and the Devon Access Forum. The Council's response to these comments is detailed in Appendix III and paragraphs 9.9 and 9.10 of this report provide an example of how these comments have been taken on-board.

**Consultation on the Core Strategy (Submission Document) SA Report**

3.20 This SA Report is being published for public consultation along with the Core Strategy Submission Document, in accordance with SEA Regulations and SA Guidance. It will be published on the Council's website ([www.southhams.gov.uk](http://www.southhams.gov.uk)) and sent to statutory consultees and the wider group consulted on the SA Scoping Report.

## 4.0 SUSTAINABILITY CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 This section summarises the findings of the SA Scoping process. The Scoping process helps to ensure that the SA covers the key sustainability issues that are relevant to the development planning system in the South Hams.

### REVIEW OF RELEVANT PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

#### *Introduction*

- 4.2 In order to establish a clear scope for the SA of the Community Strategy and LDF it was necessary (and a requirement of SEA) to review and develop an understanding of the wider range of policies, plans and strategies that are relevant to the Community Strategy and LDF. This included International, EU, National, Regional and local level policies, plans and strategies.

#### *Methodology*

- 4.3 A list of relevant plans and programmes (PPs) for the SA was compiled and for each PP, objectives and issues relevant to the SA, Community Strategy and LDF processes were identified. In order to avoid repetition and duplication, and to accommodate the tight timescale required by the Local Development Scheme (LDS), the review of PPs undertaken at the regional level (for the SA of the South West Regional Spatial Strategy) has been drawn upon. This is in accordance with advice from the SW Regional Assembly<sup>5</sup>. This regional PP review can be found on the SW Regional Assembly's Website ([http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/swra/ourwork/RSS/RSS\\_index.shtml](http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/swra/ourwork/RSS/RSS_index.shtml)).
- 4.4 Thus the PP review for the South Hams SA was able to focus upon County and Local PPs. Information obtained for each PP included title, date, publishing organisation, and objectives or requirements relevant to South Hams. Consideration was given to any key constraints, opportunities, challenges or synergies to help identify potential implications for the Community Strategy and LDF and SA/SEA processes. The review of relevant PPs is set out in Appendix I.

#### *Key Issues and Opportunities*

- 4.5 Key issues and opportunities identified for South Hams from the review of relevant plans and programmes (PP) include:
- provision of a range of affordable housing to meet local needs
  - development of year-round prosperity and raising wage levels by encouraging local businesses, employment and lifelong learning opportunities.
  - regeneration of towns, villages and hinterlands to support viable sustainable communities
  - protecting and enhancing the quality of the environment, local distinctiveness, cultural and historical heritage

<sup>5</sup> letter from Director, Policy & Planning, SWRA to all SW Local Authorities 31 January 2005

- Sherford new community in the Plymouth Sub-Region
- promotion of good design and quality developments with most developments concentrated in and around main towns and large villages
- adhering to the waste hierarchy and maximising recycling
- developing sustainable green tourism
- promoting sustainable travel and access to services and facilities
- reducing the fear of crime
- enhancing the diversity of the District's wildlife habitats and species
- taking full account of the purposes of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Park designations
- maintaining the high-quality undeveloped coastal landscape
- protecting the natural beauty and functioning of South Ham's estuaries including the River Dart estuary, Kingsbridge estuary (also designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest) and Yealm estuary (also a candidate Special Area of Conservation)

- 4.6 The findings of this review of relevant plans and programmes have informed the identification of key sustainability problems, objectives and issues. Sections 4.18 to 4.20 provide a summary of these identified issues.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC BASELINE CHARACTERISTICS AND THE PREDICTED FUTURE BASELINE**

##### *Introduction*

- 4.7 Collection of baseline information is fundamental to the SA process to provide a background to, and evidence base, for identifying both sustainability problems in South Hams and alternative ways of dealing with them, developing the SA Framework, and providing the basis for predicting and monitoring effects of the plans. In order to assess how the Community Strategy and policies of the LDF can contribute to sustainable development it is essential to understand the economic, environmental and social circumstances in South Hams today and their likely evolution in the future. This is also required under the SEA legislation. The aim is to collect only relevant and sufficient data on the present and future state of the plan area (i.e. South Hams District) to allow the potential effects of the plan to be adequately predicted.
- 4.8 The SA Guidance proposes a practical approach to data collection, recognising that information may not yet be available now, and that information gaps for future improvements should be reported as well as the need to consider uncertainties in data. Collection of baseline information should be continuous as the SA process guides plan making and as new information becomes available.

*Methodology*

- 4.9 Information was compiled from a variety of sources, including relevant PPs and National, Regional, County and Local datasets and resources. Although data had been collected during the preliminary SA work in October 2004, to assist and update the baseline review, information requests were sent to the following:
- Environment Agency
  - Countryside Agency
  - English Nature
  - English Heritage
  - South West Regional Development Agency
  - South and West Devon Primary Care Trust
  - South Hams Council for Voluntary Service
  - Learning and Skills, Devon and Cornwall
  - Job Centre Plus
  - Enterprise South Devon
  - Local Service Group, Devon County Council
  - Tor Homes
  - South Hams District Council Departments
- 4.10 The baseline information has been compiled into a table under each of the topics listed in the SEA Regulations (under Schedule 2 Information for Environmental Reports) in order to demonstrate legislative compliance. The table (shown in Appendix II) contains the following information:
- The type of information, i.e. the subject
  - Data source - indication of source reliability
  - The current local situation - to assess against comparators or targets, where available.
  - Comparators or thresholds and targets - a point of reference to which local data may be compared, how far is the current situation from established thresholds and targets.
  - Local trends – to assist in the prediction of the likely future state of the plan area and whether a particular situation is improving or worsening.
  - Issues - identification of potential positive/negative issues for sustainability, including sensitivity/importance; reversibility/permanence; ability to offset/remedy; cumulative/synergistic effects.
  - Any relevant comments about the data itself.

*Summary of Information Collected and Reviewed*

- 4.11 Key information collated in relation to social, economic and environmental issues are presented below with some examples to illustrate the characteristics of South Hams.
- 4.12 Social trends include:
- *Population* including distribution, age structure, ethnicity, religion: for example, the South Hams population has increased by 5.5% between

1991 and 2001, particularly to due to immigration; the average age in the District is 4 years above that of England and Wales (2001)

- *Human health*, including cancer, circulatory disease, road accidents: for example, the percentage of residents describing their health as good was above the national average; the number of deaths from cancer and circulatory disease in South Hams is lower than the national average.
- *Education and training* e.g. number of students/schoolchildren, qualifications and unauthorised absences: for example, fewer of the resident population (aged 16 to 74) in South Hams have no qualifications compared to the national average, whilst more are qualified to degree level or higher.
- *Housing*, including dwelling provision, average house price, affordable housing, homelessness, housing construction, second homes: for example, South Hams has the highest number of second homes in England apart from the Isles of Scilly, with 11% of homes in South Hams being second homes (compared with 6.7% in Devon County, in 2001); the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation in priority need has increased by over 100% since 1998. Also, the proportion of households unable to purchase in the lower quartile in South Hams is 80.5% compared to the national average of 32.5% (2004). The net shortfall for affordable housing in South Hams has been identified as 330 dwellings per year (2002).
- *Crime*, such as notable offences, types of crime and fear of crime: for example, notable offences and types of crime compared to national averages are low, as is the fear of burglary (despite PP objectives identifying the need to reduce the fear of crime).

#### 4.13 Economic trends include:

- *Employment statistics*, benefits, average incomes and weekly earnings: for example, average earnings are lower than the national average; house prices were approximately 10 times the average local wage in 2003.
- *Employment land provision, employment structure and sector employment and activities*: for example, South Hams is an area of European Objective 2 Status and is receiving Regional Assistance to create or safeguard jobs.

4.14 Environmental information was collected for a wide number of topics including those required by the SEA Directive and Regulations. These topics included *air quality, climate, water, biodiversity, landscape, land use, cultural/built heritage, geology, soils, waste, transport and their interrelationships* (human health and population were also considered, see Section 3.5). For example, South Hams has increased its compliance with the Bathing Water Directive since 1999. South Hams contains a number of SACs, 29 SSSIs and over 500 County and Local Wildlife Sites, as well as containing over 300 sq km of AONB and 165 sq km of Dartmoor National Park. The District contains significant numbers of Listed Buildings (3463 in 2003), as well as 52 Conservation Areas, many Scheduled Monuments, historic parks and gardens, and 46 County Geological Sites. Within South Hams recycling rates are increasing with 62% of households on Household Recycling

Schemes. Forecasts of growths in the number of cars per household and car trip generation in South Hams are greater than those for Devon with this comparison being reflected in the percent of households with two or more cars or vans (2001).

