



Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister

Creating sustainable communities

*Sustainability Appraisal of
Regional Spatial Strategies and
Local Development Documents*



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Deputy Prime Minister

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Guidance for Regional Planning Bodies and
Local Planning Authorities

November 2005

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: London

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This document is also available on the ODPM website.

Printed in the UK on material containing 75% post-consumer waste and 25% ECF pulp

ISBN: 185112 7984

Reference No: 05 PD 03432

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Abbreviations and Glossary

AAP	Area Action Plan
The Act	The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
Adoption statement	<p>A statement prepared by the Local Planning Authority notifying the public that the Development Plan Document or Supplementary Planning Document has been adopted. This is required by Regulation 36 for Development Plan Documents and Regulation 19 for Supplementary Planning Document in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.</p> <p>A statement on the main issues raised during the consultation on the sustainability appraisal and how these were taken into account in the development of the Development Plan Documents or Supplementary Planning Documents as required by the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, is recommended to be included in the Adoption Statement.</p>
AMR	Annual Monitoring Report
Consultation statement	A statement prepared by a Local Planning Authority for a Supplementary Planning Document under regulation 17 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.
DPD	Development Plan Document
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment is a generic term used to describe environmental assessment as applied to projects. In this guide 'EIA' is used to refer to the type of assessment required under the European Directive 337/85/EEC.
EiP	Examination-in-Public
GLA	Greater London Authority
GO	Government Office
Indicator	A measure of variables over time, often used to measure achievement of objectives.
<i>Output indicator</i>	An indicator that measures the direct output of the plan or programme. These indicators measure progress in achieving a plan objective, targets and policies.
<i>Significant effects indicator</i>	An indicator that measures the significant effects of the plan.
<i>Contextual indicator</i>	An indicator used in monitoring that measures changes in the context within which a plan is being implemented.

LDD	Local Development Document
LDF	Local Development Framework
LDS	Local Development Scheme
Local Development Regulations	Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. Town and Country Planning (Transitional Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2004.
LPA	Local Planning Authority (including county councils for the purpose of this guidance).
Mitigation	Used in this guidance to refer to measures to avoid, reduce or offset significant adverse effects on the environment.
Objective	A statement of what is intended, specifying the desired direction of change in trends.
Option	For the purposes of this guidance option is synonymous with 'alternative' in the SEA Directive.
Plan	For the purposes of the SEA Directive this is used to refer to all of the documents to which this guidance applies, including Regional Spatial Strategy revisions and Development Plan Documents. Supplementary Planning Documents are not part of the statutory Development Plan but are required to have a sustainability appraisal.
Publication Statement	A statement required under regulation 17 (aa) of the Town and Country Planning (Regional Planning) (England) Regulations 2004.
PPS11	Planning Policy Statement 11: Regional Spatial Strategies
PPS12	Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks
Pre-submission consultation statement	A statement prepared by a Local Planning Authority for a Development Plan Document pursuant to regulation 28(1)(c) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. Or a statement prepared by a Regional Planning Body for a Regional Spatial Strategy revision under regulation 11 of the Town and Country Planning (Regional Planning) (England) Regulations 2004.
Regional Planning Regulations	Town and Country Planning (Regional Planning) (England) Regulations, 2004.

RPB	Regional Planning Body (which for the purposes of this guidance is taken to include the Mayor of London except where the Mayor is mentioned separately).
RPG	Regional Planning Guidance
RSDF	Regional Sustainable Development Framework
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy (which for the purposes of this guidance is taken to include the Mayor's Spatial Development Strategy for London except where this is mentioned separately).
RTS	Regional Transport Strategy
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement (A statement setting out the consultation procedures for a Local Planning Authority).
Scoping	The process of deciding the scope and level of detail of a Sustainability Appraisal. See Appendix 15.
Screening	The process of deciding whether a document requires a SA. See Appendix 2.
SDS	The Mayor's Spatial Development Strategy for London
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEA Directive	European Directive 2001/42/EC "on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment".
SEA Regulations	The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (which transposed the SEA Directive into law).
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SPP	Statement of Public Participation – A statement outlining the consultation procedures for a regional spatial strategy revision.
Statement of Reasons	Regional Planning Body should produce the proposed changes and a statement of reasons under Regulations 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Regional Planning) (England) Regulations 2004, following the Examination in Public.
Sustainability issues	The full cross-section of sustainability issues, including social, environmental and economic factors.

Consultation Bodies

The Environmental Consultation Bodies	<p>The four designated bodies to be consulted under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive are English Heritage, the Countryside Agency, English Nature and the Environment Agency. The environmental consultation bodies are referred to as the ‘Consultation Bodies’ in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and in <i>A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive</i>, September 2005.</p> <p>A new organisation called Natural England, which will take on many of the functions of the Countryside Agency and English Nature has been proposed. Advice will be issued in due course on any changes to the consultation arrangements.</p> <p>The Environmental Consultation Bodies have developed a statement of services and standards which authorities can expect from them: www.environment-agency.gov.uk/aboutus/512398/830672/832860/830725/?version=1&lang=_e</p> <p>Note that these four bodies are also specific consultation bodies under the relevant Town and Country Planning Regulations 2004 (see below).</p>
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The General Consultation Bodies	The general consultation bodies that must be consulted in accordance with the relevant Town and Country Planning Regulations.
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Specific Consultation Bodies	The specific consultation bodies that must be consulted in accordance with the relevant Town and Country Planning Regulations.
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Other Consultation Bodies	The consultation bodies that it is desirable to consult in accordance with PPS12, Annex E and PPS11, Annex D.
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How to use this Guidance

This guidance is divided into two parts. Part 1 provides a general introduction. Part 2 is divided into three sections on sustainability appraisal (SA) of Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) revisions, new or revised Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). Each of these sections cross-refers to appendices, which contain more detailed guidance on aspects of sustainability appraisal. The figures and tables provided are examples and not case studies.

There is some duplication between these sections, but the guidance has been structured in this way to enable users to refer to the relevant section without having to read the rest of the document apart from the introduction.

Acknowledgements

This guidance is based on the consultation paper *Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks*, prepared for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by Land Use Consultants and Collingwood Environmental Planning in association with SQW Ltd, and MTRU, and on the ODPM publication *The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities*, prepared by Levett-Therivel Sustainability Consultants. It also draws on work by TRL, Scott Wilson and others on aspects of SA in planning. ODPM would like to thank all those who responded in the consultation exercise and the many individuals and organisations who have contributed to this publication.

PART 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Sustainable development is central to the reformed planning system. The purpose of sustainability appraisal (SA) is to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the preparation of revisions of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and for new or revised Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

‘Planning authorities should ensure that sustainable development is treated in an integrated way in their development plans. In particular, they should carefully consider the inter-relationship between social inclusion, protecting and enhancing the environment, the prudent use of natural resources and economic development.’

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (paragraph 24)

- 1.2 Under Section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (hereafter referred to as ‘the Act’), sustainability appraisal is mandatory for RSS revisions and for new or revised DPDs and SPDs.
- 1.3 When preparing revisions of RSS revisions or new and revised DPDs and SPDs, Regional Planning Bodies and Local Planning Authorities must also conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment” (the Strategic Environmental Assessment or ‘SEA Directive’), transposed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the ‘SEA Regulations’).
- 1.4 **Throughout this guidance, where reference is made to sustainability appraisal (SA) or the SA Report, it denotes sustainability appraisal under the Act, incorporating the requirements of the SEA Directive.** The term ‘SEA’ is used to denote an environmental assessment in accordance with the SEA Directive. This guidance is consistent with *A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive* (ODPM et al, 2005).

Requirements of the SEA Directive are outlined in **Appendix 1**

Purpose of this guidance

- 1.5 This guidance is intended to help regional planning bodies (RPBs) and local planning authorities (LPAs) carry out SA of RSS revisions or new or revised DPDs and SPDs.
- 1.6 This guidance provides information to assist users to comply with the SEA Directive. It is however not intended as a legal interpretation of the Directive, which is the role of the courts. The guidance must therefore be read in conjunction with the Act, the SEA Directive, the Local Development Regulations, the Regional Development Regulations, the SEA Regulations, and planning guidance, particularly PPS 11: Regional Spatial Strategies, and PPS 12: Local Development Frameworks. **Those undertaking a SA must satisfy themselves in each case, by obtaining legal advice if necessary, that the requirements of the Directive have been met.**

- 1.7 This guidance may be used to assist the Greater London Authority in the preparation of revisions to the Mayor of London’s Spatial Development Strategy for London, which is undertaken in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (London Spatial Development Strategy) Regulations 2000 and GOL Circular 1/2000.

What documents require a sustainability appraisal?

- 1.8 Under the Act, a SA is required for a RSS revision or for a new or revised DPD or SPD. It is not needed for other documents, including in the case of a RSS revision, the Statement of Public Participation, the Project Plan and the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). It is not needed for other documents in the Local Development Framework (LDF), including the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), the Local Development Scheme (LDS), AMRs and Local Development Orders (LDOs).

The Directive requires SEA for plans which “determine the use of small areas at a local level” or which are “minor modifications” to plans **only where they are determined to be likely to have significant environmental effects**. This is unlikely to be relevant to RSSs revisions or DPDs, and is most likely to apply to SPDs. **Appendix 2** gives more detail on this.

Sustainability appraisal and national planning policy

- 1.9 RPBs and LPAs must have regard to the Secretary of State’s policies and guidance in preparing RSS revisions, DPDs and SPDs. They are not required to justify national planning policy when conducting SAs, for example by appraising alternatives to national policy. However, it is desirable for SAs to include information on the significant sustainability effects of implementing national policies. Where there is a range of reasonable options for implementing a national policy at a regional or local level, these need to be examined as part of the SA.

The level of detail of a sustainability appraisal

- 1.10 A SA need not be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is useful for its purpose. The SA should focus on the significant sustainability effects of the RSS revision, DPD or SPD, and consider alternatives that take into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the document.
- 1.11 Article 5 of the SEA Directive lists some factors to be considered in deciding what information to include in the Environmental Report, which are equally valid for a SA Report:
- information that may reasonably be required, taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment;
 - the contents and level of detail of the plan;
 - the objectives and geographical scope of the plan;
 - the stage reached in the decision making process; and

- the extent to which it would be more appropriate to assess certain matters elsewhere in the decision-making process.

- 1.12 In a SA it is not appropriate, and is often impracticable, to predict the effects of an individual proposal in the degree of detail that would normally be required for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of a project. If however, a RSS revision or a DPD proposes a specific infrastructure project, development or type of land use for a particular area or location (albeit a broad location in the case of a RSS revision) the SA Report should include information which can reasonably be provided on the likely significant effects of the proposal and alternatives to it. Although SPDs do not allocate land, this consideration may also apply to them where they concern, for example, site development briefs.
- 1.13 Where proposals need to be assessed more than once, e.g. at different stages of preparation of a RSS revision, DPD or SPD, information from earlier appraisals can be used, subject to any updating or extra detail which may be necessary. This can help to avoid unnecessary duplication of appraisal.

Who should do a sustainability appraisal?

- 1.14 It is the responsibility of the RPB and LPA to make sure a SA Report has been carried out in accordance with the SEA Directive, the Act and the Regulations. RPBs or LPAs and stakeholders are encouraged to work together at regional, sub-regional and county and district levels to share expertise, research and resources when undertaking a SA. Many benefits of SA may be lost if it is carried out as a completely separate work-stream or by a separate body. However, it may also be helpful to involve people either within or outside the RPB or LPA who can contribute expertise or a detached and independent view.

Sustainability appraisal and other forms of assessment

- 1.15 A SA is likely to encompass other types of appraisal such as Equality Impact Assessment, Integrated Impact Assessment or Health Impact Assessments. In exceptional circumstances where RPBs or LPAs wish to undertake other assessments, they should take measures to integrate them within the sustainability appraisal process, such as:
- optimising information collection processes so that the information collected can be used to satisfy all appraisal requirements;
 - achieving consistency amongst objectives;
 - generating compatible information through forecasting and prediction techniques to get comparable results, e.g. between social, environmental and economic information;
 - integrating staging of assessment to create a single process wherever possible, taking advantage of synergies; and
 - facilitating transparency in decision making through analysis techniques that generate comparable findings.

