Sustainability Appraisal of the Options and Issues for the Core Strategy DPD

1. Introduction

1.1 This report presents the Sustainability Appraisal of the North Wiltshire Core Strategy DPD Issues and Options.

2. Sustainability Appraisal

2.1 The new planning system requires local authorities to undertake a 'Sustainability Appraisal' (SA) of DPDs and SPDs. The purpose of a SA is to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the preparation of those documents.

2.2 This SA incorporates the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) regulations.[1]

3. Context

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

3.1 In preparation for the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy DPD, this Council prepared and consulted on a draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report in September 2005.[2] It explains in more detail the purpose of SA and sets out the five stages of Sustainability Appraisal to accompany the production of DPDs. The Scoping Report complies with Stage A of the Sustainability Appraisal regulations. It establishes the baseline data and outlines the SA framework that will be used to inform the SA of the Core Strategy DPD. At the time the Scoping Report was written, it was based on draft guidance published by the Government. [3] Since then, the Government has published a final version of the guidance.[4]

3.2 The Council consulted the principal statutory environmental conservation bodies and a range of other local stakeholders. A list of consultees is shown in Appendix One. Some minor amendments have been made to the content of the Scoping Report in light of the comments made. Full details are available on our website at www.northwilts.gov.uk/ldf

3.3 However, it should be recognised that this is an evolving process. The Scoping Report is a key document, which informs the whole SA/SEA proposal and its content will be revised in the future, as additional data about the local conditions becomes available and to reflect changes in priorities.

4. Purpose of This Document

4.1 The Core Strategy Issues and Options document represents an informal consultation stage (under regulation 25[5]) and is part of an ongoing consultation, which will culminate in

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[1] A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive – ODPM – September 2005
[2] North Wiltshire Local Development Framework Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report – September 2005. Available on the Councils website at www.northwilts.gov.uk/ldf
[3] Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks Consultation Paper – ODPM – September 2004 &
Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks Interim Advice Note on Frequently Asked Questions – ODPM – April 2005.
[4] Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents – ODPM- November 2005.
[5] Regulation 25 – Informal, ongoing consultation as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

the publication of the Core Strategy DPD Preferred Options document. Unlike in earlier drafts of the SA guidance, the final version does not require a formal Initial Sustainability Appraisal to be published. However the guidance recommends that public and stakeholder involvement on the SA is undertaken concurrently with consultation on the DPD. On the subject of public involvement in DPDs and SA, it is stated:

'When producing the pre-submission consultation statement in line with Local Development Regulation 24, it may be useful to take the SA into account.' (Figure 7 DPD Stage 2:Production (Informal pre-submission consultation)).

4.2 Therefore, this document has been prepared to accompany the Core Strategy DPD Issues and Options document.

4.3 However, it should be noted that this SA document is limited in its scope, as it concentrates on testing the Core Strategy Options for Strategic Objectives, set out in the Options Matrix, against the SA framework.

4.4 This is due to the Core Strategy Issues and Options document largely consisting of a series of questions to establish what the views are on the overall context for future growth in North Wiltshire. Only when this process is complete and the outcomes used to inform the Preferred Options document will there be options with enough detail and focus to appraise. In any case, within the guidance for Stage B of the SA process, there are several references to how the SA work accompanying the DPD production should be documented in the SA Report – the following Stage C of the SA process. According to the guidelines:

'The SA Report must be issued with the DPD during the pre-submission public participation stage on the preferred option or options under Regulation 26 of the Local Development Regulations.' (Paragraph 3.5.1 page 53)

4.5 Therefore this sustainability appraisal work is still underway and will continue to be developed and revised in preparation for the final sustainability appraisal report which will accompany the Preferred Options stage of the Core Strategy DPD.