- 4.15 The SEA Directive requires identification of *"the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme"*. Prediction of future trends can be highly uncertain but key trends identified from the available baseline data, and therefore potential sustainability issues, are as follows:
- A growth in cars per household and trip generation above those predicted for Devon
  - An increase in people travelling to work by car
  - An increase in population, with no apparent increase in birth rate
  - A rise in average house prices, an increase of 116% between 1998 and 2003
  - An increase in the number on the common housing register; total local authority and housing association lettings; over 100% increase (1998 to 2003) in number of homeless households in temporary accommodation in priority need
  - An increase in the number of households; increasing number of second/holiday homes
  - An increase in provision of new housing on brownfield sites (however discussions with the Council have established that the provision on brownfield sites is likely to drop as new greenfield sites are progressed through the LDF, especially at Sherford)
  - Attainment of GCSEs is improving
  - A rise in economically active persons
  - Average earnings have been reasonably stable
  - An increase in tourist spending (36% increase between 1993 and 2003)
- 4.16 The findings of this review of relevant plans and programmes have informed the identification of key sustainability problems, objectives and issues. Sections 4.18 to 4.20 provide a summary of these identified issues.

*Difficulties in collecting data and limitations of the data*

- 4.17 Unavoidably there are gaps within the information provided due to the scale and availability of data. In some cases information was not feasibly available for the South Hams District or Devon County levels, for example, information on the impact of climate change is only available at a Regional level. Information on past or predicted future trends was often not readily available.

**MAIN SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES AND PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED**

- 4.18 Identification of key sustainability problems, objectives and issues assist in identifying the relevant baseline information and developing the SA Framework and is required for compliant SEA.

- 4.19 Key sustainability problems, objectives and issues have been identified through:
- the previous SA work of the Council, including working groups with Members and Officers from different departments to prepare a draft SA Framework. This draft framework was tested on key chapters of the Council's Deposit Local Plan Review. The results of this trial were published alongside the Deposit Local Plan in January 2002. Much of the work remains relevant and has been brought forward and incorporated within this Scoping exercise.
  - review of other relevant PPs
  - analysis of currently available baseline information
  - preliminary consultations with key stakeholders
- 4.20 The Community Strategy will set a vision to achieve sustainable communities. The LDF is a key component in the delivery of the Community Strategy and is able to promote sustainable development through its influence on land use. The key strategic problems, objectives and issues for sustainability identified for South Hams are set out below, along with a summary of how the Community Strategy and LDF should address and/or progress them.
- **Affordable housing**  
The LDF has a key role in enabling the delivery of affordable homes to address the significant shortfall identified by the Housing Needs Survey and other evidence and the Supplementary Planning Guidance on affordable housing. This will need to be progressed through appropriate allocations and policies to influence the provision, mix, type and tenure of housing. A partnership approach will be integral to the delivery of affordable homes and the Community Strategy can help to secure these partnerships.
  - **Local employment & prosperous economy**  
The LDF should actively seek to provide appropriately located sites and premises for local businesses, taking into account their particular needs, as well as the objectives of year-round employment and reducing the need to travel by car. Partnership will again be key to delivering such objectives and the Community Strategy can help.
  - **Sherford new community**  
The LDF is required (by the Devon Structure Plan) to accommodate Sherford New Community. There will be a key role for the LDF (especially the Sherford Area Action Plan) in ensuring effective integration of the new community within its social, environmental and economic context. The LDF will also need to ensure delivery of the supporting community infrastructure in phase with the development. The Council will be able to draw upon existing work already undertaken including the draft SPG on Sustainable Development of Large Sites and the outputs of the Sherford Enquiry by Design process.

- **High design standards for development**  
The LDF exerts an important influence upon the design of new development. The LDF will require high standards of design in new development which respects and enhances local character.
- **Protecting environmental quality**, including biodiversity, landscape, cultural and historical resources. The LDF has an integral role in ensuring the sensitive and appropriate siting of land uses in order to protect and enhance the quality of the local environment.
- **Second homes**  
The issue of second homes cannot directly be tackled by the LDF but it can include policies which give priority to local people in the occupation of new affordable housing developments.
- **Car usage**  
The LDF will propose development which minimises the need to travel by car, for example pursuing the provision of services within walking distance of residents.
- **Accessibility**  
The LDF will consider the existing provision and accessibility of services, education, recreational facilities etc for particular local communities (including minority groups such as those with limited mobility), and enable the provision of more accessible services and facilities where required

## THE SA FRAMEWORK OF OBJECTIVES

- 4.21 The SA Framework presented in Table 1 includes a set of Objectives for sustainability (separate from the Core Strategy objectives, although some overlap may occur), together with decision-aiding questions. The decision-aiding questions have been designed to assist in the appraisal as they clarify the details of the sustainability issues relevant to the sustainability objectives, as well as improving appraiser objectivity. They also ensure that the appraisal is relevant to spatial planning, and make the appraisal more specific to South Hams. It is important that the SA Framework reflects local circumstances that can be influenced by the new development planning system.
- 4.22 Sustainable Development recognises that social, economic and environmental factors are interconnected, and SA aims to take an integrated approach. Accordingly, the proposed SA Framework does not categorise Objectives into Social, Economic and Environmental. It is also necessary to demonstrate compliance with the SEA requirement to assess certain environmental topics. For each SA objective we have therefore specified the relevant SEA topics.
- 4.23 The SA Framework provides a way in which sustainability effects of a plan or programme can be described, analysed and compared. The SA methodology involves considering the content (including objectives, options and policies) of

the Core Strategy against each SA objective. Comments about whether the content of the Core Strategy is likely to progress or conflict with each SA objective are recorded in matrices. Where significant conflicts are identified, possible measures to offset adverse effects are considered, with recommendations to amend the content accordingly.

**TABLE 1: Proposed SA Framework Objectives and Decision-Aiding Questions**

4.24 These SA Objectives and Decision-Aiding Questions have been devised through identification and consideration of sustainability and the relevant issues within South Hams, as well as Scoping Consultation as described in Section 3. This SA Framework of Objectives and Decision-Aiding Questions has provided the basis for the appraisal of the content of the Core Strategy.

	OBJECTIVE	DECISION-AIDING QUESTIONS
<b>1</b>	<b>Balanced Communities</b> <i>SEA topic: Population</i>	
	Promote community viability and balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote mixed use, mixed housing type and mixed tenure developments</li> <li>▪ Encourage regeneration and enhancement of viable communities</li> <li>▪ Enable independent lifestyles for the elderly and those with disabilities</li> <li>▪ Provide sites for community services and facilities (education, health, recreation, social care etc)</li> <li>▪ Provide sites for business and employment within communities</li> <li>▪ Enable people to live near to where they work.</li> <li>▪ Promote social inclusion and community ownership</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Access</b> <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"> <li>▪ Enhance access, particularly in rural areas</li> <li>▪ 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</li> <li>▪ Improve quality and capacity of public transport, particularly in new developments</li> <li>▪ Encourage integrated public transport</li> <li>▪ Provide for basic services within walking distance of residents</li> <li>▪ Reduce isolation of minorities and people with limited mobility</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Housing</b> <i>SEA topic: Population and Human Health</i>	
	Ensure that all have access to a range of good quality housing to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restrict second home ownership</li> <li>▪ Provide dwellings to allow local residents,</li> </ul>

	meet their needs, particularly affordable housing for identified local needs	including young people, to remain within their communities
<b>4</b>	<b>Quality of the Built Environment</b> <i>SEA topic: Population and Human Health</i>	
	Enhance the form and design of the built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure new development is located in line with sustainable principles</li> <li>▪ Promote high density in new development wherever appropriate</li> <li>▪ Insist upon high design quality and respect for local character, distinctiveness and surrounding environment in new development</li> <li>▪ Protect and enhance the quality of green and open spaces</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>Health</b> <i>SEA topic: Population and Human Health</i>	
	Provide a healthy and safe environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of space for informal recreation</li> <li>▪ Design out crime and fear of crime in local communities</li> <li>▪ Contribute to a safe, secure built environment</li> <li>▪ Encourage safe provision for walking and cycling</li> <li>▪ Prevent unacceptable levels of noise, light, odour and air pollution, through application of the precautionary principle</li> </ul>
<b>6</b>	<b>Employment</b> <i>SEA topic: Population and Material Assets</i>	
	Promote a range of quality employment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote reuse of redundant agricultural buildings for employment</li> <li>▪ Encourage provision of jobs accessible to residents</li> <li>▪ Support traditional land based industries</li> <li>▪ Promote a year-round working countryside</li> <li>▪ Support provision of employment to allow young people to remain within their communities</li> <li>▪ Support indigenous growth of small and micro businesses</li> </ul>
<b>7</b>	<b>Economic Growth</b> <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"> <li>▪ Taking advantage of Objective II and Regional assistance from SWRDA</li> <li>▪ Encourage growth of indigenous companies</li> <li>▪ Encourage diversification into key growth sectors, including the environmental sector</li> <li>▪ Provide for the needs of businesses (range of premises, services, infrastructure, skilled workforce)</li> <li>▪ Enhance the vitality of town, district and local centres and encourage their commercial renewal</li> <li>▪ Provide for the purchase of goods and use of services locally</li> </ul>
<b>8</b>	<b>Landscape</b> <i>SEA topic: Landscape</i>	
	Ensure that special and distinctive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preserve and where possible enhance diverse</li> </ul>