Sustainability appraisal and community involvement

- 1.16 When carrying out consultation, RPBs and LPAs must have regard to the agreement between Government and the voluntary sector, the *Compact Code of Good Practice on Community Groups*, which sets out agreed ways of working with community groups and voluntary organisations including black and ethnic minority groups and organisations (see www.thecompact.org.uk).
- 1.17 RPBs and LPAs should also have regard to:
- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to promote race equality and the Disability Act 1995 to ensure that disabled people are not discriminated against.
 - The Cabinet Office *Code of Practice on Consultation* which sets out criteria for conducting effective consultation. UK non-departmental public bodies and local authorities are encouraged to follow this code.
 - The Audit Commission's briefing on effective community consultation, *Listen Up!*, which sets out a range of consultation techniques with advice on how they can be used and their advantages, disadvantages, and resource implications – see References and Further Information for details.
- 1.18 The SEA Directive requires consultation with other Member States of the European Union where a plan or programme is likely to have significant environmental effects on their territories. Separate guidance will be issued on the practical arrangements. Such effects are expected to arise only in exceptional cases in connection with RSS revisions, DPDs and SPDs.

Application of this Guidance where RPBs or LPAs are already carrying out SA

Regional Planning Bodies (RPBs) and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are not expected to start again in carrying out a SA where they have commenced work prior to the publication of this guidance. Where there are any changes in the SA process set out in this guidance compared with the earlier draft guidance on SA, it is acceptable if RPBs and LPAs have followed the latter. However, RPBs and LPAs are expected to follow this SA guidance in any further appraisal work undertaken unless it is impractical for them to do so because of the consequences of following the earlier guidance.

Part 2 Applying Sustainability Appraisal to Regional Spatial Strategy Revisions and Local Development Documents

2 APPLYING SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL TO REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY REVISIONS

The SA is not a separate stage, but an integral part of producing a draft revision of a RSS. It needs to be started as soon as a RSS revision is first considered, and provide input at each stage when decisions are taken. It should also be used in developing the arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the RSS, in order to identify problems and inform the next revision. The findings from the SA as it evolves should be available to partners and the community in considering options, further developing the revision and in advance of formal publication and submission with the draft revision to the Secretary of State. The more continuous and proactive engagement of the community in the process of preparing a draft revision means that the SA evidence and analysis needs to be correspondingly kept up-to-date and publicly available throughout the process as well.

Planning Policy Statement 11: Regional Spatial Strategies (paragraph 2.36)

2.1 Overview

Introduction

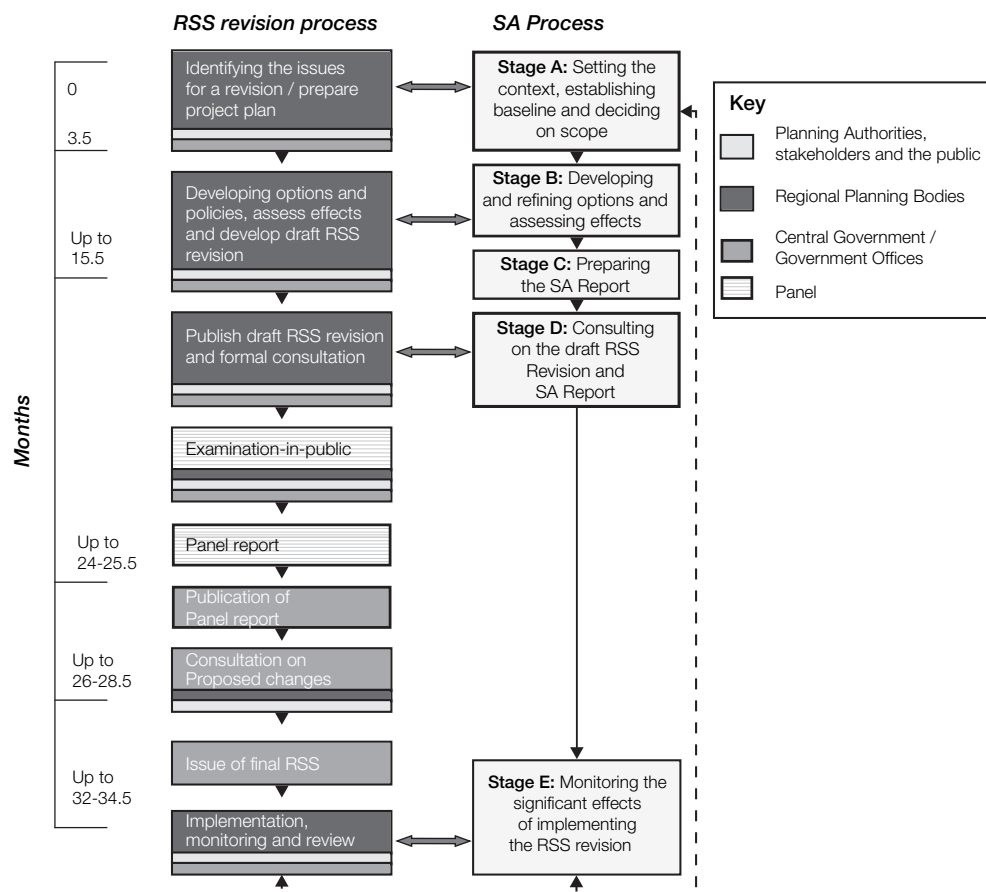
- 2.1.1 Section 39 of the Act makes it an objective of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The process of revising a RSS is largely as it was for Regional Planning Guidance (RPG), subject to the new statutory procedures and the policy and guidance set out in PPS11. Ownership of the draft revision up to submission to the Secretary of State rests with the RPB, though partnership working with stakeholders and the community. The Secretary of State remains responsible for issuing the revised RSS, following the Examination-in-Public, the report of the Panel and consultation on any proposed changes. **A single SA Report for the RSS revision as a whole should be prepared. There is no need for RPBs to prepare separate SA Reports for each work stream**, e.g. the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) is not subject to a separate SA as it is an integral part of the RSS.
- 2.1.2 The preparation of a RSS revision, as outlined in PPS11, is divided into eight main stages:
- Stage 1: Identify the issues for a revision and prepare a project plan, including a statement of public participation;
 - Stage 2: Develop options and policies, taking account of assessed effects, and develop the draft revision;
 - Stage 3: Publish and formally consult on the draft RSS revision;

- Stage 4: Examination-in-Public;
- Stage 5: Publication of the Panel Report;
- Stage 6: Consultation on the Secretary of State’s proposed changes – where these have not been subject to SA, the SA Report will need to be updated to take account of these changes;
- Stage 7: Issue of revised RSS; and
- Stage 8: Implementation, monitoring and review.

2.1.3 A summary of the key stages and tasks in the preparation of a RSS revision, including the SA, is shown in Figure 1.

The SA tasks within each stage is shown in **Appendix 3**.

Figure 1 – RSS preparation process



Incorporating Sustainability Appraisal within the RSS revision process

2.1.4 The RSS revision preparation process and its relationship with the stages of SA are illustrated in Figure 2. Integration of SA into preparation of RSS revisions is fundamental to sound plan making.

Figure 2 – Incorporating SA within the RSS revision process

RSS Stage 1: Identify the issues for a RSS revision and prepare a project plan, including a statement of public participation

SA stages and tasks

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

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

RSS Stage 2: Develop options and policies, taking account of assessed effects and developing the draft RSS revision

SA stages and tasks

SA Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects

- **B1:** Testing the RSS revision objectives against the SA framework.
- **B2:** Developing the RSS revision options.
- **B3:** Predicting the effects of the RSS revision.
- **B4:** Evaluating the effects of the RSS revision.
- **B5:** Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects.
- **B6:** Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the RSS revision.

SA Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report

- **C1:** Preparing the SA Report.

RSS Stages 3, 4 and 5: Submission of the draft RSS revision to the Secretary of State, Examination-in-Public and the Panel report

SA stages and tasks

SA Stage D: Consulting on the draft RSS revision and the SA Report

- **D1:** Consulting on the draft RSS revision and SA Report.

RSS Stages 6 and 7: Publication of proposed changes and issue of revised RSS

SA stages and tasks

- **D2:** Appraising any significant changes proposed by the Secretary of State.
- **D3:** Making decisions and providing information.

RSS Stage 8: Implementation, monitoring and review

SA stages and tasks

SA Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the RSS revision

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

A Quality Assurance checklist is provided in **Appendix 4** of this guidance to help RPBs ensure that the quality of the process and SA Report is sufficient to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive, the Act and the Regional Planning Regulations.

Joint working for RSS revisions

- 2.1.5 The RSS provides a spatial framework to inform the preparation of Local Development Documents (LDD), Local Transport Plans (LTPs) and other plans and strategies that have a bearing on land use activities. This is a two way relationship as the RSS may also take account of these strategies as they evolve.
- 2.1.6 Sub-regional and thematic working is an intrinsic part of preparing a RSS revision. As discussed above a single SA Report should be prepared for the RSS revisions a whole. However, RPBs may find it useful to prepare sub-regional SA Reports as technical papers to support the overall SA Report for the RSS revision. The RPB and the bodies engaged in the sub-regional work, such as LPAs and National Park Authorities, are encouraged to work together.
- 2.1.7 RPBs are advised to keep the SA Report for the revision up to date and make it available on the RPB website, to ensure that the public will have access to the latest SA material and RSS revision proposals.

Public and stakeholder involvement

- 2.1.8 It is essential that public and stakeholder involvement on the SA is undertaken concurrently with the RSS revisions (see Figure 3).

The environmental consultation bodies have issued a statement of the services and standards which they undertake to provide on SEA (see www.environment-agency.gov.uk/aboutus/ and follow links to 'about us', 'policy', 'SEA', 'Roles + services').

Figure 3 – Public involvement in the SA process during the preparation of a RSS revision

RSS Stage 1: Identify the issues for a RSS revision and prepare project plan

Consulting on the scope of SA (5 weeks as required by the SEA Regulations)

The environmental consultation bodies, other specific and general consultation bodies must be consulted.

RSS Stage 2: Develop options and policies, assess effects and develop draft RSS revision

Informal pre-submission public involvement throughout the development of options

Follow the advice in PPS11 to ensure that the relevant SA commentary on the likely significant effects of the options for the draft revision of the RSS is available at the same time as the options themselves.

Possible methods of public involvement may include: making effective use of websites; creating formal groups that include the wider community; sub-regional events and citizens' juries etc, as set out in Annex D to PPS11.

RSS Stages 3, 4 & 5: Submission of the draft RSS revision to the Secretary of State, Examination-in Public and the Panel Report

Submission (6 to 12 weeks as required by the Regional Planning Regulations)

The RPB should submit the RSS revision, SA Report and pre-submission consultation statement, make them publicly available and publish them as required by the Regional Planning Regulations. As part of this, these documents will be available for comment to all those who were engaged in the development of the RSS revision, including the four environmental consultation bodies, specific consultation bodies and general consultation bodies as required by the Regional Planning Regulations.

Figure 3 – Public involvement in the SA process during the preparation of a RSS revision

The Panel will consider soundness of the RSS revision.

Possible methods of public involvement may include: the use of media such as the local radio, and television; issuing press releases; using the internet; advertising in national, regional and local newspapers; holding planning surgeries; advertising in local libraries; and topic based newsletters, as suggested in Annex D to PPS11.

RSS Stages 6, 7 & 8: Publication of proposed changes and reasoned statement, implementation, monitoring and review (no less than 8 weeks as required by the Regional Planning Regulations)

The Secretary of State's proposed changes and reasoned statement will be made publicly available and published as required by the Regional Planning Regulations.