5. Methodology

Testing DPD Objectives against the sustainability appraisal framework (Task B1)

5.1 The SA/SEA methodology incorporates two cross checks to assess the level of consistency, and possibly conflict, between the Sustainability Objectives and the Development Plan Document (DPD) objectives. The former can be quite specific statements of desired outcomes for the Local Development Framework (LDF) which reflect the sustainability issues affecting North Wiltshire, whereas the latter are broad overarching statements reflecting long-term objectives which it is appropriate to pursue. Nevertheless, it is important that the two sets are as consistent as possible and that any potential conflicts are identified and reduced by redefining the objectives where appropriate.

5.2 Following the check on the internal consistency of the Sustainability Objectives (as documented in Stage A4 of the Scoping Report), the Council has now undertaken to cross check these objectives with those set out in the Options Matrix in Core Strategy Options and Issues document. These are detailed in two tables in Appendix One.

5.3 The key tensions between the objectives, identified in this compatibility assessment are:
- Options 1, 2, and 3, for which the theme is the protection of the historic and natural environment, are compatible with the SA Objective 2 (To protect and enhance the quality

of the natural and historic environment). However, they may conflict with SA Objectives 1 and 4, which focus on the social and economic benefits of sustainable development.

- Options 4,5 and 6 (for which the theme is the delivery of services that are important to social and cultural wellbeing) are compatible with SA Objectives 1 and 4, which focus on promoting the social and economic benefits of sustainable development. However, they will not necessarily be compatible with SA objectives 2 and 3 which focus on promoting and enhancing the quality of the natural, historic and built environment.

- Options 7,8 and 9, for which the theme is the delivery of economic development, regeneration and growth are compatible with SA Objective 4 which focuses on promoting or maintain the long term economic health of the local economy. This may not be compatible with SA Objective 1, which focuses on promoting or maintaining socially inclusive communities and their access to community infrastructure.

- Options 1,4 and 7, for which the development model is to concentrate consideration of the themes at only a few places in the District may ensure that SA Objectives 1 and 4 are met. However, this will not necessarily mean that all of the District of North Wiltshire and all the towns and villages within will benefit.

- Options 2,5 and 8, for which the development model is to identify several main settlements for the consideration of themes may ensure that SA Objective 1 is met. However, this will not necessarily mean that all of the District and all the towns and villages within will benefit.

- Options 3,6 and 9, for which the development model is to consider the themes evenly and fairly across the whole of the District would ensure that SA Objectives 1 and 4 would be met in part. However, this may conflict with specific sustainability indicators within those objectives such as promoting more sustainable transport choices and reducing the need to travel. If development were to be very piecemeal and small scale, this may also mean that benefits to the community may not be achieved. There are also be a conflict with Sustainability Objectives 2 and 3.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The main area of conflict between the Core Strategy DPD Options for objectives and the SA objectives is where those options which will facilitate development, whilst meeting the social and economic sustainability objectives may conflict with those that seeking to promote or maintain the natural, historic and built environment.

6.2 Rather than rewording the options, the conflict must be taken into account in developing the options further and ultimately perhaps trading development needs against conservation priorities on a site by site basis.

7. Forthcoming Work

7.1 Over the forthcoming months, work will continue to develop the SA for the Core Strategy DPD and to inform the preparation of the Preferred Options. This work is contained within Stage B of the SA process, as shown in the diagram in Appendix Three. During this stage, work will continue to appraise in broad terms the effects of strategic options (including any new options, which arise out of the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation) and in more detail the effects of the preferred options when these have been selected. The key tasks, which will be undertaken, are:

- Developing the DPD Options
- Predicting the Effects of the DPD
- Evaluating the Effects of the DPD
- Considering ways of mitigating effects and maximising beneficial effects and
- Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the DPD.

8. Sustainability Appraisal Report

8.1 A Sustainability Appraisal Report will accompany the Core Strategy Preferred Options Document, when it is published for consultation in 2006. The SA Report will map and provide conclusions on the overall sustainability of the DPD. It will include judgements on significance of the effects of the DPD. Any inconsistencies between the contents of the Core Strategy DPD and the SA Framework will be highlighted, with recommendations for improving the options where appropriate. Reasons for eliminating options will also be documented.