	landscapes, and the features within them, are conserved and enhanced	<p>landscape character and value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain a high quality of undeveloped coastal landscapes</li> <li>▪ Protect and enhance the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Dartmoor National Park</li> <li>▪ Maintain and enhance hedgerow cover and traditional field boundaries</li> </ul>
<b>9</b>	<b>Land and Soil Quality</b> <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"> <li>▪ Promote high density development</li> <li>▪ Actively promote the re-use of previously developed land</li> <li>▪ Remediate contaminated land</li> <li>▪ Protect the best and most versatile agricultural land</li> <li>▪ Avoid soil erosion and sedimentation</li> </ul>
<b>10</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b> <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"> <li>▪ Promote ecologically based land management</li> <li>▪ Protect and enhance valuable wildlife habitats and species, both those statutorily designated and those of local value</li> <li>▪ Avoid habitat fragmentation</li> <li>▪ Protect and enhance those species and habitats identified in the Devon BAP and the National BAP</li> <li>▪ Protect and enhance the biodiversity value of the Coastline, including estuaries</li> </ul>
<b>11</b>	<b>Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage</b> <i>SEA topic: Cultural Heritage</i>	
	Protect and enhance cultural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Protect and enhance valued architecture, both buildings (including listed buildings) and their settings</li> <li>▪ Support locally-based cultural resources and activities</li> <li>▪ Protect and improve historical and archaeological environment (landscapes, site, buildings and settings), including Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs)</li> <li>▪ Protect the important geology of South Hams district</li> <li>▪ Protect and enhance Conservation Areas</li> </ul>
<b>12</b>	<b>Minerals</b> <i>SEA topic: Material Assets</i>	
	Encourage efficient exploitation of mineral resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contribute to the supply of minerals while protecting local communities and the environment</li> <li>▪ Minimise demand for primary minerals and aggregates</li> <li>▪ Recycle local stone, where possible, to reinforce local character</li> </ul>

<b>13</b>	<b>Energy</b> <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"> <li>▪ 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)</li> <li>▪ Support the generation and use of renewable energy, while protecting local communities and the environment</li> <li>▪ Promote energy efficiency by locating development in such a way as to minimise the number of trips made by private car</li> <li>▪ Promote energy efficiency in the design of new development</li> </ul>
<b>14</b>	<b>Air Quality</b> <i>SEA topic: Air, Climatic Factors and Human Health</i>	
	Protect and improve local and global air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain or improve local air quality</li> <li>▪ Reduce the number of trips made by private car</li> <li>▪ Reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions</li> <li>▪ Consider the longer term effects</li> </ul>
<b>15</b>	<b>Waste</b> <i>SEA topic: Water, Soil, Human Health and Population</i>	
	Encourage minimisation, reuse and recycling of waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage provision for local community recycling and waste management facilities, including on new developments</li> <li>▪ Promote minimisation, reuse and recycling of construction materials and waste</li> </ul>
<b>16</b>	<b>Water</b> <i>SEA topic: Water and Climatic Factors</i>	
	Protect and enhance the water environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Take into account the predicted effects of climate change</li> <li>▪ Protect and improve freshwater, estuarine and coastal water quality</li> <li>▪ Consider the close relationship between water quality, quantity and flood risk management</li> <li>▪ Increase efficient use and reuse of water resources</li> <li>▪ Promote sustainable coastal and flood risk management that provides for climate change, where appropriate, in new developments</li> <li>▪ Promote Sustainable Drainage Systems</li> </ul>

## 5.0 CORE STRATEGY OPTIONS

### INTRODUCTION

- 5.1 The Core Strategy has been significantly informed during its development by work undertaken for the South Hams Local Plan Review. In March 1999 a paper including a questionnaire was sent to every household in the District. This sought the opinion of the public on the appropriate future role of the District, and more specifically for particular settlements, in accommodating new dwellings and employment land, as well as a range of community facilities. Questions were also posed regarding transport, environment and conservation, and tourism. The questionnaire set out options to gauge the preferences of the local community. The results of the consultation were summarised in a published Issues Report, and were taken into account during the further development of the Local Plan Review. Many of the issues and options set out for consideration at this stage remain relevant to the Core Strategy, and have informed the progression of preferred options.
- 5.2 During the development of their Core Strategy, South Hams District Council continued to consider various strategic options for the Spatial Strategy – in particular the accommodation of housing and employment land. As part of the SA and SEA of the Core Strategy, these options were appraised to clarify their relative performance with respect to sustainability for South Hams. The outcome of the SA strongly endorsed South Hams District Council's approach.

### COMPARISON OF MAIN STRATEGIC OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND PREFERRED OPTIONS

- 5.3 The results of the SA, including matrix based appraisal of each set of options, is presented in Appendix IV. A comparison of the likely social, environmental and economic effects of implementing the options is provided in the matrices. For each set of options considered, a preferred option (with an outline of reasons) for the progression of sustainability is set out in the bottom row of each matrix.
- 5.4 For each set of options, this section summarises the reasons for the identification of the options considered, as well as reasons not to consider certain options where relevant. The preferred option from a sustainability perspective for each set of options is set out, along with a brief summary of reasons.

### Settlement Designation

#### Principle of planning on the basis of designated hierarchy of settlements

- 5.5 South Hams has long worked with an established settlement hierarchy which informs the appropriate role of settlements in the District. This hierarchy of Area Centres and Local Centres has been developed in accordance with Structure Plan policy.

## 5.6 Options for the Core Strategy:

1. Continue to work with a hierarchy of settlements for the planning of the district
2. Plan the district in the absence of the settlement hierarchy

5.7 Option 1 is clearly the preferred option. Continuing to work with the existing settlement hierarchy will ensure the retention of a coherent context from which to plan the distribution of new development, in order to retain and enhance appropriate roles for settlements. This will provide a strategic framework within which to promote balanced communities and reduce the need to travel by private car.

### Settlement Designation

#### Designation of particular settlements

5.8 Within South Hams' established settlement hierarchy, there are four Area Centres and five Local Centres, as follows:

#### Area Centres

- Dartmouth
- Ivybridge
- Kingsbridge
- Totnes

#### Local Centres

- Chillington /  
Stokenham
- Modbury
- Salcombe
- Woolwell
- Yealmpton

5.9 Within Option 1 (continue to work with a hierarchy of settlements for the planning of the district), different combinations of settlements classified as Area Centres and Local Centres were not considered in any detail. The four towns designated as area centres have long served as focal points for their surrounding rural areas in terms of providing key facilities and local services. In terms of scale and function there are no feasible alternative or additional existing settlements which warrant the designation of Area Centre. Similarly for the Local Centres, the existing five centres fall naturally within the appropriate size and functional range. A few other larger villages were briefly considered for designation as Local Centres. However, their proximity to settlements designated as Area Centres means that residents access many services and facilities from the Area Centres, such that the viability of services in the villages themselves is limited (Dartington being very close to Totnes, Kingswear close to Dartmouth, and Marldon and Stoke Gabriel being close to Torbay).

5.10 South Hams District Council is required by the Devon Structure Plan (and as part of the Plymouth Sub-Region) to accommodate a new community at Sherford. An Area Action Plan for the implementation of this new community

is being prepared. The merits of allocating Sherford as an Area Centre, a Local Centre, or neither were considered, as follows:

5.11 Options for the Core Strategy:

1. Allocate Sherford new community as an Area Centre
2. Allocate Sherford new community as a Local Centre
3. Do not allocate Sherford as an Area Centre or Local Centre

5.12 Option 1 is clearly the preferred option for the progression of a genuinely sustainable new community at Sherford. Designation as an Area Centre will provide an appropriate context from which to plan the appropriate range of employment, services, facilities and infrastructure in phase with the provision of housing. This should help ensure the new community is sensitively integrated within its setting, and allow it to evolve as a balanced community where residents have equitable and easy access to jobs and services by means other than the car. Were the provision of appropriate services, facilities and infrastructure to lag behind the provision of dwellings, this could lead to entrenched pattern of much less sustainable living, where residents commute outside of the community on a regular basis to access jobs and services. Once established, such a pattern could be difficult to reverse, making it more difficult to 'retrofit' viable services at a later date.

### **Housing Land Provision**

#### **Extent of Provision**

5.13 Devon Structure Plan requires the provision of a significant amount of new housing in the South Hams part of the Plymouth PUA, including a new community at Sherford of at least 4000 dwellings. The principle of accommodating this new community has been decided at the Structure Plan level. The number of dwellings to be provided has also been a matter for strategic determination as part of the Structure Planning process, and continues to be considered as part of the planning of the Plymouth Sub-Region. Consequently it is not appropriate for South Hams to consider alternative levels of provision at the new community.