Where the SA Report needs to be updated, it will be published and made available as for the above.

In accordance with the Regional Planning Regulations, copies of the RSS, any further updated SA Report and a summary of representations will be made publicly available and published as required by the Regional Planning Regulations. As part of this, these documents will be available for comment to all those who were engaged in the development of the RSS including the environmental consultation bodies, specific consultation bodies and general consultation bodies as required by the Regional Planning Regulations.

It is also the practice of the Secretary of State to publish a summary of the representations received and how they were taken into account, including on any updated SA Report. This may form part of the document setting out the reasons for any further changes to the RSS revision.

Finally, either at the front of the SA report or as a separate document there should be a statement, agreed by the Secretary of State and the RPB, summarising how the SA results and opinions received were taken into account, reasons for choice of alternatives and proposals for monitoring. This will be published.

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

RSS Stage 1: Identify the issues for the RSS revision and prepare a project plan, including a statement of public participation

What the SEA Directive says:

The Environmental Report should provide information on [inter alia]:

- the “relationship [of the plan or programme] with other relevant plans and programmes” (Annex I(a))
- “the environmental protection objectives, established at international, [European] Community or [national] level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation” (Annex I (e))
- “relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme” and “the environmental characteristics of the areas likely to be significantly affected” (Annex I (b), (c))
- “any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC” (Annex I (d))

“...the authorities... which, by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programmes ... shall be consulted when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report” (Article 5.4 and 6.3).

2.2.1 At this stage the RPB compiles the background social, environmental and economic information needed and determines the scope of the SA.

Developing an appraisal methodology and programme in line with the project plan for the RSS revision

2.2.2 The SA programme should be taken into account when developing the project plan of the RSS.

Producing an outline of stakeholder and public participation

2.2.3 The proposed partnership working arrangements with stakeholders and how the wider community is to be involved in the appraisal should be considered when developing the statement of public participation. It is helpful if linkages between the preparation of the RSS revision and the preparation of other associated documents are explored, to maximise the opportunities for joint consultation and involvement. Figure 3 gives some ideas about public involvement in the SA Process.

Task A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives

- 2.2.4 The RPB must take account of relationships between the RSS revision and other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives. The SEA Directive specifically requires environmental protection objectives established at international, European Community or national levels to be taken into account. Relevant documents include the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, PPSs, the Regional Development Agency's Economic Strategies, Environment and Housing Strategies. Information on these relationships will enable potential synergies to be exploited and any inconsistencies and constraints to be addressed.
- 2.2.5 The RPB will need to keep these relationships under review as it prepares both the current and future RSS revisions.
- 2.2.6 The Regional Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF) or equivalent (some regions use a different name) is a high-level statement of the regional vision for achieving sustainable development and provides an essential part of the background against which all regional strategies are prepared. This is the starting point for developing a RSS revision, putting sustainability at the heart of a spatial strategy.

Appendix 5 provides an indicative list of other relevant plans, programmes and sustainability objectives.

Task A2: Collecting baseline information

- 2.2.7 It provides the basis for predicting and monitoring effects and helps to identify sustainability problems and alternative ways of dealing with them. Baseline information will consist of a lot of indicators, however quantitative and qualitative information can be used for this purpose. To get the best value from baseline information, it needs to be kept up to date rather than merely being a snapshot of the situation at a particular time.
- 2.2.8 RPBs are advised to collect baseline information during the survey and evidence gathering stage of the RSS revision. They are encouraged to consider what information they already have and what more they will need. They may already hold useful information, in particular from appraisals and monitoring of the current RSS, other plans and programmes or the RSS Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs). The review of other policies, plans and sustainability objectives at task A1 will also provide a considerable amount of information.
- 2.2.9 Much baseline information will be generic to the region rather than specific to the particular RSS revision on which the SA is being carried out. It might therefore be useful for the preparation of SA Reports of future RSS revisions as well as the SAs of DPDs and SPDs. Some of it will also be relevant to monitoring changes in contextual indicators. RPBs should keep these potential uses in mind when this information is being collected.

2.2.10 Sufficient information about the current and likely future state of the RSS revision area is needed to allow its effects to be adequately predicted. It needs to focus on the social, environmental and economic characteristics of the area that relate to the issues likely to be tackled in the RSS revision. The SA Report can then focus on those where significant effects are likely.

2.2.11 For each indicator selected, enough information is needed to answer the following questions:

- how good or bad is the current situation? Do trends show that it is getting better or worse?
- how far is the current situation from any established thresholds or targets?
- are particularly sensitive or important elements of the economy, physical environment or community affected, e.g. skills shortages, endangered species or rare habitats, vulnerable social groups?
- are the problems reversible or irreversible, permanent or temporary?
- how difficult would it be to offset or remedy any damage?
- have there been significant cumulative or synergistic effects over time? Are there expected to be such effects in the future?

Appendix 6 suggests how baseline information can be collected and presented. **Appendix 7** lists some key sources for baseline information.

Task A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

2.2.12 The identification of sustainability issues (including environmental problems as required by the SEA Directive) is an opportunity to define key issues for the RSS revision and to develop sustainable objectives and options.

2.2.13 RPBs will be aware of many sustainability issues which they face at the time they start their RSS revision. They may be able to identify others in conducting the SA of the RSS revision on the basis of:

- experience with issues identified in earlier versions of the RSS and other regional plans and programmes, including the RSDF;
- identification and analysis of possible tensions or inconsistencies with other policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives;
- identification and analysis of possible tensions or inconsistencies between the current or future baseline conditions and proposed objectives, targets or obligations; and

- consultation with authorities with social, environmental and economic responsibilities, other stakeholders and public. Public reaction to the project plan may be helpful to the RPB in reviewing the scope of the proposed RSS revision and the main issues to be addressed.

2.2.14 Any issues identified need, where possible, to be linked to evidence in the baseline information and the identification of historical or likely future trends. In particular it will be helpful to examine whether the existing RSS is achieving or moving away from its targets.

Appendix 8 gives further information on recording issues and problems.

Task A4: Developing the sustainability appraisal framework

2.2.15 The SA framework provides a way in which sustainability effects can be described, analysed and compared. It is central to the SA process.

2.2.16 It consists of sustainability objectives which, where practicable, may be expressed in the form of targets, the achievement of which is measured using indicators. Objectives and indicators can be revised as baseline information is collected and sustainability issues are identified, and can be used in monitoring the implementation of the RSS (see Figure 22 in Appendix 9).

2.2.17 Sustainability objectives are distinct from the objectives of the plan, though they may in some cases overlap with them. They provide a way of checking whether RSS revision objectives are the best possible ones for sustainability and can be seen as a methodological yardstick against which the social, environment and economic effects of the RSS revision can be tested.

2.2.18 The number of sustainability objectives, indicators and targets needs to be manageable and developed with input from relevant stakeholders.

2.2.19 Where conflicts arise between sustainability objectives, it may be helpful to consider the following principles:

- the relative timing of the document concerned;
- the level of consultation undertaken;
- the degree to which the policies, plans, programmes and objectives are consistent with current policy or legal requirements; and
- the extent to which any appraisal has already been conducted.

Appendix 9 gives further information on developing the SA framework.

Task A5: Consulting on the scope of the sustainability appraisal

2.2.20 To meet the requirements of the SEA Directive, the RPB must seek the views of the four statutory environmental consultation bodies designated in the SEA Regulations (the Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature and the Environment Agency) on the scope and level of detail of the environmental information to be included in the SA Report. It is also desirable for other relevant bodies to be consulted as the RPB considers appropriate, with a balance between those concerned with social, environmental and economic issues. These consultees may include organisations listed in Annex D to PPS 11. RPBs should allow 5 weeks for this stage of consultation. The rest of the community involvement process on the production of the RSS and SA Report should be undertaken following the procedures of PPS11 (see Figure 3).

2.2.21 RPBs are recommended to consult on the basis of a Scoping Report presenting information collected at Stage A (particularly baseline information and the SA framework) and if possible give an outline of the SA Report (see Stage C and Figure 3).

2.3 SA Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects

RSS Stage 2: Develop options and policies, assess effects and develop the draft RSS revision

What the SEA Directive says:

“...an environmental report shall be prepared in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated” (Article 5.1). Information to be provided in the Environmental Report includes “an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with” (Annex I (h)).

2.3.1 During this stage the RPB appraises in broad terms the effects of strategic options and then in more detail the effects of the preferred options when these have been selected. Elements of Stage B may need to be carried out more than once in the course of the RSS revision’s development, and some of the Stage A tasks, including further refining of the baseline characteristics and key issues and problems, may need to continue.

Public participation on the development of options

2.3.2 It is good practice for the appraisal of options to be integrated with the arrangements for partnership working with stakeholders and public participation set out in Annex D to PPS11. Public participation during this stage helps to ensure that the SA will be comprehensive and robust enough to support the DPD during the later stages of public consultation and examination. Figure 3 provides some ideas for community engagement at this stage.

Task B1: Testing the draft RSS revision objectives against the sustainability appraisal framework

- 2.3.3 The objectives of the RSS revision set out what it is aiming to achieve in spatial planning terms and set the context for development of options and policies for the RSS revision.
- 2.3.4 It is important for the objectives of the RSS revision to be in accordance with sustainability principles (see task A4). The objectives should be tested for compatibility with the SA objectives. This will help in refining the RSS revision objectives as well as in identifying options. The RSS revision objectives also need to be consistent with each other, and the SA objectives will be one way of checking for this. Where there is conflict between objectives, the RPB will need to reach a decision on priorities.

Appendix 10 suggests approaches to testing objectives and policies.

Task B2: Developing the RSS revision options

- 2.3.5 RPBs will develop options, working with the community and relevant stakeholders, to achieve the objectives of the RSS revision. For key RSS revision issues, RPBs are advised to consider a hierarchy of options (see Figures 27 and 28, Appendix 11).
- 2.3.6 Given the duty under the Act on those preparing a RSS revision to contribute to sustainable development, it is essential for it to set out to improve on the situation which would exist if there were no RSS. It should also aim to improve on the effects of the existing RSS. To test this, options considered often include scenarios termed 'no plan' and 'business as usual'. It is important to be aware that baselines will change over time under 'no plan' and 'business as usual' options, as well as under new revisions to a RSS.
- 2.3.7 In preparing a comprehensive revision of a RSS, a large number of options may be generated. It is recommended that broad strategic options are considered as opposed to detailed policy wording variants. Options need to be sufficiently distinct to highlight the different sustainability implications of each, so that meaningful comparisons can be made. The options need to be compared with each other and with the current social, environmental and economic characteristics of the area which is subject to the RSS revision and the likely future without the RSS revision. In doing so they need to be tested against the SA framework.
- 2.3.8 The development and appraisal of options (see Tasks B3 and B4) will be an iterative process, with the options being revised to take account of the appraisal findings and consultation responses. This will inform the selection of options and their development in detail for inclusion in the RSS revision which is submitted to the Secretary of State and published for consultation.
- 2.3.9 As each option is refined, a commentary on the key sustainability issues and problems arising must be prepared, with recommendations on how each of the options could be improved, e.g. through mitigation measures (see Task B5).

2.3.10 It may be possible to drop some options from further consideration, for example because of appraisal findings, to comply with national planning policy, or for operational reasons, and document the reasons for eliminating them. The SA Report (see Stage C) will need to map the development of the options and supporting policies by reference to their significant effects and mitigation of any adverse effects.

Appendix 11 provides more detail on developing and appraising options.

Task B3: Predicting the effects of the RSS revision

2.3.11 The purpose of this task is to predict the social, environmental and economic effects of the options being considered in the RSS revision process. The potential effects need to be quantified where appropriate, or a judgement made where this is not possible, with reference to the baseline situation. Prediction of effects involves:

- identifying the changes to the sustainability baseline which are predicted to arise from the RSS revision, including options. The predicted effects of options can be compared both with each other, with 'no RSS revision' and/or 'business as usual' scenarios, and against the SA objectives; and
- describing these changes in terms of their magnitude, their geographical scale, the time period over which they will occur, whether they are permanent or temporary, positive or negative, probable or improbable, frequent or rare, and whether or not there are secondary, cumulative and/or synergistic effects.

