

# **Annex 1: Adopted Core Strategy 2001-2016 Statement of Sustainability and Consultation**

## **Sustainability Appraisal**

1. Local authorities are required to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) during the preparation of local development documents such as the Core Strategy. This is to ensure that sustainable development is at the heart of decisions at every stage of plan-making and is an integral part of the process. The Core Strategy has been subject to initial and detailed SA to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of the strategy to ensure that it accords with sustainable development. The SA incorporates the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with European and UK legislation (EU directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI No 16330), respectively).
2. The SA is an iterative, ongoing process and is integral to the preparation of the strategy. It has considered the effects of the emerging strategy on the environment and other aspects for sustainability. The findings of the SA on the Core Strategy showed that the document was sound.
3. A Sustainability Report accompanies the Core Strategy. This report documents the SA and SEA process and findings, and explains in greater detail the difference the SA process has made. The SA process, including consultation on the SA, has shown that the Core Strategy will make a significant contribution to the progression of Sustainable Development objectives for the South Hams. The SA has genuinely influenced the plan progression, resulting in significant changes being made to the DPD. These are outlined below, however the SA Report (Submission Document), and in particular, Appendix IX of the report should be referred to for further detail.

### **Options**

A comparative appraisal of the sustainability effects of sets of options considered for the Spatial Strategy was undertaken. All of the SA recommendations regarding the most sustainable options for the Spatial Strategy were incorporated in the Core Strategy Preferred Options document.

### **Core Strategy Objectives**

The majority of SA recommendations regarding the Core Strategy Objectives were 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 'Regenerate the district's towns, villages and their hinterlands, using previously developed land and existing buildings

where appropriate', and to 'promote development which will help to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and the emission of greenhouse gases'.

### **Core Strategy Policies**

A number of SA recommendations relating to Core Strategy Policies were progressed within the 'Preferred Options' version of the Document (published in June 2005), and additional recommendations were progressed within the 'Submission' Document (published in January 2006). These included improving sustainability measures at Sherford New Community, and changes to policies relating to areas such as nature conservation, climate change, rural diversification and tourism.

### **Adoption of the Core Strategy**

The Independent Examination of the Core Strategy was undertaken in July 2006. In his Report, the Inspector found the Core Strategy to be sound, and determined that the 'SA process has been satisfactorily implemented in relation to the CS'. As no fundamental changes to the spatial vision or strategy were recommended, the Inspector reported that no further SA is required. Consequently, it is considered that no further amendments to the SA report are required.

### **Monitoring of the SA and Core Strategy**

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 SA process included the suggestion of proposals to monitor the sustainability of the LDF implementation, and these will be incorporated into the South Hams Annual Monitoring process. This will ensure the implementation of Sustainability recommendations.

### **Statement of Consultation and Involvement on the Core Strategy**

4. The Core Strategy has been prepared in accordance with the minimum requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and relevant national policies and guidance. The Core Strategy has met the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) requirements relating to public consultation. It has been through two major stages of preparation, each subject to a six week consultation period: First, an Issues and Options stage in October-November 2004; and second, the Preferred Options stage in June-August 2005. The Core Strategy was subject to its final consultation, the Submission stage, from January-March 2006. At each stage, copies of the document were sent to a broad spectrum of organisations including the Government Office for the South West, the South West Regional Assembly, adjoining local authorities and town and parish councils.

5. Statutory organisations and all community and interest groups detailed in the SCI were consulted and views sought throughout the process. A large number of organisations were also invited to participate in a series of events, including focused workshops, open days, and seminars in addition to submitting response forms. The strategy document and response forms were publicly advertised in local newspapers, and were made available on the Council's website, at the Council offices and to view at libraries across the district.
6. Summaries of the representations received at the Preferred Options stage were made available on the Council's website. A statement of consultation has also been prepared that provides an audit of each consultation period. It documents who has been consulted, how the consultation was undertaken, the main issues raised and how these issues have been addressed in subsequent stages of the document.

### **Adoption**

7. The Core Strategy has correctly followed the procedures and requirements through the stages of plan preparation, culminating in the independent Examination in July 2006. At the end of November the Council received the Inspector's Report, the recommendations of which are binding on the Council. The Council resolved to adopt the Core Strategy, including all of the Inspector's recommendations on 21 December 2006. With the Core Strategy having been determined to be "sound" through the Examination and following the process outlined above, the Council considers that there are no reasonable alternatives to the adoption of the Core Strategy in its final form. The Council has placed a public notice, date 19 January 2007 advising of the adoption of the Core Strategy in local newspapers.