5.14 In the rest of the South Hams (outside the Plymouth PUA) the Structure Plan requires the provision of 3,850 dwellings during the plan period, only about 750 of which would require the allocation of new housing land. In preparing their Core Strategy, South Hams District Council has considered options regarding the accommodation of dwellings for 'the rest of' South Hams, as follows.

5.15 Options for the Core Strategy:

1. Under-provision
2. Meet closely the Structure Plan requirement

### 3. Over-provision

- 5.16 The outcome of this appraisal would indicate that for sustainability reasons, the Council should feel encouraged to allocate additional dwellings in the South Hams over and above the Structure Plan allocation. Shortage of affordable housing is an acute problem facing South Hams (with significant implications for the quality of life of residents unable to compete on the housing market, and the retention of viable, balanced communities), and it would seem that only by exceeding the allocation can the Council start to redress the existing shortage. Clearly, the more dwellings to be accommodated, the more potential for adverse impacts upon landscape and biodiversity. However, it is not possible to predict the impacts upon such issues at this stage, along with others such as the historic environment and the water environment. The potential for such impacts should not be considered prohibitive since it should be possible to provide adequate mitigation, as well as enhancement, through the LDF.

#### **Housing Land Provision Distribution**

- 5.17 South Hams District Council also considered options regarding the distribution of allocated dwellings, as follows:
- 5.18 Options for the Core Strategy:
1. Concentration in a limited number of settlements (Area and Local Centres)
  2. Wider dispersion to Area and Local Centres plus some larger sustainable villages
  3. Wide dispersion to most settlements across the district
- 5.19 Option 2 - Wider dispersion to Area and Local Centres plus some larger sustainable villages – is the preferred approach. It is considered that this option would achieve a balance between matching supply and demand for housing (and it is recommended that demand is defined according to the extent of affordable rather than open market housing need), whilst preventing the incremental encroachment upon habitats, landscapes, the historic environment as well as the water environment which could result from a dispersed approach. Restricting the majority of new dwellings to the larger more sustainable settlements should also promote viable, balanced communities. It is recommended that the dispersion of new dwellings to the settlements presently proposed is compatible with the settlement hierarchy.
- 5.20 In addition to the allocation at Sherford and the allocations to existing settlements in accordance with the settlement hierarchy, Newnham was allocated at Preferred Options stage to accommodate up to 450 new dwellings. The appropriateness of a number of other urban fringe locations for accommodating a new community (as an alternative to Sherford) was

considered as part of the approach to the planning of Plymouth sub-region. Sherford emerged as the preferred option. The Council considered it appropriate to accommodate the balance of dwellings required in the PUA at Newnham. The Council did not consider that Woolwell was a sustainable location for modest or large scale growth because of traffic congestion on the A386, landscape intrusion (particularly from Dartmoor) and deficiencies in community infrastructure (particularly the absence of a secondary school). The intention was to assess the detailed implications of accommodating up to 450 dwellings at Newnham during the development of other Local Development Documents (the Submission version of the Core Strategy no longer contains the proposal at Newnham. The reasons for this are explained in paragraphs 8.16 and 8.17 of this report).

### **Employment Land Provision**

#### **Extent of Provision**

- 5.21 The strategic context for provision of employment land is set by the Devon Structure Plan which establishes that South Hams will need to accommodate 105 hectares of new employment land during 2001-2016. Of this total, 80 hectares must be in the South Hams part of the Plymouth Principal Urban Area (PUA) (immediately adjoining Plymouth), leaving 25 hectares to be distributed in the rest of the district.
- 5.22 Of the 80 hectares to be provided in the South Hams part of the Plymouth PUA, approximately half has already been committed - mainly at Langage. This lies to the north of the A38 on the eastern edge of Plympton and is designated a Strategic Employment Site. Subtracting employment land already developed since 2001 and land that has been granted planning permission but has not yet been developed, leaves 39 hectares of new employment land to be provided within the South Hams part of the Plymouth PUA during the remainder of the plan period. The Council's preferred approach is to accommodate much of the outstanding balance of employment land around the A38 Deep Lane junction, at Langage and Sherford. This would effectively group the Langage and Sherford employment proposals resulting in a significant strategic employment site proposal.
- 5.23 Similarly, subtracting employment land already developed since 2001 and land that has been granted planning permission but has not yet been developed, leaves 13.9 hectares of new employment land to be accommodated elsewhere in the district during the remainder of the plan period. In preparing the Core Strategy, South Hams District Council has considered options regarding the accommodation of employment land for 'the rest of' South Hams, as follows.
- 5.24 Options for the Core Strategy:
1. Under-provision
  2. Meet closely the Structure Plan requirement

3. Over-provision
- 5.25 The preferred approach for sustainability requires a balance between increasing the employment opportunities (including diversity of opportunities) currently available with protection of the district from excessive new development that could erode the high quality of the environment. It is considered that a low level of provision would not only decrease employment opportunities, impede economic growth, threaten the viability of communities and increase out-commuting, but could also result in the incremental erosion of the quality of the environment and new development, with less resources available for protection and enhancement.
- 5.26 In the light of these considerations, it is recommended that if South Hams pursues the preferred option of housing provision in excess of the SP allocation, then the extent of employment land allocated should reflect this, and somewhat exceed the SP allocation. This is not to suggest an approach of securing as much employment land as possible. Rather, employment land provision should be closely related to need. Possible adverse effects on the local environment will need to be carefully mitigated – and whilst it is not the role of the spatial strategy to set out requirements relating to design, this should be ensured through other elements of the LDF.

#### **Employment Land Provision Distribution**

- 5.27 South Hams District Council has also considered the distribution of employment land for allocation, outside of the Principal Urban Area.
- 5.28 Options for the Core Strategy:
  1. Concentration in a limited number of settlements
  2. Dispersion according to need, but to existing settlements
  3. Wide dispersion, not limited to existing settlements
- 5.29 Option 2 is the preferred approach. However, this does not preclude significant employment nodes being allocated in appropriate locations should the need be there. For example, the majority of employment land could be located to Area Centres (according to need), with smaller sites allocated in Local Centres as well as villages if appropriate sites and access arrangements are available.

#### **SUMMARY OF PROGRESSION**

- 5.30 All preferred options for sustainability are being progressed as preferred options within the Core Strategy. This provides a very positive sustainable context from which to develop the detail of the Core Strategy as well as other Local Development Documents to implement the Core Strategy.

## **6.0 INITIAL SA OF CORE STRATEGY OBJECTIVES, SPATIAL STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC POLICIES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- 6.1 An initial SA of the Core Strategy (Preferred Options) draft Objectives, Spatial Strategy and Strategic Policies was undertaken at a relatively early stage in their development (during May 2005). Recommendations resulting from the SA were then presented to South Hams, such that recommended changes could be incorporated within the emerging Core Strategy in a genuinely iterative manner.
- 6.2 Appendix V presents the detail of this SA, with comments regarding the extent to which each element of the Core Strategy is considered likely to progress sustainability for South Hams. Recommendations to improve the progression of sustainability or mitigate potential adverse effects were made – including some recommended changes to the wording of objectives and policies. These are presented alongside the commentary in Appendix V.
- 6.3 A summary of findings and recommendations is presented below. Recommendations focus on aspects for improvement, thus the content of the report is necessarily skewed towards those aspects where potential adverse effects could arise. On the whole, the findings of the SA suggest that the emerging Core Strategy (Preferred Options) will make significant contributions to the progression of SA objectives.

### **SUMMARY OF INITIAL SA OF CORE STRATEGY OBJECTIVES**

- 6.4 At least one Core Strategy objective was found to be relevant for each SA objective – indicating relatively good coverage of sustainability issues. However, some were much more rigorously addressed than others. Some SA objectives were only implicitly progressed (see more detailed comments in Appendix V) with no explicit mention for example of minerals, waste, walking and cycling, and flooding. The Council might consider implicit progression to be appropriate in some instances to allow the Core Strategy objectives to remain succinct and focused upon priorities. However, some recommendations were provided as follows where we considered elaboration might prove beneficial.
- 6.4 The LDF strategic objectives in relation to housing are to:-
- a) Provide affordable housing to meet the needs of local people;
  - b) Meet the strategic requirements for housing;
  - c) Secure high quality, locally distinctive, sustainable housing developments;
  - d) Promote mixed use, mixed type, mixed tenure schemes; and
  - e) Provide for housing at the highest densities suitable for the site.

The LDF strategic objectives in relation to the economy are to:

- f) Regenerate the district's towns, villages and their hinterlands, **and reuse existing buildings where appropriate;**
- g) Provide for business growth and development, **supporting indigenous growth, growth sectors, and** providing year-round sustainable, well-paid employment;  
**New objective – Secure high quality, locally distinctive, sustainable economic development**
- h) Improve the district's economic infrastructure; and
- i) Retain and develop a prosperous working countryside.

The LDF strategic objectives in relation to accessible services are to:

- j) Reduce rural isolation;
- k) Support the role of market towns and other local centres;
- l) Retain existing and promote new local services and facilities **accessible by foot or by bicycle;**
- m) Promote **high trip generating** development at locations accessible by sustainable transport.