2.3.12 Predictions do not have to be expressed in quantitative terms. Hard data may enable a RPB or expert advisors to make detailed quantitative predictions, and this can be particularly useful where a RSS revision's effects are uncertain, close to a threshold, or cumulative. However, quantification is not always practicable, and broad based and qualitative predictions can be equally valid and appropriate. In current practice, these are often expressed in easily understood terms such as 'getting better or worse' or a scale from ++ (very positive) to -- (very negative). It can be useful to link predictions to specific objectives, e.g. 'will the RSS revision help prevent climate change?'

2.3.13 However, qualitative does not mean 'guessed'. Predictions should be supported by evidence, such as references to any research, discussions or consultation which helped those carrying out the SA to reach their conclusions.

2.3.14 The SA Report must document any uncertainties or limitations in the information underlying both qualitative and qualitative predictions. Assumptions, for instance about underlying trends, should be clearly stated. To enhance transparency, RPBs are encouraged to state briefly the reasons for their decisions to pursue a quantitative or qualitative approach to prediction of effects. Many sustainability problems result from the accumulation of multiple, small and often indirect effects rather than a few large obvious ones. The SEA Directive requires an assessment of secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects, which should be incorporated in the SA.

Appendix 12 gives further guidance on prediction and appraisal of effects.

Appendix 13 provides guidance on the assessment of secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects.

Task B4: Evaluating the effects of the RSS revision

- 2.3.15 Having identified and described the likely effects of the RSS, an evaluation of their significance needs to be made. When forming a judgement on whether a predicted effect will be significant, RPBs need to consider the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects, including secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects. The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected) need to be considered. The value and vulnerability of certain areas and populations may also influence the appraisal, particularly where thresholds or standards may be exceeded.
- 2.3.16 The following principles may be helpful in assessing the significance of effects:
- significance has to be determined individually in each case. Effects which are significant in one situation are not necessarily significant in another;
 - analysis of significance needs to be proportionate, carried out in reasonable time, and effort expended to assess significance should be proportionate to the expected severity of the effect;
 - flexibility is important so that individual cases can be assessed. Criteria should be used as guidelines, not rules; and
 - mathematical models are difficult to use in determining significance. Many aspects can be covered by descriptions. The use of numeric models could give rise to fictitious precision. An attempt at quantifying qualitative and semi-quantitative aspects will not necessarily lead to an increase in objectivity.
- 2.3.17 Conclusions on the overall sustainability of the RSS, including options, should be provided. Assumptions used in making judgements on the significance of effects of the RSS revision should be documented. Any inconsistencies between the objectives of the RSS revision and its policies should be highlighted, and amendments made where possible to reduce conflicts.
- 2.3.18 As the RSS revision is refined, the key sustainability issues (including environmental problems as required by the SEA Directive) should be documented for the SA Report (see Stage C), with recommendations for improving the options. Reasons for eliminating options should also be documented.
- 2.3.19 Public involvement at this stage may be particularly beneficial on the key aspects of the RSS revision and their sustainability implications. Early public involvement on these key issues could reduce the risk of major changes to the RSS revision following submission.

Task B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects

2.3.20 The SA Report must include measures to prevent, reduce or offset significant adverse effects of implementing the RSS revision. These measures are referred to in this guidance as 'mitigation measures', but they include proactive avoidance of adverse effects as well as actions taken after effects are noticed. Mitigation measures may also include recommendations for improving beneficial effects.

2.3.21 Mitigation can take a wide range of forms, including:

- changes to the RSS revision as a whole, including bringing forward new options, or adding or deleting options;
- refining policies in order to improve the likelihood of beneficial effects and to minimise adverse effects e.g. by strengthening policy criteria;
- technical measures to be applied during the implementation stage, e.g. buffer zones, application of design principles;
- proposals in EIA's accompanying planning applications; and
- proposals for changing other plans and programmes.

Task B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the RSS revision

2.3.22 Monitoring allows the actual significant effects of implementation of the RSS to be tested against those predicted in the SA. It thus helps to ensure that problems which arise during implementation can be identified and future predictions made more accurately. It can also be used to collect baseline information for future RSS revisions. Information and indicators can be drawn from existing sources at national, regional and sub-regional levels to avoid any unnecessary duplication. Proposals for monitoring need to be developed during Stage B for inclusion in the SA Report.

2.3.23 Monitoring is not a separate exercise from the rest of the RSS revision or SA preparation process. Decisions on what to monitor and how to do it should be considered early on. Stage E provides further information on the requirements for monitoring.

Appendix 14 gives more information on monitoring and describes how RPBs and LPAs might design a SA monitoring system.

2.4 SA Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report

What the SEA Directive says:

“The environmental report shall include information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, [and] its stage in the decision-making process” (Article 5.2).

Information to be provided in the Environmental Report includes:

- “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” (Annex I (f) and footnote)
- “an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with” (Annex I (h))
- “the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme” (Annex I (g))

Task C1: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report

- 2.4.1 The SA Report on the draft RSS revision is a key output of the appraisal process, presenting information on the effects of the plan on which formal public consultation is carried out. The relationship between the two documents should be indicated. **The SA Report must clearly show that the SEA Directive’s requirements have been met.** This should be achieved through signposting the places in the SA Report where the information required by the Directive is provided.
- 2.4.2 In deciding the length and level of detail to be provided in the SA Report, the RPB needs to bear in mind its purpose. It is likely to be of interest to a wide variety of readers, including decision makers, statutory consultees, other authorities, non-governmental organisations, and members of the public, and needs to be prepared with this range of users in mind. It must include a non-technical summary.
- 2.4.3 The Regional Planning Regulations require the RPB to prepare a pre-submission consultation statement. It is also advised that this include details of who was consulted during Stage B of the SA process and how their views were taken into account.

Appendix 15 provides a suggested approach and structure for the Scoping Report and the SA Report.

2.5 SA Stage D: Consulting on the draft RSS revision and the Sustainability Appraisal Report

RSS Stages 3, 4 and 5: Submission of the draft RSS revision to the Secretary of State, Examination-in-Public and the Panel report

What the SEA Directive says:

“The authorities [with relevant environmental responsibilities] and the public... shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme” (Article 6(2)).

“The environmental report, ... the opinions expressed [in responses to consultation] ... and the results of any transboundary consultations ... shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption...” (Article 8).

“...when a plan or programme is adopted, the [environmental] authorities [and] the public ... are informed and the following items [shall be] made available to those so informed: (a) the plan or programme as adopted, (b) a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme...[including] the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with, and (c) the measures decided concerning monitoring” (Article 9(1)).

2.5.1 The RPB must submit the draft RSS revision, the SA Report, the pre-consultation statement and any supporting technical documents to the Secretary of State. It is for the RPB to ensure that the draft revision has been subject to SA which is compliant with the requirements of the SEA Regulations (see task C1). The RPB should undertake Task D1 and part of Task D2 of the SA process at this stage.

Task D1: Consulting on the draft RSS revision and the Sustainability Appraisal Report

2.5.2 The Secretary of State is the ‘responsible authority’ whose role it is to publish the RSSs, not the RPB. Therefore, as part of the test of soundness for the RSS, the Panel will be expected to satisfy themselves that the RSS has been subjected to a satisfactory SA, in order to assist the Secretary of State in carrying out its functions. Part of this task will involve the Panel assessing the SA against the relevant Regulations and this guidance. The Panel will also have to consider any representations made questioning whether the SA is satisfactory or not.

For more information on the requirements of the SEA Directive see **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 4** which provides a Quality Assurance checklist.

2.5.3 The RSS revision that is issued at the end of the process must be accompanied by an SA Report which addresses any changes made as a result of the Examination in Public. Given the timeframes leading from the Examination in Public up to publication of the RSS revision, the provision of SA information to support proposed changes may be necessary.

- 2.5.4 A respondent providing a representation at the Examination-in-Public (for example, those proposing alternatives to the draft RSS revision) may therefore need to provide supporting SA information and appraisal work. Where this applies a full SA Report is not needed. Appraisal activity at this stage should seek to justify the proposal put forward, and it may be helpful to base such appraisal work on the scope of the draft RSS revision. The use of the same sustainability objectives and baseline information for example will make it easier to compare options and it will result in less work needing to be done by the proponent or respondent.
- 2.5.5 A Panel Report will be issued outlining the decision-making process and a statement of reasons required to accompany any proposed changes to the RSS revision.

RSS Stages 6 and 7: Publication of proposed changes and issue of revised RSS

Task D2: Appraising any significant changes proposed by the Secretary of State

- 2.5.6 The Secretary of State will consider the Panel's report and publish any proposed changes to the RSS revision for public consultation. Where the Secretary of State proposes significant changes that have not already been subject to sustainability appraisal, it will be important to keep the implications for the SA Report under review. This could be documented as an annex to the SA Report or if there are significant impacts that have not been appraised, in a revised SA Report. Both the proposed changes and the accompanying SA Report will be made available to the public for comment. Opportunities for further consultation may be investigated by the Secretary of State if necessary.

Task D3: Making decisions and providing information

- 2.5.7 Following consultation, the RSS will be published incorporating the Secretary of State's final changes with a statement of reasons for any further changes made. The Secretary of State will publish summary of the representations received and how they were taken into account, including on the SA. This may be included in the statement of reasons.
- 2.5.8 When the RSS revision is published, the Regional Planning Regulations require a publication statement to be issued. This can include the summary required by the SEA Directive on any changes made to the RSS as a result of the assessment and responses to consultation.
- 2.5.9 The publication statement should also provide information on how monitoring will be carried out during implementation of the RSS revision. The SA Report will already have documented proposed monitoring measures, and they can now be confirmed or modified in the light of consultation responses and/or the Examination-in-Public.
- 2.5.10 The RSS revision, publication statement and SA Report (including any revisions) must be published on the website of the RPB and the relevant Government Office together with details of where and when hard copies of the revised RSS and SA Report are available for inspection.

2.6 SA Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the RSS revision

RSS Stage 8: Implementation, monitoring and review

What the SEA Directive says:

“Member States shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes in order, *inter alia*, to identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action” (Article 10.1).

The Environmental Report shall include “a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring” (Annex I (i)).

- 2.6.1 Proposals for monitoring must be considered early in the SA process (see Task B6), included in the SA Report (Stage C) and reviewed in the light of any responses to consultation.

Task E1: Finalising aims and methods for monitoring

- 2.6.2 Monitoring arrangements should be designed to provide information that can be used to highlight specific performance issues and significant effects, and lead to more informed decision-making. Monitoring can also be a useful source of baseline information for future RSS revisions, and RPBs may be able to use it to fill gaps in this information.
- 2.6.3 RPBs need to ensure that monitoring information is appropriate to their needs, up to date and reliable, and that sources of information are referenced.
- 2.6.4 The SEA Directive specifically requires monitoring to identify unforeseen adverse effects and to enable appropriate remedial action to be taken. It may be difficult to implement monitoring mechanisms for unexpected effects, or to attribute such effects to implementation of the RSS when they occur. However, in line with European Commission guidance (2003), this provision may be understood as covering effects which differ from those which were predicted, or unforeseen effects which are due to changes of circumstances.
- 2.6.5 The Act requires RPBs to produce AMRs to report on progress in implementing the RSS revision, including the sustainability effects of its policies.

Task E2: Responding to adverse effects

- 2.6.6 RPBs are encouraged to consider how to react if monitoring reveals adverse effects. While the SEA Directive does not create new obligations on environmental protection, other legislation, licensing arrangements or policies may require action on the part of either the RPB or another body. Details of any contingency arrangements could be included in the mitigation measures set out in the SA Report and in the RSS revision itself.

Appendix 14 gives more information on monitoring and describes how RPBs and LPAs might design a SA monitoring system.