8.2 The structure of the SA Report is likely to be similar to that suggested in the SA guidance. This is shown in Appendix Four.

Appendix One Scoping Report

Statutory Consultees (as required by SEA Directive):

Countryside Agency
English Heritage
English Nature
Environment Agency

Additional Organisations:

External:

Bath and North East Somerset Council (Planning Policy Team);
Cotswold District Council (Forward Planning);
Gloucestershire County Council (Planning Unit)
Kennet District Council (Forward Planning Team);
South Gloucestershire Council (Local Plans Team);
Swindon Borough Council (Forward Planning Group);
West Wiltshire District Council (Forward Planning);
Salisbury District Council (Forward Planning)
Wiltshire County Council (Strategic Planning, Minerals and Waste Group)
Government Office for the South West (GOSW)
South West Regional Assembly
South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)

British Geological Survey
British Waterways
Forestry Commission
Highways Agency
North Wessex Downs AONB Group
Cotswold Conservation Board
RSPB
Sport England
Network Rail
Thames Water
The British Wind Energy Association
Wessex Water
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

Community & Environment – Environmental Health
Community & Environment – Estate & Design
Community & Environment – Housing
Community & Environment – Regeneration & Assets
Planning Services – Development Control

Internal Council Services:
Community & Environment – Community Partnership

Appendix Two

		Core Strategy DPD Options for Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives								
		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Option 9
		A few key historic sites and landscapes are given priority over all other interests	Several historic site and broad areas of landscapes are protected; but prioritised according to the available resources.	All historic sites and all landscapes are given priority over all other interests	To identify a key core settlement large e-ugh or with the potential to grow to attract the development of key social and cultural developments.	To spread the growth around the main settlements to act as Service centres for key social and cultural developments.	To place, encourage or subsidise social and cultural services to be as close to the rural community as possible.	To concentrate employment and housing and growth at one or two main settlements to gain the maximum advantage of the economies of scale and attractiveness to business interest.	To encourage economic growth at a few main settlements that offers the best prospect for the creation of self-sustaining communities.	To distribute the benefits of economic growth to all settlements and make particular effects to diversity, support and protect the local economy.
SA/ SEA Objectives and Indicators										
PROMOTES OR MAINTAINS SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES AND THEIR ACCESS TO COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE	1.Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in a decent home	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
	2. Promote communities which are inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free, whilst recognising the diverse and special needs those communities	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+
	3. Improve provision and access to community facilities.	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+
	4. Promote more sustainable transport choices and reduce the need to travel	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+
	5. Reduce Poverty and Social Exclusion	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+

		Core Strategy DPD Options for Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives								
		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Option 9
		A few key historic sites and landscapes are given priority over all other interests	Several historic site and broad areas of landscapes are protected; but prioritised according to the available resources.	All historic sites and all landscapes are given priority over all other interests	To identify a key core settlement large e-ugh or with the potential to grow to attract the development of key social and cultural developments.	To spread the growth around the main settlements to act as Service centres for key social and cultural developments.	To place, encourage or subsidise social and cultural services to be as close to the rural community as possible.	To concentrate employment and housing and growth at one or two main settlements to gain the maximum advantage of the economies of scale and attractiveness to business interest.	To encourage economic growth at a few main settlements that offers the best prospect for the creation of self-sustaining communities.	To distribute the benefits of economic growth to all settlements and make particular effects to diversity, support and protect the local economy.
SA/ SEA Objectives and Indicators										
PROMOTES OR MAINTAINS THE QUALITY OF THE NATURAL AND THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT	6. Conserve and enhance the landscape, visual quality and character of towns, villages and countryside.	+	+	+	+	0	-	0	0	0
	7. Maintain and enhance biodiversity, flora and fauna	+	+	+	-	?	?	?	?	?
	8. Conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment	+	+	+	-	?	?	?	?	?
	9. Reduce land contamination and safeguard soil quantity and quality.	0	0	0	+	0	0	?	?	?
	10. Improve water and air quality and reduce pollution of air, water and soil	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0