The LDF strategic objectives in relation to the environment are to:

- n) Conserve and enhance the quality of the district's countryside and coastal landscapes;
- o) Conserve and enhance the diversity **and abundance** of wildlife, **especially protected, natural or semi natural habitats and species;**
- p) Conserve and enhance the historic and archaeological features of the district, **including valued architectural features;**
- q) Provide for recreational use and enjoyment of the district's towns **and** villages (**including accessible green spaces**), countryside and coast;
- r) Require that new development is of a high quality, respects its location and is compatible with the sustainable management of land, soil, **air** and water.

- 6.5 Details of which of these recommendations were progressed in the developing Core Strategy, with reasons, are provided in Appendix VII.

### **SUMMARY OF INITIAL SA OF SPATIAL STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC POLICIES**

- 6.6 Commentary regarding the extent to which the emerging Spatial Strategy and Strategic Policies were considered to progress sustainability for South Hams is provided in Appendix V. The findings of the SA were predominantly positive, but a number of recommendations were suggested to improve the performance of the Spatial Strategy and Strategic Policies with respect to sustainability. These are detailed in Appendix V. Some examples of recommendations are presented below:

#### **Policy CS1 Settlement Designation**

- 6.7 Further elaboration of the type of development to be accommodated in Area and Local Centres is required to adequately convey the principle of the roles

of each. For example clarification of ‘other local services’ for the Area Centres could be provided, as well as the role of the Local Centres with respect to housing, and what is or is not likely to be acceptable in villages.

### **Policy CS2 Housing Land Provision**

- 6.8 During subsequent LDF development, clearly the Council will need to seek to minimise potential adverse impacts such as visual impacts, especially within the AONB. (This is likely to be a particular issue for Dartmouth, considering its location within the AONB and the number of dwellings to be accommodated). New residential development at Kingsbridge will need to respect the integrity of the Salcombe/Kingsbridge SSSI. The Environment Agency’s indicative floodplain map indicates that there may be particular issues with flooding for Totnes, and new residential development here will need to be particularly sensitively sited to ensure no net loss of flood storage capacity.

### **Policy CS3 Employment Land Provision**

- 6.9 We note that the locations of Torr Quarry and Wrangaton are proposed to accommodate significantly more employment land than the Area Centres, Local Centres or any of the Villages. The reasons for this could usefully be described.

### ***Strategic Policies:***

### **Policy CS4 Previously Developed Land**

- 6.10 The policy should encourage conversion of existing buildings which will help ensure that the existing building stock remains in productive use, and will reduce demand for new building materials.

### **Policy CS5 Affordable Housing on Proposed Sites**

- 6.11 The Council should bear in mind that the additional housing is likely to entail a need for (albeit incremental) provision of facilities – and ensure that affordable housing is not pursued at the expense of securing sufficient high-quality infrastructure (including environmental infrastructure such as flood risk management, water efficiency and biodiversity measures). This is in recognition that in the long-term, local communities will be more receptive to accommodating new dwellings if they are carefully implemented and integrated with the local communities. This consideration can probably be sufficiently progressed through other Core Strategy (and other LDD) policies.

### **Development in Towns and Villages**

- 6.12 In the paragraph which begins “Within Development Boundaries, development is acceptable in principle” the Council might usefully add impacts upon the receiving environment to the range of detailed planning considerations listed.

### Policy CS7: Development Boundaries

- 6.13 It was suggested that a further criterion could be added about safeguarding or enhancing pedestrian routes and cycleways.

### Policy CS8 Development Outside the Development Boundaries

- 6.14 The sentence *“In all cases, the development will only be permitted providing that there would be little adverse effect on the character, appearance, wildlife or amenities of the area”* is considered somewhat negative, and whilst not precluding beneficial impacts, does not actively encourage them. An alternative form of wording could be: *“In all cases, the development will only be permitted providing that there would be little adverse effect on the character, appearance, wildlife or amenities of the area, and where possible, development should seek to contribute positively to its surroundings.”*
- 6.15 In the final sentence of the Policy, SA objectives might be better progressed by substituting ‘or’ for ‘and’ such that development would support the area’s conservation or enhancement **and** would foster its social and economic wellbeing (with the final part of the sentence deleted).

### Policy CS10 Design of New Development

- 6.16 It is considered that the criteria in section 4 of the Policy could be slightly amended or elaborated as follows:
- iii Safe and convenient access for all potential users **including by foot, bicycle, and taking into account the needs of the mobility impaired**
  - iv Use of appropriate building materials, **sourced locally where possible**, and techniques respecting local tradition
  - vi Necessary and appropriate street lighting, **avoiding unnecessary light pollution, and** appropriate street furniture and public art
  - vii Energy **and water** conservation features...

Additional criteria to consider:

- ix Contributions to enhancing local biodiversity value
  - x Space for information recreation
- 6.17 The written justification could also mention that larger scale development provides opportunities for particularly innovative design and proactive environmental management measures. These include measures to reduce fluctuations in run off including sustainable urban drainage and green roofs, greywater recycling, provision for biodiversity, renewable energy schemes, and provision for walking and cycling.

### Policy CS11 Infrastructure Provision

- 6.18 There may well be instances where the need for green infrastructure functions such as additional flood risk management infrastructure and biodiversity mitigation can be shown to be directly related to the development (particularly for larger scale developments). In these instances, the potential to provide multifunctional green infrastructure should be considered, as well as the potential to pool contributions where appropriate.

#### **Policy CS12 Renewable Energy**

- 6.19 Minor amendments are suggested to the criteria as follows:
- I There is no unacceptable harm to amenity (ie delete residential)
  - II the proposal minimises its visual impact, through appropriate siting, layout, landscaping, design and use of materials, **and remaining visual impacts are acceptable**
  - III measures are taken to minimise increases in ambient noise levels, dust, odour, and traffic generation **to acceptable levels**

#### **Policy CS13 Energy Efficiency**

- 6.20 There may be a danger that developers take ‘at least 10%’ to mean that 10% is the standard to aim for. Perhaps an additional comment to the effect that the Council will look more favourably upon developments proposing to provide more than 10% of the development’s energy requirement from on-site renewables could be included.

#### **SUMMARY OF PROGRESSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.21 South Hams District Council provided a summary of whether the detailed SA recommendations could be progressed within the Core Strategy, with reasons. This is presented in Appendix VIII.

## **7.0 CORE STRATEGY (PREFERRED OPTIONS) POLICIES – DETAILED SA**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- 7.1 During June 2005, a later version of the Core Strategy (Preferred Options) policies at a relatively advanced stage of development was appraised in detail. The likely effect of each policy upon each sustainability objective was considered, with comments about whether policy is likely to progress or conflict with each SA objective recorded in matrices. These matrices are presented in Appendix VI. As detailed, this SA of the Core Strategy (Preferred Options) policies found that, for the most part, the policies were strongly progressive for sustainability.
- 7.2 Where conflicts were identified, possible measures to offset adverse effects were considered, with recommendations to offset them provided in the bottom row of each matrix, again presented in Appendix VI. Often, these recommendations do not seek a modification to the Core Strategy itself. Rather, they highlight important aspects or uncertainties regarding the sustainability of policies during implementation, which will need to be taken into account in the development of other Local Development Documents, or in the preparation of development briefs etc.

### **SUMMARY OF DETAILED SA OF CORE STRATEGY (PREFERRED OPTIONS) SPATIAL STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC POLICIES**

- 7.3 A summary of findings and recommendations is presented below. Recommendations focus on aspects for improvement, thus the content of the report is necessarily skewed towards those aspects where potential adverse effects could arise. On the whole, the findings of the SA suggest that the emerging Core Strategy (Preferred Options) will make significant contributions to the progression of SA objectives.

#### **Policy CS 1: Settlement Designation**

- 7.4 Policies elsewhere in the LDF (e.g. Core Policies) should ensure that small scale business development and employment are permitted despite the overall strategic focus.

#### **Policy CS 2: Housing Land Provision**

- 7.5 The urban districts in which most of the allocations under this policy are located may have a value for biodiversity – for instance by providing bat roosts. This need not be a negative sustainability point for this policy, providing the interest is recognised in development control policies. It is important that when this strategic policy is turned into site-specific policies that the suitability of the local drainage infrastructure matches not only the norm for the development, and existing needs, but also allows for the predicted effects of climate change.

**Policy CS4: Previously Developed Land**

- 7.6 The policy has, overall, significantly positive sustainability effects. However, there is a tension between the strongly aspirational target of 50% of housing on PDL, and the acute need for affordable housing in the district. Put simply, if there is already a problem with affordable housing availability, restricting possible locations further is likely to make this worse - unless the issue is tackled adequately by other policies and initiatives. There should be a firm evidence base for the 50% target if it is to be retained.