3 APPLYING SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS

The SA will play an important part in demonstrating if a Local Development Documents is sound by ensuring that it reflects sustainability objectives. The results of the sustainability appraisal will contribute to the reasoned justification of policies.

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (page 24, summary box)

3.1 Overview

Local Development Documents

- 3.1.1 The new system is designed to enable authorities to decide which combination of Local Development Documents (LDDs), best suits their circumstances. The ability to produce a number of Local Development Documents, rather than one plan, will make it easier to keep policies and proposals up to date. There are three types of Local Development Document: Development Plan Documents (DPDs), Supplementary Planning Document (SPDs), and Statements of Community Involvement (SCIs). **The Act requires DPDs and SPDs to undergo SA as part of the process of ensuring that they will contribute to sustainable development. SCIs do not require SA.**
- 3.1.2 **Development Plan Documents** – DPDs include the core strategy, site specific allocations and policies, and area action plans. They are subject to independent examination and have the status of development plans as defined by Section 38 (6) of the Act. They form the statutory development plan for the area together with the relevant RSS. Under the Act, two or more authorities may produce joint DPDs. These could include core strategies for their combined areas or area action plans covering areas that fall across their boundaries.
- 3.1.3 **Supplementary Planning Documents** – SPDs, whilst not having development plan status, can be used to expand policy or provide further detail to policies in DPDs. They cannot allocate land and are not subject to independent examination.
- 3.1.4 **Statements of Community Involvement** – SCIs specify how the authority intends to involve communities and stakeholders in the process of preparing LDDs.

Other documents within the Local Development Framework

- 3.1.5 Other documents within the LDF that are **not** required to undergo SA are:
- **Local Development Schemes** – The LDS sets out the details of each local development document produced, and outlines the timescale and arrangements for the production of new LDDs.
 - **Annual Monitoring Reports** – The AMR assesses the implementation of the LDS and the extent to which policies in the LDDs are being successfully implemented.
 - **Adopted Proposals Maps** – An adopted proposals map illustrates all site-specific policies in all the adopted DPDs in map form, and also identifies areas of protection

such as nationally protected landscape and local nature conservation areas, green belt land and conservation areas. It must be revised as each new DPD is adopted, and should reflect the up-to-date spatial plan for the area. The adopted proposals map does not require SA as it is a visual representation of policies that have already been appraised.

- **Local Development Orders** – Local Development Orders (LDOs)¹ grant planning permission for particular types of development in specified areas. A SA is not required for a LDO as the LDO can only be made in order to implement policies which have been adopted as part of a DPD and which have, therefore, already undergone SA. However, in practice an LDO will often be developed during the formulation of the DPD to which it relates. When preparing an LDO, a LPA must produce a Statement of Reasons which must include a description of the development permitted, a statement of the policies the LDO would implement and a plan or statement identifying the land to which the LDO applies. This will help to avoid inconsistencies with the sustainability objectives for the area and potential delays in the planning application process. Where it is proposed to grant development consent through an LDO the planning authority must determine whether EIA is necessary and, if so ensure that all EIA requirements are completed before the Order is made.

Transitional Arrangements

- 3.1.6 Article 13.3 of the SEA Directive (Regulation 6.2) requires an environmental assessment of plans and programmes whose formal preparation began before 21 July 2004 and which have not been adopted by 21 July 2006, unless there are exceptional circumstances in which this is not feasible. This is unlikely to be relevant to LDDs under the Act, since the issue of retrospective application should not apply. Under the Town and Country Planning (Transitional Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2004, work undertaken prior to commencement of the Act in September 2004 may be considered as part of the preparation of a LDD. However, as PPS12 makes clear, this will include a SA which incorporates the requirements for an environmental assessment under the SEA Directive. The need to undertake a SA as an integral part of preparing a DPD has been clear since the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill was introduced in 2003. Since it is most unlikely that any preparatory work on a LDD would have been undertaken before then, there should be no cases of failure to carry out a SA, even for those LDDs where work started prior to July 2004.

Please see **The SEA Directive: Advice for Planning Authorities on Retrospective Application** for old style transitional plans currently being finalised.
www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_039938.hcsp

¹ LDOs are a new concept introduced by the 2004 Act, enabling local planning authorities to grant permitted development rights. Such an order may grant planning permission for development specified in the order, and/or for development of any class so specified.

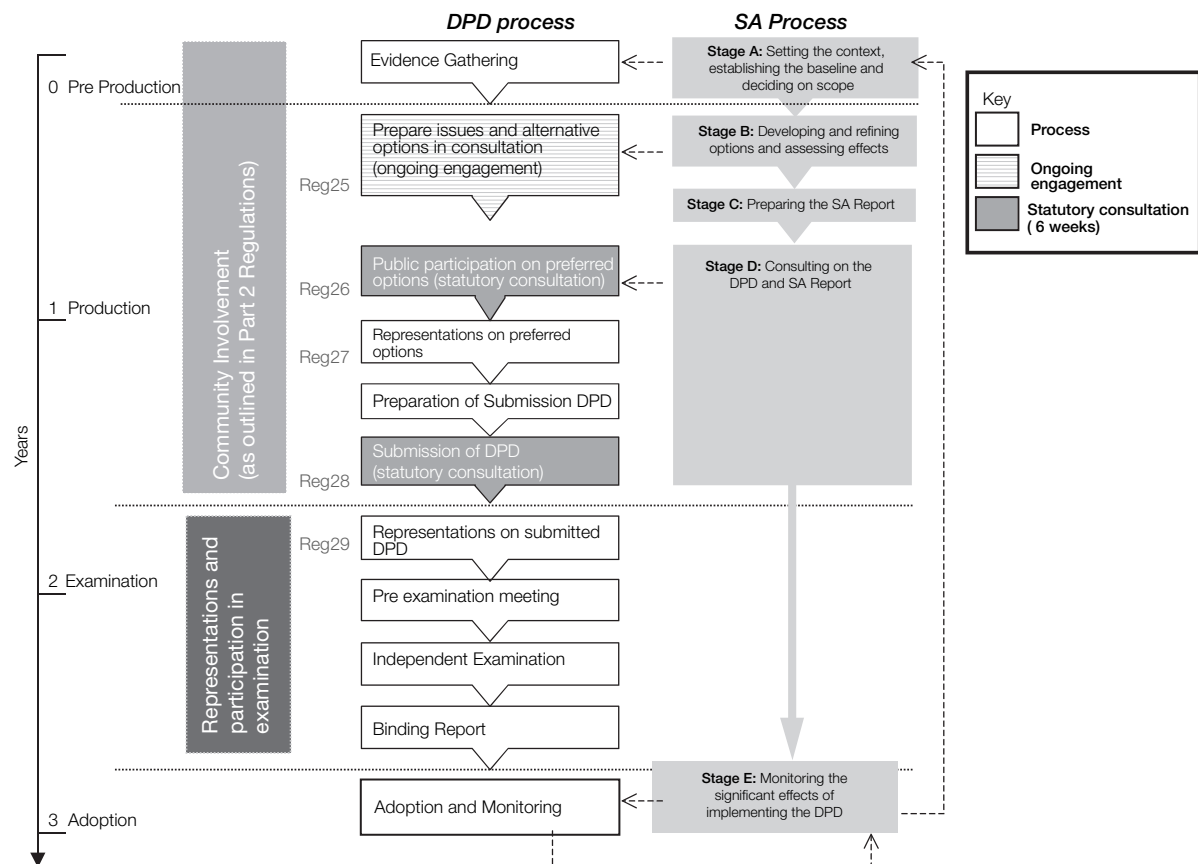
Applying sustainability appraisal to Development Plan Documents

3.1.7 The DPD preparation process, as set out in PPS12, can be divided into four main stages. These are:

- Stage 1: Pre-production – survey and evidence gathering;
- Stage 2: Production – preparation of preferred options, supported by continuous community involvement followed by a six week period of formal public participation on those options and then preparation and submission of the DPD in the light of the representations received;
- Stage 3: Examination – an independent examination into the soundness of the plan; and:
- Stage 4: Adoption – the binding report and adoption (followed by implementation and monitoring)

3.1.8 The DPD preparation process is illustrated in Figure 4, including the relationship with the key SA stages described in this section. The stages and tasks for carrying out SA in the preparation of a DPD are listed in Figure 5. Aspects of these stages are described in more detail in the appendices.

Figure 4 – The DPD preparation process



Incorporating sustainability appraisal within the DPD process

3.1.9 The DPD preparation process and its relationship with the stages of SA are illustrated in Figure 5. Integration of SA into DPD preparation is fundamental to sound plan making.

Figure 5 – Incorporating SA within the DPD process

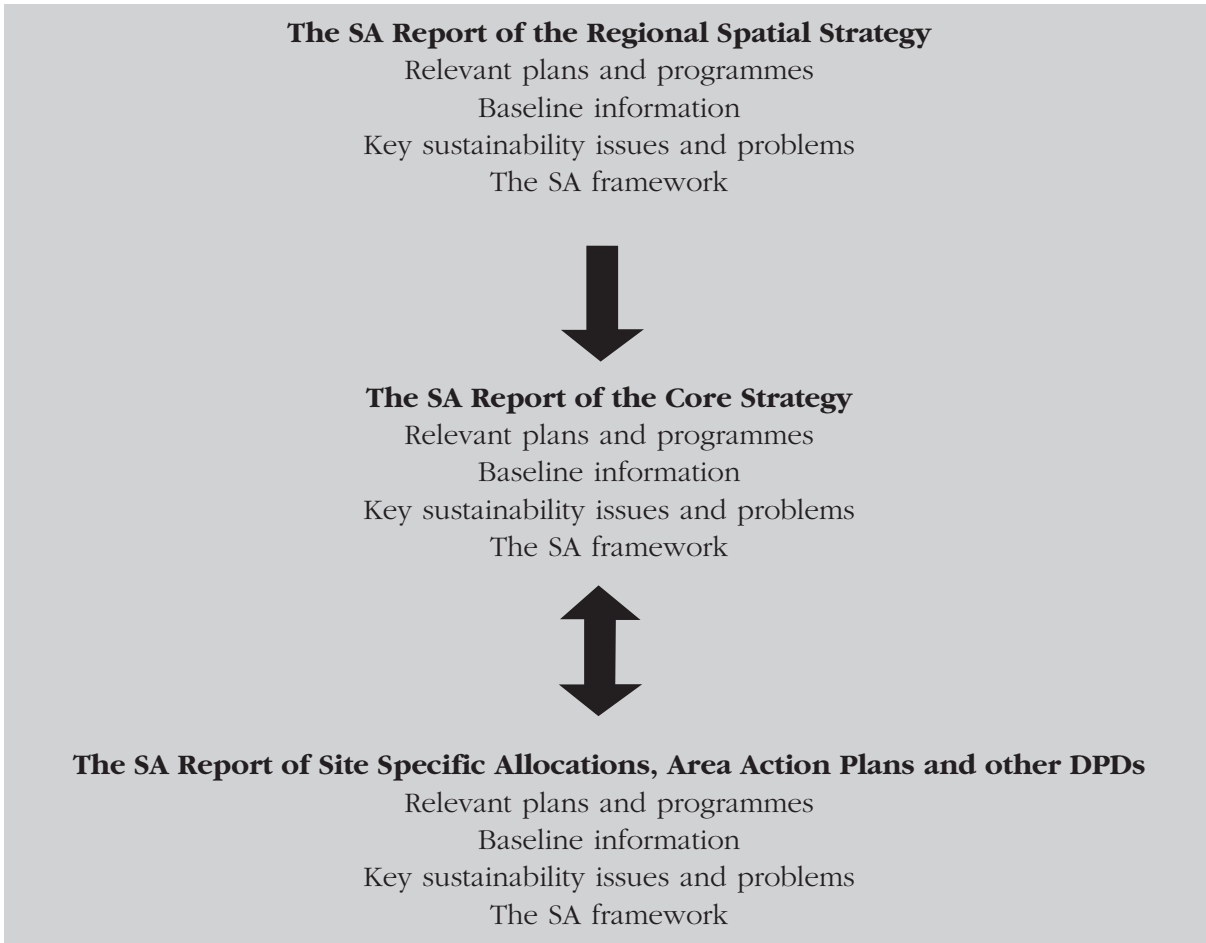
DPD Stage 1: Pre-production – Evidence Gathering
SA stages and tasks
<p>Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives. ● A2: Collecting baseline information. ● A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems. ● A4: Developing the SA framework. ● A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA.
DPD Stage 2: Production
SA stages and tasks
<p>Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● B1: Testing the DPD objectives against the SA framework. ● B2: Developing the DPD options. ● B3: Predicting the effects the DPD. ● B4: Evaluating the effects of the DPD. ● B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects. ● B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the DPDs.
<p>Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● C1: Preparing the SA Report.
<p>Stage D: Consulting on the preferred options of the DPD and SA Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● D1: Public participation on the preferred options of the DPD and the SA Report. ● D2(i): Appraising significant changes.
DPD Stage 3: Examination
SA stages and tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● D2(ii): Appraising significant changes resulting from representations.
DPD Stage 4: Adoption and monitoring
SA stages and tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● D3: Making decisions and providing information.
<p>Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the DPD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● E1: Finalising aims and methods for monitoring. ● E2: Responding to adverse effects.