		Core Strategy DPD Options for Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives								
		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Option 9
		A few key historic sites and landscapes are given priority over all other interests	Several historic site and broad areas of landscapes are protected; but prioritised according to the available resources.	All historic sites and all landscapes are given priority over all other interests	To identify a key core settlement large e-ugh or with the potential to grow to attract the development of key social and cultural developments.	To spread the growth around the main settlements to act as Service centres for key social and cultural developments.	To place, encourage or subsidise social and cultural services to be as close to the rural community as possible.	To concentrate employment and housing and growth at one or two main settlements to gain the maximum advantage of the economies of scale and attractiveness to business interest.	To encourage economic growth at a few main settlements that offers the best prospect for the creation of self-sustaining communities.	To distribute the benefits of economic growth to all settlements and make particular effects to diversity, support and protect the local economy.
SA/ SEA Objectives and Indicators										
DEMONSTRATES THE PRUDENT USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND INCORPORATES, WHERE RELEVANT, RECYCLING, RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURES	11. Address the causes and impacts of climate change, including minimising harm from flooding	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0
	12. Promote more efficient use of the land	0	0	0	+	+	-	+	+	-
	13. Promote efficient use of water	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	14. To minimise waste, whilst maximising recycling.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PROMOTES OR MAINTAINS THE LONG TERM ECO-MIC HEALTH OF THE LOCAL ECO-MY	15. Maintain and strengthen the economic viability of towns and villages, including employment opportunities.	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+
	16. Maintain and improve environment for inward investment.	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+
		+	Positive Compatible							

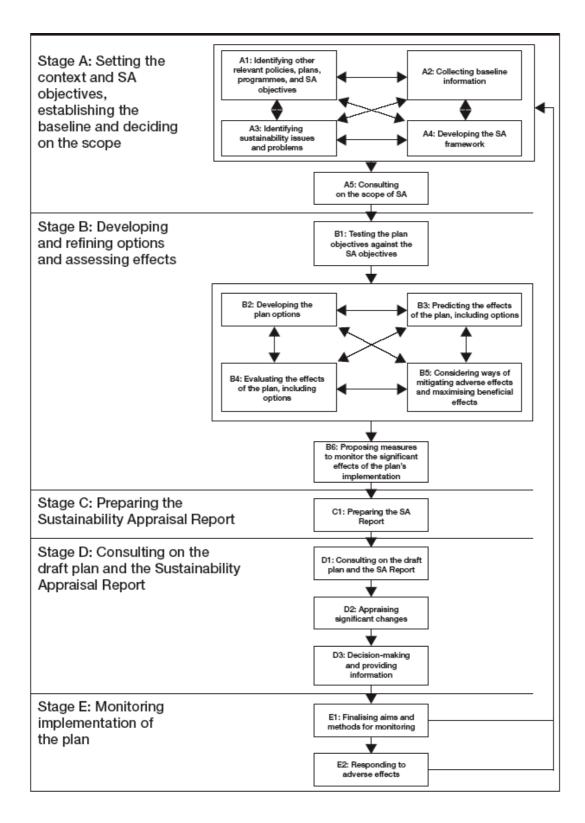|	Core Strategy DPD Options for Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives								
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Option 9
	A few key historic sites and landscapes are given priority over all other interests	Several historic site and broad areas of landscapes are protected; but prioritised according to the available resources.	All historic sites and all landscapes are given priority over all other interests	To identify a key core settlement large e-ugh or with the potential to grow to attract the development of key social and cultural developments.	To spread the growth around the main settlements to act as Service centres for key social and cultural developments.	To place, encourage or subsidise social and cultural services to be as close to the rural community as possible.	To concentrate employment and housing and growth at one or two main settlements to gain the maximum advantage of the economies of scale and attractiveness to business interest.	To encourage economic growth at a few main settlements that offers the best prospect for the creation of self-sustaining communities.	To distribute the benefits of economic growth to all settlements and make particular effects to diversity, support and protect the local economy.
SA/ SEA Objectives and Indicators									
	-	Possible Conflict							
	0	Neutral							