**Policies CS5 and CS6: Affordable Housing and Affordable Housing on Windfall Sites**

- 7.7 Consideration should be given to producing a guide on Sustainable Construction, covering specifically matters such as reducing the use of minerals, recycling (and using recycled products), cutting energy and water consumption, minimising waste and CO<sub>2</sub>, both during the construction phase, but also, by design, over the decades or centuries of use that will follow. To mitigate any local negative impacts on Air Quality, site specific policies and others should establish and encourage Affordable Housing In locations that will minimise car use and facilitate pedestrian/cycle access and the public transport.

**Policy CS8: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**

- 7.8 Design issues take on an even greater importance in AONBs, and consideration should be given to mentioning these issues in the supporting text and linking them to policy CS10 and a more detailed explanation in a design guide. Consideration should be given to modifying this policy to specifically mention the issue of renewable energy proposals, which might occur within AONBs (e.g. wind turbines)

**Policy CS9: Coastal Preservation Area**

- 7.9 Given the high quality of the area's landscape, consideration should be given as to whether higher standards of design and use of local styles / materials should be insisted on when development is permitted. Consideration should be given as to whether the policy should be expanded to take account of future proposals for renewable energy development.

**Policy CS10: Design**

- 7.10 The specific mention of green spaces and space for informal recreation (where appropriate) would help enhance the positive sustainability effect of this policy, as would specifically mentioning some possibilities, such as walking and cycling. Mention should also be made of the potential of good design to reduce negative impacts of noise and light and odour pollution which can have an indirect impact on health through quality of life and mental well-being. Modify paragraph 6.35 to specifically mention historic buildings Conservation

Areas and their settings. Perhaps as follows. ‘...biodiversity **and cultural heritage** implications....’

### **Policy CS11: Infrastructure Provision**

- 7.11 Consideration should be given to strengthening the policy, for instance a minor change in the wording as follows; ‘where existing infrastructure is inadequate, new or improved infrastructure and facilities should **always** be provided.’”

### **Policies CS12 and CS 13: Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency**

- 7.12 Climate change is one of the greatest challenges the District has ever faced. The potential negative impacts for both humans and biodiversity are considerable. These consequences should be spelt out so that the community can better understand, feel ownership of, and hopefully get behind the principle of the policy. An additional paragraph should be inserted by way of an introduction and explanation. The potential positive sustainability impact of the policy (for example in the areas of Quality of The Built Environment, Energy / Air Quality) would be enhanced if the wording were amended, and the commitment to renewables consequently strengthened, by replacing ‘minimal’ in point 2 of the policy, with ‘acceptable’. There may be some visual consequences of this technology, but the consequences of alternative forms of power generation, or of climate change, are likely to be worse overall from a sustainability point of view.

### **SUMMARY OF PROGRESSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.15 Details of the progression or otherwise of each recommendation, with reasons, has been provided by South Hams District Council, and is presented in Appendix IX. As a result of the short timescale available for the detailed SA prior to the publication of the Preferred Options document, many of the recommendations are to be considered during the preparation of the Core Strategy Submission document.
- 7.16 In addition, during the appraisal there was substantial uncertainty about the sustainability implications of certain policies upon certain SA objectives. This is because much depends upon the sustainable implementation of the Core Strategy policies via other Local Development Documents. It is not the role of the Core Strategy to set out details regarding, for example, the means by which issues such as biodiversity, cultural heritage and the historic environment, landscape, and the water environment, should be taken into account in the design of particular developments or when allocating specific sites. However, a particularly valuable aspect of the SA recommendations for the Core Strategy policies has been highlighting issues which will need careful consideration in the development of other Local Development Documents.
- 7.17 For example, the SA of the Previously Developed Land (PDL) Policy identified an uncertain impact for biodiversity since PDL can be valued for its biodiversity. Whilst not necessitating a modification to the principle of

accommodating development on PDL, this uncertainty is something that should be considered during the development of Local Development Documents to implement the Core Strategy to ensure that the flora and fauna value of PDL sites are accounted for in the development process. South Hams District Council has identified that it will take the comment into account in the Core Policies Development Plan Document (see Appendix VIII).

## **8.0 CORE STRATEGY (SUBMISSION DOCUMENT) POLICIES – DETAILED SA**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- 8.1 During December 2006, a draft version of those aspects of the Core Strategy (Submission Document) which had been substantively modified since the Core Strategy (Preferred Options) were appraised in detail. This included both Policy amendments and new Policies. The likely effect of each policy upon each sustainability objective was considered, with comments about whether policy is likely to progress or conflict with each SA objective recorded in matrices. These matrices are presented in Appendix VII.
- 8.2 Where conflicts were identified, possible measures to offset adverse effects were considered, with recommendations to offset them provided in the bottom row of each matrix, again presented in Appendix VII. Opportunities to further progress beneficial effects were also outlined.

### **SUMMARY OF DETAILED SA OF CORE STRATEGY (SUBMISSION DOCUMENT)**

- 8.3 Summary findings and recommendations resulting from the appraisal of components of the Submission Document substantively modified since the publication of the Preferred Options are presented below. Recommendations focus on aspects for improvement, thus the content of the report is necessarily skewed towards those aspects where potential adverse effects could arise. On the whole, the findings of the SA suggest that the Core Strategy will make significant contributions to the progression of SA objectives.

#### *Spatial Strategy*

##### **Policy CS1 Settlement Designation and Town/Village Centres**

- 8.4 The SA appraised Clause 3 only (the principle of the designated Area Centres and Local Centres having been appraised at the Preferred Options stage).
- 8.5 The principle of designating Central Zones in the larger settlements is considered to be a valuable addition to this Policy. It should help progress various sustainability objectives by providing an accessible focus for accessible retail, employment, leisure, cultural activity. Securing a mix of such functions within Area and Local Centres should provide opportunities for the development of social networks.
- 8.6 The supporting text specifies that the Zones will be identified in the appropriate settlement-specific DPDs. From a sustainability perspective, it will be particularly important to ensure that the Central Zones reduce the need to travel by car, rather than increasing congestion within central areas. It is recommended that, along with the designation of the Zones, the appropriate settlement-specific DPDs demonstrate that this will be the case, and where necessary set out measures to achieve it.

### **Policy CS2 Location of Development**

- 8.7 The principle of acceptability of development within the listed settlements remains unchanged from the Preferred Options version of the Core Strategy. The reference to development boundaries has been removed from the Core Strategy, but as specified in the supporting text, defined development boundaries (within which development will in principle be acceptable) are retained, and will be defined in the relevant settlement specific DPDs. From a sustainability perspective, the implications of moving the reference to development boundaries from one DPD to another does not result in a significantly different sustainability outcomes, and does not warrant re-appraisal of the Policy.
- 8.8 The Policy now also usefully stipulates that outside the listed settlements development will be strictly controlled and only permitted where it can be delivered sustainably and in response to a demonstrable local need. This will help to clarify the situation for potential developers.

### **Policy CS3 Housing Provision and Affordable Housing Targets**

- 8.9 This appraisal of this policy focused on the main differences between the Preferred Options version of the policy and the Submission Document version. These are as follows:
- An additional 400 dwellings are proposed outside the PUA during the period 2001-2016. The additional proposed dwellings are spread between a number of Area and Local Centres, as well as Villages. Whereas in the Preferred Options, no dwellings were proposed in Ivybridge, 75 dwellings are now proposed. Totnes is to accommodate 400 dwellings rather than the 300 previously proposed, and Kingsbridge is to accommodate 200 rather than 150 dwellings.
  - Affordable housing targets have been added, supported by clauses 2 and 3 regarding the proportion of affordable dwelling provision that will be expected within the PUA and the proportion to be expected outside it.
- 8.10 The revisions to this Policy will result in more sustainable outcomes for the District – in particular by going further to address the pressing need for affordable housing, the provision of which is so fundamental to achieving balanced communities with living and working opportunities for all. The additional dwellings will result in more pressure upon the receiving environment, but if carefully managed, this need not compromise the achievement of sustainability objectives relating to the quality of the built environment, landscape etc.
- 8.11 It is recommended that new residential development in Ivybridge is made subject to the prior provision of adequate services and facilities.

### **Policy CS4 Employment Land Provision**

- 8.12 The appraisal of this Policy focused on the main difference between the Preferred Options version of the policy and the Submission Document version, ie the provision for an additional 4.6 hectares of employment land outside the Principal Urban Area, of which an additional 2.5 hectares is proposed at Totnes, and an additional 1.5 hectares in Ivybridge.
- 8.13 The revision to the Employment Land Provision Policy results in benefits for sustainability, recognising the need for additional employment land to secure employment opportunities for the local community. The provision of the majority of this additional land either within or accessible to Area Centres will assist in reducing the need to travel further to access employment. Clearly, the employment land will need to be sensitively located and designed in order to ensure successful and sustainable integration with the receiving environment and existing communities.