A Quality Assurance checklist is provided in **Appendix 4** of this guidance to help LPAs ensure that the quality of the process and SA Report is sufficient to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive, the Act and the Local Planning Regulations.

The common use of sustainability appraisal information for Development Plan Documents

- 3.1.10 LPAs carrying out a SA of a DPD may find it helpful to draw on information and objectives prepared for SA of the most recent RSS revision, and in particular any relevant sub-regional information. Once SA information and objectives have been developed for a LPA's first SA, subsequent SAs of other DPDs can also draw on this information. This applies particularly for Stage A of the process (see figure 6). LPAs will normally need to add to this, but use of common data and objectives may considerably reduce the amount of work. It is good practice for the counties with relevant experience in the two-tier areas to work with the districts in the provision of information and objectives.
- 3.1.11 LPAs may need to update information from SA of RSS revisions, for example if a significant amount of time has elapsed since their preparation.

Figure 6 – The common use of SA information for DPDs



Public and stakeholder involvement

3.1.12 It is recommended that public and stakeholder involvement on the SA is undertaken concurrently with consultation on the DPD. It is crucial to combine the consultation requirements for the preparation of the DPD with the SA process (see Figure 7).

The environmental consultation bodies have issued a statement of the services and standards which they undertake to provide on SEA (see www.environment-agency.gov.uk/aboutus/ and follow links to 'about us', 'policy', 'strategic environmental assessment', Rules & Services')

<p>Figure 7 – Public involvement in DPDs and SA</p>	
<p>DPD Stage 1: Pre-production – Evidence gathering</p>	
<p>Consulting on the scope of SA (5 weeks as required by the SEA Regulations)</p>	
<p>The environmental consultation bodies must be consulted.</p> <p>Other community groups and social and economic bodies should be consulted as the LPA considers appropriate.</p>	
<p>DPD Stage 2: Production</p>	
<p>Informal pre-submission consultation</p>	
<p>Follow the advice in PPS 12, ensuring that the relevant SA commentary on the likely significant effects of the options is available at the same time as the options themselves.</p> <p>When producing the pre-submission consultation statement in line with Local Development Regulation 24, it may be useful to take the SA into account.</p> <p>Possible methods of public involvement include: ‘planning for real’ exercises; focus groups; steering groups; one-to-one exercises; meetings; and links with local strategic partnerships.</p> <p>It is recommended that notification of the emerging options and SA date is published on the LPAs website.</p>	
<p>Formal pre-submission participation on SA for DPDs (6 weeks)</p>	
<p>Follow the advice in PPS 12 for DPDs, ensuring that the relevant SA information is consulted on at the same time as the options of the DPD.</p> <p>Consider the responses on the SA Report as well as on the preferred options of the DPD.</p> <p>Methods include publicising the preferred options for the DPD as well as the SA Report; including copies available at the principal office and other places which the planning authority considers appropriate; publishing on the website; circulating copies to local media (local press, TV, radio, etc.); issuing leaflets/brochures to local community; organising public exhibitions; holding one-to one meetings; and organising focus groups.</p>	
<p>Follow the advice in PPS 12 ensuring that the relevant SA information is consulted on at the same time as the options of the DPD.</p>	
<p>DPD Stage 3: Examination</p>	
<p>Submission and appraisal of any significant changes.</p>	
<p>DPD Stage 4: Adoption and monitoring</p>	
<p>Copies of the DPD, SA Report and adoption statement should be made available to the environmental consultation bodies, the other specific consultation bodies, the general consultation bodies, and other consultees where relevant.</p> <p>A summary of the main issues raised on the SA, how these were taken into account in the development of the plan and SA Report, and details of monitoring arrangements must also be produced. This may be included as part of the adoption statement for the DPD.</p>	

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

DPD Stage 1: Pre-Production – Evidence gathering

What the SEA Directive says:

The Environmental Report should provide information on [inter alia]:

- the “relationship [of the plan or programme] with other relevant plans and programmes” (Annex I(a))
- “the environmental protection objectives, established at international, [European] Community or [national] level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation” (Annex I (e))
- “relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme” and “the environmental characteristics of the areas likely to be significantly affected” (Annex I (b), (c))
- “any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC” (Annex I (d))

“...the authorities... which, by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programmes ... shall be consulted when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report” (Article 5.4 and 6.3).

- 3.2.1 Stage A of the SA process is undertaken during the pre-production stage of a DPD, and needs to be integrated with evidence gathering for the DPD.

Developing an appraisal methodology and programme in line with the LDS

- 3.2.2 The SA programme should be taken into account when the LPA develops its timetable for the preparation of its LDF as outlined in the LDS.

Producing an outline of stakeholder and community involvement

- 3.2.3 An outline of the proposed stakeholder and public involvement for SA should be considered as part of the SCI. The SCI will explain to local communities and stakeholders how they are to be involved in the preparation of DPDs, and the steps that the authority will take to facilitate this involvement. It will set out the standards to be met by the authority in terms of public participation, building on the minimum requirements set out in PPS12. Figure 7 provides some ideas for public involvement in the SA process.

Task A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives

- 3.2.4 The LPA must take account of relationships between the DPD and other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives. The SEA Directive specifically requires environmental protection objectives established at international, European Community or national levels to be taken into account. Other relevant documents include the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, and PPSs, and a range of other plans and strategies at regional and local levels, all of which may influence the options to be considered in preparation of the DPD. Information on these relationships will enable potential synergies to be exploited and any inconsistencies and constraints to be addressed. The LPA will need to keep these relationships under review as it prepares both the current and future DPDs.

Appendix 5 provides an indicative list of other relevant plans programmes and sustainability objectives.

Task A2: Collecting baseline information

- 3.2.5 Baseline information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring effects and helps to identify sustainability problems and alternative ways of dealing with them. Baseline information consists of mainly indicators although both quantitative and qualitative information can be used. To get the best value from baseline information, it needs to be kept up to date rather than being merely a snapshot of the situation at a particular time.
- 3.2.6 LPAs are advised to collect baseline information during the survey and evidence gathering stage of DPD preparation. They are encouraged to consider what information they already have and what more they will need. They may already hold useful information, in particular from the appraisals and monitoring of Local Plans or Unitary Development Plans under the old planning system or of existing DPDs. The review of other policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives will also provide a considerable amount of information. Other relevant data may be obtained from Public Service Agreements, Quality of Life Indicators and Best Value Indicators. The RPB and the county council in the two-tier areas may be able to provide national, regional, sub-regional, and county information.
- 3.2.7 Much baseline information will be generic to the authority's area rather than specific to the particular DPD on which the SA is being carried out. It could therefore be used to support the SA of future LDDs. These potential uses should be kept in mind when information is being collected.
- 3.2.8 Sufficient information about the current and likely future state of the area covered by the DPD needs to be collected to allow effects to be adequately predicted. Information collection needs to focus on the social, environmental and economic characteristics of the area that relate to the issues to be tackled in the DPD. The SA Report can then focus on those where significant effects are likely.

3.2.9 For each indicator selected, enough information is needed to answer the following questions:

- how good or bad is the current situation? Do trends show that it is getting better or worse?
- how far is the current situation from any established thresholds or targets?
- are particularly sensitive or important elements of the economy, physical environment or community affected, e.g. skills shortages, endangered species or rare habitats, and vulnerable social groups?
- are the problems reversible or irreversible, permanent or temporary?
- how difficult would it be to offset or remedy any damage?
- have there been significant cumulative or synergistic effects over time? Are there expected to be such effects in the future?

Appendix 6 suggests how baseline information can be collected and presented. **Appendix 7** lists some key sources for baseline information.

Task A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

3.2.10 The identification of sustainability issues (including environmental problems as required by the SEA Directive) is an opportunity to define key issues for the DPD and to develop sustainable plan objectives and options.

3.2.11 LPAs will be aware of many sustainability issues or problems which they face when preparing their DPD. They may be able to identify others in conducting the SA of the DPD on the basis of:

- experience with issues identified in previous LDDs and other policies, plans and programmes, including the Community Strategy;
- identification and analysis of possible tensions or inconsistencies with other policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives;
- identification and analysis of possible tensions or inconsistencies between the current or future baseline conditions and proposed objectives, targets or obligations; and
- consultation with authorities with social, environmental and economic responsibilities, other relevant stakeholders, and the public. Public reaction to the LDS may be helpful to the LPA in reviewing the scope of the DPD and the main issues to be addressed.

3.2.12 Any issues identified need, where possible, to be linked to evidence by reference to baseline information and the identification of historical or likely future trends. In particular, it will be helpful to examine whether the existing DPD is achieving or moving away from its targets.

Appendix 8 gives further information on recording issues and problems.

Task A4: Developing the sustainability appraisal framework

- 3.2.13 The SA framework provides a way in which sustainability effects can be described, analysed and compared. It is central to the SA process.
- 3.2.14 The SA framework consists of sustainability objectives which, where practicable, may be expressed in the form of targets, the achievement of which is measurable using indicators. Objectives and indicators can be revised as baseline information is collected and sustainability issues and problems are identified, and can be used in monitoring the implementation of the DPD (see Figure 22 in Appendix 9).
- 3.2.15 Sustainability objectives are distinct from the objectives of the plan, though they may in some cases overlap with them. They provide a way of checking whether the DPD objectives are the best possible ones for sustainability and can be seen as a methodological yardstick against which the social, environment and economic effects of a plan can be tested.
- 3.2.16 The number of sustainability objectives, indicators and targets needs to be manageable and developed with input from stakeholders.
- 3.2.17 Where conflicts arise between sustainability objectives, it may be helpful to consider the following principles:
- the relative timing of the documents concerned;
 - the level of consultation undertaken on the plan;
 - the degree to which the policies, plans, programmes and objectives are consistent with current policy or legal requirements; and
 - the extent to which any appraisal has already been conducted.

Appendix 9 gives further information on developing the SA framework.

Task A5: Consulting on the scope of the sustainability appraisal

- 3.2.18 To meet the requirements of the SEA Directive, the LPA must seek the views of the four statutory environmental consultation bodies designated in the SEA Regulations (the Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature and the Environment Agency) on the scope and level of detail of the environmental information to be included in the SA Report. These bodies are among the 'specific consultation bodies' listed in PPS12 Annex E. It is also desirable for other bodies to be consulted as the LPA considers appropriate, with a balance between those concerned with social, environmental and economic issues. LPAs should allow 5 weeks for this stage of consultation. The rest of the community involvement process on the production of the DPD and SA Report should be undertaken following the procedures of PPS12 (see Figure 7).