		Core Strategy DPD Options for Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives		
		Development Model: To concentrate consideration of themes at only a few significant places in the District:	Development Model: To identify several key places for the consideration of themes	Development Model: To consider the themes evenly and fairly across the whole of the District
Sustainability Objectives		Option 1, 4 and 7	Option 2, 5 and 8	Option 3, 6 and 9
PROMOTES OR MAINTAINS SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES AND THEIR ACCESS TO COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE	1. To provide everyone with the opportunity to live in a decent home at a price they can afford	Would meet the strategic need for housing, but not necessarily the local need i.e. To provide opportunities for people to live in their home area.	Would meet the strategic and some of the local need for housing	Would meet the local needs for housing.
	2. Promote communities which	Could build in measures for	Could build in measures for crime	Could build in measures for crime prevention.

		Core Strategy DPD Options for Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives		
		Development Model: To concentrate consideration of themes at only a few significant places in the District:	Development Model: To identify several key places for the consideration of themes	Development Model: To consider the themes evenly and fairly across the whole of the District
Sustainability Objectives		Option 1, 4 and 7	Option 2, 5 and 8	Option 3, 6 and 9
	are inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free, whilst recognising the diverse and special needs of those communities	crime prevention.	prevention.	
	3. Improve provision and accessibility to community facilities	Development may bring about the provision of additional community facilities and/or the enhancement of existing facilities, but would benefit other areas to a lesser or indeed no degree.	Development may bring about the provision of additional community facilities and/or the enhancement of existing facilities, but would benefit other areas to a lesser degree.	Development may bring about the provision of additional community facilities and/or the enhancement of existing facilities.
	4. Promote more sustainable transport choices and reduce the need to travel	Development would be directed to locations where public transport is available.	Development would be directed to locations where public transport is available.	Development wouldn't necessarily be provided in areas with alternative means of transport provision.
	5.Reduce Poverty and Social Exclusion	May result in social exclusion for those towns, villages and areas not identified because they will not benefit from new facilities.	May result in social exclusion for those towns, villages and areas not identified because they will not benefit from new facilities.	Few areas of exclusion.
PROMOTES OR MAINTAINS THE QUALITY OF THE NATURAL AND THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT	6. Conserve and enhance the landscape , visual quality and character of towns, villages and countryside	Development may mean the degrading of a landscape or townscape if in a conspicuous location, but this could be constrained.	Development may mean the degrading of a landscape or townscape, but this could be constrained.	Development may mean the degrading of a landscape or townscape.
	7. Maintain and enhance biodiversity, flora and fauna	Development should generally avoid wider biodiversity impacts, but could offer opportunities for investing in environmental improvements close to population concentrations.	Development should generally avoid wider biodiversity impacts, but could offer opportunities for investing in environmental improvements close to population concentrations.	Development may impact on biodiversity.
	8. Conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment	Development should generally avoid wider historic environment impacts.	Development affecting the historic environment could be mitigated.	Development affecting the historic environment could be mitigated.
	9. Reduce land contamination			