### **Policy CS5 Sherford New Community**

- 8.14 Since the principle of accommodating the new community at Sherford is a strategic requirement, the role of South Hams District Council is not to decide whether to accommodate it, but rather to accommodate it a sustainable and beneficial manner. Consequently, the appraisal focused not upon the principle of accommodating the new community, but upon how it is to be achieved.
- 8.15 The Policy sets out the principle of accommodating the new community, and provides a valuable overview of the development mix and supporting infrastructure that will be required. The requirements as set out in the Policy are proactive in the progression of several sustainability objectives. Whilst it is recognised that it is not appropriate for this Core Strategy policy to stipulate all the attributes of the development, minor changes to the Policy wording are suggested as follows, in order to further progress opportunities for sustainability to be embedded within the community:
1. A site at Sherford, to the south-west of the A38 Deep Lane junction, is proposed for the major mixed-use development of a sustainable new community.
  2. The design of the new community must be of a high standard, locally distinctive and environmentally sustainable. It must be developed in such a way so as to avoid pollution, minimise the use resources, minimise waste and conserve energy **and water. It must include sustainable drainage, and a proportion of the new community's energy needs will be expected to be met through on-site generation of renewables.**
  3. The Sherford New Community must be developed in a fully comprehensive way and in accordance with an agreed phasing programme, to include provision for:
    - a) 4,000 dwellings, in a range of housing types and tenures, approximately 50% of which should be affordable homes;

- b) 18 ha. of employment land to provide **a range of** local employment opportunities; and
  - c) the following key infrastructure:
    - i) local community facilities, including cultural, religious, education (one secondary and three primary schools), health (including GP and dentist surgeries and health centre provision), sport, recreation, **leisure** and shopping facilities, together with local employment opportunities;
    - ii) sustainable access networks and transport systems including, in particular, a strategic high quality, high capacity, high frequency public transport link with Plymouth from the commencement of development, park and ride interchange provision accessible to the A38 and A379, **and a network of safe routes for pedestrians and bicycles throughout the community;**
    - iii) public and private open space, **accessible links with the countryside, retention and positive incorporation of valued on-site landscape, wildlife and historic features where possible, structural landscaping and habitat creation;** and
    - iv) all necessary physical infrastructure.
4. The Sherford New Community should be capable of accommodating further development beyond 2016.

#### **Location of additional 450 dwellings within the South Hams Part of the Plymouth PUA**

- 8.16 There is a requirement to accommodate about 450 homes on a site or sites within the South Hams part of the Plymouth PUA (immediately adjoining the city). The Council has concluded in the Submission version of the Core Strategy that, in order to bring forward an achievable build rate, it is not feasible to accommodate these 450 dwellings at Sherford during the plan period in addition to the 4,000 already allocated there.
- 8.17 The choice of location for the additional 450 dwellings is finely balanced and may involve one or more locations. The level of detail in relation to site choices which is now required is at odds with the spirit of the Core Strategy – which is primarily a strategic document. The Core Strategy therefore allocates these 450 dwellings to elsewhere within the South Hams part of the PUA but is not specific about location. The precise location(s) for these dwellings will be identified in the Plymouth Urban Fringe AAP. This document will address the detailed and technical work required to make this site choice, and is the appropriate document to allow the necessary Sustainability Appraisal work to be undertaken. The guidance offered in the Core Strategy in relation to these

450 dwellings within the PUA, is that they should not be accommodated as part of the Sherford New Community up to 2016.

### *Strategic Policies*

#### **Policy CS6 Affordable Housing**

- 8.18 The Submission version of the Affordable Housing Strategic Policy is much more succinct than the Preferred Options version. Most of the detail (regarding thresholds and percentages) from the Preferred Options version is being moved to the Core Policies. However, the principles remain unchanged, and consequently the revision is not considered to warrant re-appraisal of the Policy.
- 8.19 The abridged (Submission) version of the Policy is useful in that it clearly stipulates that residential development will be required to provide affordable housing (at a level which takes into account the nature of the development and local needs), and links to the Spatial Strategy which sets out affordable housing targets.

#### **Policy CS9: Landscape**

- 8.20 Overall the policy is positive in terms of achieving the sustainability and, apart from perhaps having a negative effect on the winning and working of minerals, the policy conforms to central government advice.
- 8.21 As detailed in the matrix, the policy as it stands is capable of different interpretations as to exactly which landscape areas are covered by this policy. It is recommended that the third bullet point be amended as shown below. The policy would then score ++ for the landscape sustainability objective.
3. The distinctive qualities and environmental features contributing to local landscape character – **both locally designated landscapes and features and qualities in the wider countryside** – should be conserved, maintained and enhanced.
- 8.22 Some forms of renewable energy can be visually acceptable in the landscape and, considering the SW targets for renewable energy generation by 2011, it is recommended that the Council consider the production of guidance on this matter. This work could be undertaken in partnership with the AONB Service and the National Park Authority.

#### **Policy CS10 Nature Conservation**

- 8.23 The Policy provides proactive progression for several sustainability objectives, and sets a clear principle that the District's habitats and species will be afforded a high level of protection. The Policy also makes it clear that the aim is not just to protect, but also to deliver enhancements. Recognition of the need to protect and enhance both statutorily designated and locally valued habitats and species is particularly valuable.

- 8.24 It will be important for habitats and species in the South Hams to be capable of responding to change – in particular the effects of climate change (eg by providing increased connectivity of habitats), and we suggest adding another clause to the Policy to this effect, as follows:
1. Sites of national and international importance for nature conservation are protected and will be enhanced in line with national legislation and guidance;
  2. Habitats and features of regional and local importance for nature conservation are protected and will be enhanced;
  3. Protection is given to protected species with special consideration given to European Protected Species;
  4. The biodiversity and earth science resource of the district are maintained and where appropriate will be enhanced and restored, with particular regard to Biodiversity Action Plan objectives and targets; and
  5. **Development will deliver net benefits for habitat connectivity, in order that habitats and species are able to adapt to change, including climate change**

#### **Policy CS11 Climate Change**

- 8.25 UK Climate Impacts Programme (2002) Summary of climate changes for the South West by the 2050s predicts an annual temperature increase of between 1.0 and 2.5 degrees centigrade. The Climate Change policy is to be commended upon its recognition of the need to start planning now to avoid exacerbating, as well as to manage the effects of, climate change.
- 8.26 The Policy sets out specific measures to reduce energy consumption. Measures relating to the water environment could usefully be added, as follows:

New development should reflect the need to plan for climate change, through addressing its causes and potential impacts. New development should **progress** the:-

- reduction of energy usage;
- reduction of private car usage and encouragement of alternative forms of sustainable transport;
- development of renewable energy resources; and
- **management of the impacts of climate change through the design and location of development, including sustainable drainage, water efficiency measures, and ensuring no net loss of flood storage capacity.**

#### **Policy CS 12 Tourism**

- 8.27 The sequential approach for accommodating tourist facilities progresses a number of sustainability objectives (including accessibility, employment, economy, and protection of the landscape and biodiversity).

- 8.28 There is some concern that the Policy could in places result in an over-proliferation of tourist facilities within the Town and Village Zones, and this could be to the detriment of the availability of services and facilities for local residents. The Policy could stipulate that this situation will need to be avoided, as follows:

Tourist and leisure facilities, including accommodation, should be provided in locations which accord with the following sequential approach:

- i) In the “Town Centre” and “Village Centre” zones identified in the Area and Local Centres, **whilst preserving the primary function of the Zones as a hub for local residents;**
- ii) Within the development boundaries of settlements;
- iii) Outside the development boundaries such development should be accommodated in existing or replacement buildings and provided that no unacceptable harm to national and local interests is caused.

### **Policy CS13 Rural Diversification**

- 8.29 The policy should help to meet the Council’s sustainability objectives, particularly in relation to supporting sustainable rural communities and the agricultural economy, whilst protecting the natural beauty of the landscape.
- 8.30 As many of the buildings and farm complexes considered for re-use may have historical and/or cultural significance it is recommended that clause 1 of the Policy is modified slightly as follows:
- 1) Development to enable diversification of the rural economy will be acceptable where it is compatible with its location and setting and will cause no unacceptable harm to the surrounding landscape **or historic and cultural heritage**

- 8.31 The Council may wish to consider providing some indication of the scale of development likely to be acceptable in rural areas.

### **SUMMARY OF PROGRESSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.32 Details of the progression or otherwise of each recommendation, with reasons, has been provided by South Hams District Council, and is presented in Appendix X. The Council has been very proactive in integrating SA recommendations into the Submission Document, and this should contribute to a more sustainable future for the District. Examples of changes made to the Submission Document as a result of the recommendations are outlined below:
- 8.33 Additional wording was added to the Sherford New Community Policy (CS5), in order to set out the principle of integrating sustainable drainage, securing a proportion of the new community’s energy needs through on-site generation of renewables, providing a network of safe routes for pedestrians and bicycles throughout the community, and retaining and incorporating valued on-site landscape, wildlife and historic features as positive features of the design.