- 3.2.19 LPAs are recommended to consult on the basis of a Scoping Report presenting information collected at Stage A (particularly baseline information and the SA framework) and if possible giving an outline of the SA Report (see Stage C).
- 3.2.20 One Scoping Report can be prepared for several LDDs, provided that it gives sufficient information at the level of detail required for each of the DPDs concerned (see Appendix 15). This can be achieved by preparing the Scoping Report in two parts: a general section which sets out the elements common to all of the DPDs, and a second part reporting on each DPD individually (e.g. the objectives of the individual DPD, sustainability issues and problems specific to it, and any broad options to be considered) or making clear where no specific details on a DPD need to be added.

3.3 SA Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects

DPD Stage 2: Production – Prepare issues and alternative options

What the SEA Directive says:

“...an environmental report shall be prepared in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated” (Article 5.1). Information to be provided in the Environmental Report includes “an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with” (Annex I (h))

- 3.3.1 During this stage the LPA appraises in broad terms the effects of strategic options and then in more detail the effects of the preferred options when these have been selected. Elements of Stage B may need to be carried out more than once in the course of the DPD’s development, and some Stage A tasks, including further refining of the baseline characteristics and key issues and problems, may need to continue.

Public participation in the development of options

- 3.3.2 Public participation during this stage helps to ensure that the SA will be comprehensive and robust enough to support the DPD during the later stages of public consultation and examination. Regulation 25 of the Local Development Regulations requires the LPA to consult the environmental and other specific consultation bodies and the general consultation bodies as it considers appropriate, in the identification of issues and development of options. In addition it is fundamental that the wider community is also involved. Public involvement at this stage is a continuous process of informal discussion, rather than the formal public participation under Regulation 26 of the Local Development Regulations. Figure 7 provides some ideas for public involvement at this stage.

Task B1: Testing the DPD objectives against the sustainability appraisal framework

- 3.3.3 The objectives of the DPD set out what it is aiming to achieve in spatial planning terms and set the context for development of options for the DPD.
- 3.3.4 It is important for the objectives of the DPD to be in accordance with sustainability principles. The objectives should be tested for compatibility with the SA objectives. This will help in refining the DPD objectives as well as in identifying options. The DPD objectives also need to be consistent with each other, and the SA objectives will be one way of checking for this. Where there is conflict between objectives, the LPA will need to reach a decision on priorities.

Appendix 10 suggests approaches to testing objectives and policies.

Task B2: Developing the DPD options

- 3.3.5 LPAs will develop options, working with the community and relevant stakeholders, to achieve the objectives of the DPD. For key DPD issues, LPAs are advised to consider a hierarchy of options (see Figures 27 and 28, Appendix 11).
- 3.3.6 Given the duty under the Act on those preparing a DPD to contribute to sustainable development, it is essential for it to set out to improve on the situation which would exist if there were no DPD. It should also aim to improve on the effects of existing DPD or 'saved plan'. To test this, options considered often include scenarios termed 'no plan' and 'business as usual'. It is important to be aware that baselines will change over time under 'no plan' and 'business as usual' options, as well as under new DPDs.
- 3.3.7 In preparing a DPD, a large number of options may be generated, some of these may come from suggestions made by the community or stakeholders, such as sites promoted by landowners. It is recommended that broad strategic options are considered as opposed to detailed policy wording variants. Options need to be sufficiently distinct to highlight the different sustainability implications of each, so that meaningful comparisons can be made. The options need to be compared with each other and with the current social, environmental and economic characteristics of the area which is subject to the DPD and the likely future situation without a DPD. In doing so they need to be tested against the SA framework.
- 3.3.8 The development and appraisal of options (see Tasks B3 and B4) will be an iterative process, with the options being revised to take account of the appraisal findings and consultation responses. This will inform the selection, refinement and publication of preferred options for consultation at Local Development Regulation 26 stage.
- 3.3.9 As each option is refined, a commentary on the key sustainability issues and problems arising must be prepared, with recommendations on how each of the options could be improved, e.g. through mitigation measures (see Task B5).
- 3.3.10 It may be possible to drop some alternatives from further consideration, for example because of SA findings, to comply with national planning policy, or for operational reasons, and document the reasons for eliminating them. The SA Report (see Stage C) will need to map the development of the options and the supporting policies by reference to their significant effects or their mitigation of any adverse effects.

Appendix 11 provides more detail on identifying and appraising options.

Task B3: Predicting the effects of the DPD

3.3.11 The purpose of this task is to predict the social, environmental and economic effects of the options being considered in the DPD process. The potential effects need to be quantified where appropriate, or a judgement made where this is not possible, with reference to the baseline situation. Prediction of effects involves:

- identifying the changes to the sustainability baseline which are predicted to arise from the DPD, including options. The predicted effects of options can be compared both with each other, with 'no DPD' and/or 'business as usual' scenarios, and against the SA objectives; and
- describing these changes in terms of their magnitude, their geographical scale, the time period over which they will occur, whether they are permanent or temporary, positive or negative, probable or improbable, frequent or rare, and whether or not there are secondary, cumulative and/or synergistic effects.

3.3.12 Predictions do not have to be expressed in quantitative terms. Hard data may enable a LPA or expert advisors to make detailed quantitative predictions, and this can be particularly useful where a DPD's effects are uncertain, close to a threshold, or cumulative. However, quantification is not always practicable, and broad based and qualitative predictions can be equally valid and appropriate. In current practice, these are often expressed in easily understood terms such as 'getting better or worse' or a scale from ++ (very positive) to - - (very negative). It can be useful to link predictions to specific objectives, e.g. 'will the DPD help prevent climate change?'

3.3.13 However, qualitative does not mean 'guessed'. Predictions should be supported by evidence, such as references to any research, discussions or consultation which helped those carrying out the SA to reach their conclusions.

3.3.14 The SA Report must document any uncertainties or limitations in the information underlying both qualitative and quantitative predictions. Assumptions, for instance about underlying trends, should be clearly stated. To enhance transparency, LPAs are encouraged to state briefly the reasons for their decisions to pursue a quantitative or qualitative approach to prediction of effects. Many sustainability problems result from the accumulation of multiple, small and often indirect effects rather than a few large obvious ones. The SEA Directive requires an assessment of secondary, cumulative, and synergistic effects, which should be incorporated in the SA.

Appendix 12 gives further guidance on prediction and appraisal of effects.

Appendix 13 provides guidance on the assessment of secondary, cumulative, and synergistic effects.

Task B4: Evaluating the effects of the DPD

3.3.15 Having identified and described the likely effects of the DPD, an evaluation of their significance needs to be made. When forming a judgement on whether a predicted effect will be significant, LPAs need to consider the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects, including secondary, cumulative, and synergistic effects. The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected) need to be considered. The value and vulnerability of certain areas and populations may also influence the appraisal, particularly where thresholds or standards may be exceeded.

3.3.16 The following principles may be helpful in appraising the significance of effects:

- significance has to be determined individually in each case. Effects which are significant in one situation are not necessarily significant in another;
- analysis of significance needs to be proportionate, carried out in reasonable time, and effort expended to assess significance should be proportionate to the expected severity of the effect;
- flexibility is important so that individual cases can be assessed. Criteria should be used as guidelines, not rules; and
- mathematical models are difficult to use to determine significance. Many aspects can be covered by descriptions. The use of numeric models could give rise to fictitious precision. An attempt at quantifying qualitative and semi-quantitative aspects will not necessarily lead to an increase in objectivity.

3.3.17 Conclusions on the overall sustainability of the DPD, including options, should be provided. Assumptions used in making judgements on the significance of effects of the DPD should be documented. Any inconsistencies between the objectives of the DPD and its policies should be highlighted, and amendments made where possible to reduce conflicts.

3.3.18 As the DPD is refined, the key sustainability issues (including environmental problems as required by the SEA Directive) should be documented for the SA Report (see Stage C), with recommendations for improving the options. Reasons for eliminating options should also be documented.

3.3.19 Public involvement at this stage may be particularly beneficial on the key aspects of the DPD and their sustainability implications. Early public involvement on these key issues could reduce the risk of major changes to the DPD following submission.

Task B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects

3.3.20 The SA Report must include measures to prevent, reduce or offset significant adverse effects of implementing the DPD. These measures are referred to in this guidance as 'mitigation measures', but they include proactive avoidance of adverse effects as well as actions taken after effects are noticed. Mitigation measures may also include recommendations for improving beneficial effects.

3.3.21 Mitigation can take a wide range of forms, including:

- changes to the DPD as a whole, including bringing forward new options, or adding or deleting options;
- refining policies in order to improve the likelihood of beneficial effects and to minimise adverse effects e.g. by strengthening policy criteria;
- technical measures to be applied during the implementation stage, e.g. buffer zones, application of design principles;
- proposals in EIA's accompanying planning applications; and
- proposals for changing other plans and programmes.

Task B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the DPD

3.3.22 Monitoring allows the actual significant effects of implementation of the DPD to be tested against those predicted in the SA. It thus helps to ensure that problems which arise during implementation can be identified and future predictions made more accurately. It can also be used to collect baseline information for future LDDs. Information and indicators can be drawn from existing sources at national, regional and sub-regional levels to avoid any unnecessary duplication. Proposals for monitoring need to be developed during Stage B for inclusion in the SA Report.

3.3.23 Monitoring is not a separate exercise from the rest of the DPD or SA preparation process. Decisions on what to monitor and how to do it should be considered early on. Stage E provides further information on the requirements for monitoring.

Appendix 14 gives more information on monitoring and describes how LPAs might design a SA monitoring system.

3.4 SA Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report

What the SEA Directive says:

“The environmental report shall include information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, [and] its stage in the decision-making process” (Article 5.2).

Information to be provided in the Environmental Report includes:

- “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” (Annex I (f) and footnote)
- “an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with” (Annex I (h))
- “the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme” (Annex I (g))

Task C1: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report

- 3.4.1 The SA Report on the draft DPD is a key output of the appraisal process, presenting information on the effects of the plan on which formal public consultation is carried out. The relationship between the two documents should be indicated. **The SA Report must clearly show that the SEA Directive’s requirements have been met.** This should be achieved through signposting the places in the SA Report where the information required by the Directive is provided.
- 3.4.2 In deciding the length and level of detail to be provided in the SA Report, the LPA needs to bear in mind its purpose as a public consultation document. It is likely to be of interest to a wide variety of readers, including decision makers, other authorities, statutory consultees, other authorities, non-government organisations and members of the public, and needs to be prepared with this range of users in mind. It must include a non-technical summary.

Appendix 15 provides a suggested approach and structure for the Scoping Report and the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

3.5 SA Stage D: Consulting on the preferred options of the DPD and the Sustainability Appraisal Report

What the SEA Directive says:

“The authorities [with relevant environmental responsibilities] and the public... shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme” (Article 6(2)).

“The environmental report, ... the opinions expressed [in responses to consultation] ... and the results of any transboundary consultations ... shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption...” (Article 8).

“...when a plan or programme is adopted, the [environmental] authorities [and] the public ... are informed and the following items [shall be] made available to those so informed: (a) the plan or programme as adopted, (b) a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme...[including] the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with, and (c) the measures decided concerning monitoring” (Article 9(1)).

Task D1: Public participation on the preferred options of the DPD and the Sustainability Appraisal Report

3.5.1 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.

Task D2(i): Appraising significant changes

3.5.2 The LPA prepare a DPD for submission, taking into account the consultation on the Preferred Options. The DPD may simply be a refinement of one of the Preferred Options to provide greater clarity about how it will be delivered, including for example, detailed policy wording. In this case further SA would not be needed, but an annex to the SA Report would explain the position. The DPD may be based on a combination of Preferred Options or strike a mid position between them. Again, it may not be necessary to undertake further SA, but the position should be clear in an annex to the SA Report.

3.5.3 On the other hand the DPD may contain strategy which was not included in the Preferred Options to the extent that it has significant impacts which have not hitherto been appraised. In this case these effects must be appraised and the SA Report may need more extensive supplementation or even rewriting.