		Core Strategy DPD Options for Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives		
		Development Model: To concentrate consideration of themes at only a few significant places in the District:	Development Model: To identify several key places for the consideration of themes	Development Model: To consider the themes evenly and fairly across the whole of the District
Sustainability Objectives		Option 1, 4 and 7	Option 2, 5 and 8	Option 3, 6 and 9
	and safeguard soil quantity and quality			
	10. Improve water and air quality and reduce pollution of air, water and soil			
DEMONSTRATES THE PRUDENT USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND INCORPORATES, WHERE RELEVANT, RECYCLING, RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURES	11. Address the causes and impacts of climate change, including minimising harm from flooding	Development in floodplain would be contrary to this objective.	Development in floodplain would be contrary to this objective.	Development in floodplain would be contrary to this objective.
	12. Promote more efficient use of land	Concentrating development at a few significant places and ensuring development is at a high density would result in efficiencies in land use.	Concentrating development at several significant places and ensuring development is at a high density would result in efficiencies in land use.	
	13. Promote Efficient Use of Water	There could be substantial opportunity to be innovative	There could be substantial opportunity to be innovative	There could be substantial opportunity to be innovative
	14. To minimise waste, whilst maximising recycling	There could be substantial opportunity to be innovative	There could be substantial opportunity to be innovative	There could be substantial opportunity to be innovative
PROMOTES OR MAINTAINS THE LONG TERM ECONOMIC HEALTH OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY	15. Maintain and strengthen the economic viability of towns and villages, including employment opportunities	Employment needs to be taken into account as part of development.	Employment needs to be taken into account as part of development.	Employment needs to be taken into account as part of development.
	16. Maintain and improve environment for inward investment	There could be substantial opportunity to be innovative	There could be substantial opportunity to be innovative	There could be substantial opportunity to be innovative

Appendix Three Sustainability Appraisal Stages and Key Tasks

Stage A: Setting the context and SA objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope

- A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans, programmes, and SA objectives
- A2: Collecting baseline information
- A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems
- A4: Developing the SA framework
- A5: Consulting on the scope of SA

Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects

- B1: Testing the plan objectives against the SA objectives
- B2: Developing the plan options
- B3: Predicting the effects of the plan, including options
- B4: Evaluating the effects of the plan, including options
- B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects
- B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of the plan's implementation

Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report

- C1: Preparing the SA Report

Stage D: Consulting on the draft plan and the Sustainability Appraisal Report

- D1: Consulting on the draft plan and the SA Report
- D2: Appraising significant changes
- D3: Decision-making and providing information

Stage E: Monitoring implementation of the plan

- E1: Finalising aims and methods for monitoring
- E2: Responding to adverse effects

Appendix Four

Example Structure and Contents of the SA Report

Structure of Report	Information to include
Components making up the Environmental Report	Table sign-posting the components of the SA Report which make up the Environmental Report for the purposes of the SEA Directive
1. Summary and outcomes	1.1. Non-technical summary 1.2. A statement of the likely significant effects of the plan 1.3. Statement on the difference the process has made to date 1.4. How to comment on the report
2. Appraisal Methodology	2.1. Approach adopted to the SA 2.2. When the SA was carried out 2.3. Who carried out the SA 2.4. Who was consulted, when and how 2.5. Difficulties encountered in compiling information or carrying out the assessment.
3. Background	3.1. Purpose of the SA and the SA Report 3.2. Plan objectives and outline of contents 3.3. Compliance with the SEA Directive/Regulations
4. Sustainability objectives, baseline and context	4.1. Links to other policies, plans and programmes and sustainability objectives and how these have been taken into account 4.2. Description of the social, environmental and economic baseline characteristics and the predicted future baseline 4.3. Main social, environmental and economic issues and problems identified 4.4. Limitations of the information, assumptions made etc. 4.5. The SA framework, including objectives, targets and indicators
5. Plan issues and options	5.1. Main strategic options considered and how they were identified 5.2. Comparison of the social, environmental and economic effects of the options 5.3. How social, environmental and economic issues were considered in choosing the preferred options 5.4. Other options considered, and why these were rejected 5.5. Any proposed mitigation measures
6. Plan policies	6.1. Significant social, environmental and economic effects of the preferred policies 6.2. How social, environmental and economic problems were considered in developing the policies and proposals 6.3. Proposed mitigation measures 6.4. Uncertainties and risks
7. Implementation	7.1. Links to other tiers of plans and programmes and the project level (EIA, design guidance etc.) 7.2. Proposals for monitoring