- 8.34 The Nature Conservation Policy (CS10) was expanded to include protection for wildlife corridors, links, or stepping stones between habitats in order that habitats and species in the South Hams are better able to respond to change – in particular the effects of climate change.
- 8.35 ‘Management of the impacts of climate change through the design and location of development’ was further elaborated in Policy CS11 (Climate Change) to specify that this will include sustainable drainage, water efficiency measures, and ensuring no net loss of flood storage capacity.
- 8.36 Policy CS12 (Tourism) sets out a sequential approach to accommodating tourist facilities – seeking to focus facilities within ‘Town Centre’ and ‘Village Centre’ Zones (identified in the Area and Local Centres). The appraisal considered that this could in places result in an over-proliferation of tourist facilities within the Town and Village Zones, which could be to the detriment of the availability of services and facilities for local residents. The sequential approach was not altered, but the Policy wording was revised to specify that the primary function of the Zones as a hub for local residents is to be preserved.
- 8.37 The SA of Policy CS13 (Rural Diversification) noted that many of the buildings and farm complexes considered for re-use may have historical and/or cultural significance, and recommended a modification to the Policy wording to ensure rural diversification causes no unacceptable harm to historic or cultural heritage. This was progressed in the Submission Document.
- 8.38 Other SA recommendations did not seek to modify the wording of Policies, but related to important aspects for consideration in related Development Plan Documents. For example, the Submission Document version of Policy CS1 (Settlement Designation and Town/Village Centres) was revised (from the Preferred Options version of the Policy) to include a principle of designating Central Zones in the larger settlements. The SA found this to be a valuable addition to this Policy. It should help provide an accessible focus for retail, employment, leisure, cultural activity. The SA also noted that it will be particularly important to ensure that the Central Zones reduce the need to travel by car, rather than increasing congestion within central areas. It was therefore recommended that, along with the designation of the Zones, the appropriate settlement-specific DPDs demonstrate that this will be the case, and where necessary set out measures to achieve it.

## 9.0 IMPLEMENTATION

### **PROPOSALS FOR MONITORING THE SUSTAINABILITY EFFECTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL LDF CORE STRATEGY**

- 9.1 Unlike the old Development Plan system, the new Local Development Framework (LDF) for South Hams is designed to be an on-going, iterative process, in which all sections are kept up to date through a rolling process of public involvement, monitoring and, where necessary, adjustment. The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans are monitored to identify unforeseen adverse effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action (Article 10.1). ODPM's SA Guidance (November 2005) specifies that monitoring arrangements should be designed to highlight significant effects, effects which differ from those that were predicted, and to provide a useful source of baseline information for the future.
- 9.2 The proposed monitoring strategy should:
- Clearly set out who is responsible for the monitoring, as well as its timing, frequency and format for presenting results;
  - By collecting new information, update and strengthen original baseline data, rectifying any deficiencies, and thereby provide an improved basis for the formulation of future plans;
  - Establish a mechanism for action to enhance positive effects of the plan, mitigate any negative ones and assess any areas that were originally identified as containing uncertainty. The aim should be to keep the LDF working at maximum effectiveness for the benefit of the community; and,
  - Empower all of the community by providing a clear and easily understandable picture of how actual implementation of the LDF is affecting the district. Is it moving the area towards or away from the more sustainable future we intended? Are any significant effects identified actually happening? Are any unforeseen consequences being felt? Are any mitigation measures that were proposed operating effectively?
- 9.3 At the Scoping stage, we drafted a number of possible indicators/targets for each of the sustainability objectives, to provide an initial framework for discussion. However, it is important that this is then refined into a manageable monitoring strategy, with a practicable number of indicators, focusing on the key sustainability issues. The selection of key indicators should be informed by the outcome of appraisal, such that it is possible to monitor whether significant effects foreseen were accurately predicted.
- 9.4 The Sustainability Report published with the Preferred Options Core Strategy suggested proposals to monitor the sustainability of the LDD implementation. This included the selection of indicators to measure significant sustainability

effects predicted during appraisal. Targets were also proposed where appropriate and available. The Sustainability Report then invited comment upon them. This Revised Sustainability Report presents refined proposals to monitor the sustainability effects of the Core Strategy.

- 9.5 The Planning Act requires Local Planning Authorities to produce Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) to document progress in implementing the Local Development Framework. South Hams District Council published an AMR in December 2005 to discuss progress during the period April 2004 to March 2005. Guidance from the ODPM advises that these AMRs should incorporate SA monitoring. Consequently, it is proposed that the scope of AMR monitoring will incorporate indicators to measure the significant sustainability effects of implementing the Core Strategy.
- 9.6 Expanding upon existing monitoring arrangements (rather than seeking to implement a separate monitoring scheme) will ensure that the organisational structures necessary to compile and report on the sustainability effects are already in place, and to respond to any unexpected adverse effects. As recognised by South Hams District Council, the AMR “*is not just about collecting information; rather the emphasis should be on analysing outputs, significant effects and contextual indicators*” (Annual Monitoring Report December 2005). It should also avoid duplication in effort.
- 9.7 South Hams District Council published their Annual Monitoring Report in December 2005, after the publication of the Sustainability Report (with the Preferred Options). This provided an opportunity to draw upon the suggested sustainability indicators and targets during the selection of indicators for inclusion in the AMR. This is considered to be a particularly proactive approach, such that the Council’s LDF monitoring strategy already includes sustainability indicators.
- 9.8 Table 2 below sets out Sustainability indicators and targets to monitor the sustainability effects of implementing the Core Strategy. Most sustainability indicators are already incorporated within the AMR, and are denoted by *italicised indicators* within the table. A small number of sustainability indicators are not included within the AMR covering the period April 2004 to March 2005. These remaining indicators seek to measure provision for on-site renewable energy generation to contribute to the development’s energy requirements, landscape, and the number of planning applications received per year for new / expanding businesses. It is proposed that these additional indicators are included within the subsequent AMR.
- 9.9 Totnes and District Sustainability Group commented upon the monitoring proposals as set out in the Sustainability Report accompanying the Core Strategy Preferred Options. They sought the following modifications to proposed targets:
- Renewable Energy  
The target to secure at least 10% of the energy requirements of major developments (10 dwellings or more) through on-site renewable energy

generation capacity should be revised so that all new developments are required to deliver a proportion of on-site renewable energy. The 10% target should also be increased, especially for larger sites.

- Energy Efficiency  
Target for 40% of new dwellings to meeting ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ BREEAM and BRE EcoHomes standards to be raised to 100%.

9.10 As a result, we have incorporated the suggestions related to energy efficiency within the Table of indicators and targets. However, the target for on-site renewable energy generation has been removed as the Submission version of the Core Strategy no longer contains a specific renewable energy target. However, in major developments such as the Sherford new community the relevant DPD should include specific targets.

**Table 2 Core Strategy Sustainability Indicators and Targets**

<b>Potential Significant Sustainability Issues Identified</b>	<b>Proposed Indicator</b>	<b>Proposed Target</b>
Affordable housing	<i>Supply of affordable housing</i>  <i>Mix of housing completed by house size and house tenure</i>  <i>House prices and affordability</i>	66% of new homes on allocated sites outside the Plymouth PUA should be available at affordable prices. 50% of new homes on ‘windfall’ sites (above the site size thresholds stipulated in the Affordable Housing SPG) should be available at affordable prices
Previously developed land	<i>Percentage of new and converted dwellings built on previously developed land</i>  <i>Employment development on previously developed land</i>	Outside the Plymouth PUA achieve 50% provision of new homes on previously developed land and through conversion of existing buildings
Renewable energy	Provision for on-site renewable energy generation to contribute to the development’s energy requirements	
Landscape	AONB headline indicators currently being developed - as specified in ‘South Devon AONB Management Plan 2004 – 2009’ p.48	
Biodiversity	<i>Change in areas and populations</i>	

	<i>of biodiversity importance</i> <i>Achievement of Biodiversity Action Plan targets</i>	
Employment land provision	<i>Amount of land developed for employment by type</i> <i>Losses of employment land by type</i>	Achieve Core Strategy allocations within LDF period
Energy Efficiency	<i>Percentage of developments and buildings meeting 'excellent' or 'very good' BREEAM and BRE EcoHomes standards</i>	100%
Heritage	<i>Number of features of historic and cultural interest protected</i>	
Accessibility	<i>Proximity of new housing to local facilities</i> (suggest % new housing within 15 minutes walking distance of (a) shops, (b) primary school, (c) healthcare and within 5 minutes walking distance of (d) bus stop and (e) public open space (adapted from Better places to live by design: a companion guide to PPG3 'movement and place making' and English Nature Accessible Natural Greenspaces Standards) <i>Loss of existing services and facilities</i> <i>New retail and office development in town centres</i> <i>Green Flag awarded open space</i>	50%
Economic growth	Number of planning applications received per year for new / expanding businesses <i>Average earnings</i> <i>Number of farm diversification schemes</i>	
Development boundaries	<i>% development within settlements</i>	
Water	<i>Percentage of development with Sustainable Drainage Systems</i>	