3.5.4 It is for the LPA to undertake this further appraisal. However, where new strategies emanate from the representations made by stakeholders on the Preferred Options it may be helpful for those stakeholders to provide information on their effects.

Submission of the DPD to the Secretary of State

DPD Stage 3: Examination

- 3.5.5 Once the DPD is finalised by the LPA, it must be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination, accompanied by the SA Report and the consultation statement. LPAs are responsible for both preparing and adopting the DPD, and so it is for them to ensure that the DPD has been subject to SA which is compliant with the requirements of the SEA Regulations. The LPA must be satisfied that the requirements of the SEA Regulations have been met at the time that the DPD has been submitted for independent examination, as well as when finally adopting the plan (see task C1).
- 3.5.6 The role of the Inspector at examination is to consider the soundness of the DPD, using the SA as part of the evidence base. The Inspector will not undertake his own assessment of compliance. However there may be circumstances in which it appears to him that the evidence in the SA is insufficient for him to come to satisfactory conclusions about the soundness of the DPD. The LPA should update the SA Report as appropriate (see task D2(ii)).
- 3.5.7 Given the frontloading inherent in the new system, new sites should not be raised for consideration for the first time at submission or examination. However, in exceptional circumstances where a site is identified at a late stage in the DPD preparation process, the promoter of the new site will need to collate the relevant SA information in sufficient time to allow consultation with the public on the proposal and appraisal well in advance of submission or examination (see text box below).

‘Where any statutory processes have not been undertaken for sites submitted late in the preparation of a Development Plan Document, the Inspector would not be able to recommend their inclusion in the binding report. Furthermore, if the inclusion of alternative sites would make the Development Plan Document procedurally unsound, the inspector would not be able to recommend their inclusion in that document. It is therefore, the responsibility of those promoting such changes to show that the proper procedures have been undertaken’.

Planning Policy Statement 12, Local Development Frameworks (page 38).

- 3.5.8 Relevant SA information will need to be made available in relation to any proposed changes to a DPD following the submission of the DPD for examination, where such changes may have significant sustainability effects. The Inspector is likely to want confirmation at the pre-examination meeting of what action is being taken to ensure that such information is available to the examination. The promoter of any such change (including, exceptionally, any proposed new sites) is responsible for providing the necessary information for the LPA to incorporate in its SA Report (see PPS12 – box on page 37/38, paragraphs 4.3 and 4.17). This information must be consistent with the scope and level of detail of the SA conducted by the LPA, and refer to the same baseline information in identifying the likely significant effects of the revised policy or new site.
- 3.5.9 Where late changes are made, a further period of public consultation may need to be carried out prior to completing the examination of the DPD, having regard to the consultation requirements of the SEA Directive. It would be helpful if consultation was consistent with the LPA’s SCI.

Task D2 (ii): Appraising significant changes resulting from representations

3.5.10 As a result of the examination, the Inspector will produce a report with recommendations which will be binding upon the LPA. Where the Inspector suggests significant changes in the binding report, he or she will need to be satisfied that sufficient SA material is available to show what the significant effects are. The LPA must then incorporate the changes required by the Inspector, amend the SA Report and adopt the DPD.

DPD Stage 4: Adoption and monitoring

3.5.11 During the adoption and monitoring stage of a DPD the remainder of Stage D and all of Stage E of the SA process be undertaken.

Task D3: Making decisions and providing information

3.5.12 The information in the SA Report, including any subsequent revisions, and responses to consultation must be taken into account during the preparation of the DPD and before the final decision is taken to adopt it.

3.5.13 LPAs must produce an adoption statement to accompany the adopted DPD outlining how they have taken the findings of the full SA process into account, and how sustainability considerations more generally have been integrated into the DPD. This summary must provide enough information to make clear any changes made to the DPD as a result of the SA process and responses to consultation, or why no changes were made or options were rejected.

3.5.14 The adoption statement could also provide information on how monitoring will be carried out during implementation of the DPD. The SA Report will already have documented proposed monitoring measures, and they can now be confirmed or modified in the light of consultation responses and/or the examination.

3.5.15 The DPD, adoption statement and SA Report, including any revisions, must be published on the website of the LPA and made available to the public and the statutory bodies in accordance with Regulation 36 of the Local Development Regulations.

3.6 SA Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the DPD

What the SEA Directive says:

“Member States shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes in order, *inter alia*, to identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action” (Article 10.1).

The Environmental Report shall include “a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring” (Annex I (i)).

- 3.6.1 Proposals for monitoring must be considered early in the SA process (see Task B6), included in the SA Report (Stage C) and reviewed in the light of any responses to consultation.

Task E1: Finalising aims and methods for monitoring

- 3.6.2 Monitoring arrangements should be designed to provide information that can be used to highlight specific performance issues and significant effects, and lead to more informed decision-making. Monitoring can also be a useful source of baseline information for future DPDs, and LPAs may be able to use it to fill gaps in this information. It may also provide some of the information needed for EIAs of projects.
- 3.6.3 LPAs need to ensure that monitoring information is appropriate to their needs, up to date and reliable, and that sources of information are referenced.
- 3.6.4 The SEA Directive specifically requires monitoring to identify unforeseen adverse effects and to enable appropriate remedial action to be taken. It may be difficult to implement monitoring mechanisms for unexpected effects, or to attribute such effects to implementation of the DPD when they occur. However, in line with European Commission guidance (2003), this provision may be understood as covering effects which differ from those which were predicted, or unforeseen effects which are due to changes of circumstances.
- 3.6.5 The Act requires LPAs to produce AMRs on progress in implementing LDDs. These need to include the findings of SA monitoring. Further guidance is set out in *Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide* (ODPM, 2005) and *Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) – FAQs and Seminar Feedback on Emerging Best Practice 2004/05* (ODPM, 2005).

Task E2: Responding to adverse effects

- 3.6.6 LPAs are encouraged to consider how to react if monitoring reveals adverse effects. While the SEA Directive does not create new obligations on environmental protection, other legislation, licensing arrangements or policies may require action on the part of either the LPA or another body. Details of any contingency arrangements could be included in the mitigation measures set out in the SA Report and in the DPD itself.

Appendix 14 gives more information on monitoring and describes how RPBs and LPAs might design SA monitoring systems.

4 APPLYING SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL TO SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

4.1 Overview

Introduction

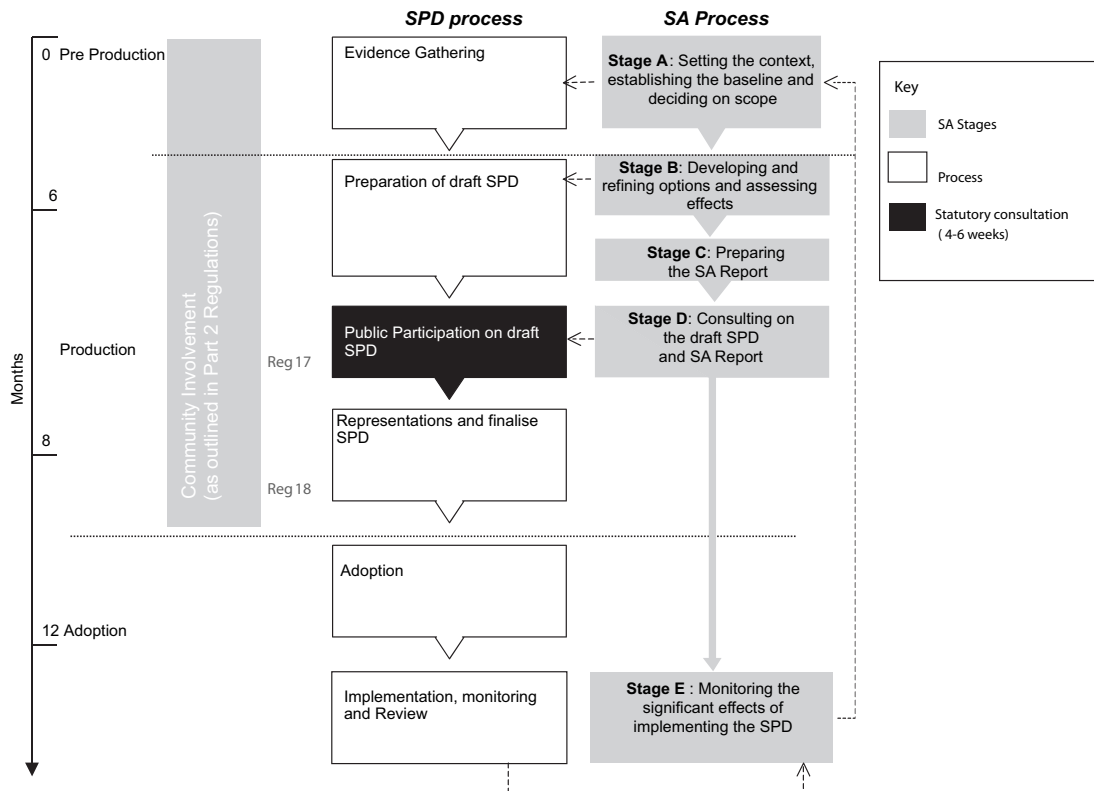
- 4.1.1 SPDs form part of the planning framework for the area. Though not part of the statutory development plan, SPDs may cover a range of issues, both thematic and site-specific, which provide further details of policies in a DPD. However, they cannot be used to allocate land. They may take the form of design guides, area development briefs, or issue-based documents that supplement policies in a DPD.
- 4.1.2 Unlike past SPG they need to conform to set procedures, and must be included in the LDS. The process for preparing SPDs is similar to that for DPDs, though it will be faster and there is no requirement for an independent examination. They will be subject to rigorous procedures of community engagement in accordance with the authority's SCI and will be accorded weight in the determination of planning applications.
- 4.1.3 There is a three-stage process of pre-production, production (including a 4 to 6 week consultation period) and adoption following consideration of consultation responses. The SPD preparation process is illustrated in Figure 8, which also shows the relationship with the SA stages described in this section.

Screening and possible exemptions for sustainability appraisal of SPDs that have no significant effects

- 4.1.4 **The need for screening determinations under the SEA Directive is most likely to arise with SPDs which cover a small area at local level or which make only minor modifications to existing policy.** The term 'modification' should be interpreted as 'in elaboration of' when referring to SPDs; this may include development briefs and design guides. Where the authority has made a determination that the SPD is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects it will also need to consider whether there are likely to be any significant economic or social effects. Section 19 of The Act requires an authority to produce a SA Report for all LDDs, including SPDs, regardless of whether there are likely to be any significant effects.
- 4.1.5 Where an authority considers that no significant effects are likely, it should draw on the relevant material in the SA of the parent DPD policy. The SA Report for the SPD would comprise this material, together with a short explanation that the SPD itself has no significant social, economic or environmental effects beyond those already appraised in relation to the parent DPD.
- 4.1.6 However, where the SPD has been prepared on the basis of a DPD or saved plan, policy or policies which have not been subject to SA, then the authority will need to carry out a SA of that policy or policies and report on those. Similarly, where the SPD is going beyond minor modifications to policy, or significantly developing policy, then a SA of the SPD will be required.

Appendix 2 provides further detail on screening and possible exemptions from the SEA Directive.

Figure 8 – The SPD preparation process



Incorporating SA within the SPD process

4.1.7 The SPD preparation process illustrated in Figure 9 shows the relationship between the SPD preparation process and SA stages.

Figure 9 – Incorporating SA within the SPD process

SPD Stage 1: Pre-production – Evidence gathering
SA stages and tasks
<p>Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainable development objectives. ● A2: Collecting baseline information. ● A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems. ● A4: Developing the SA framework. ● A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA.
SPD Stage 2: Production – Prepare draft SPD
SA stages and tasks
<p>Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● B1: Testing the SPD objectives against the SA framework. ● B2: Developing the SPD options. ● B3: Predicting the effects of the draft SPD. ● B4: Evaluating the effects the draft SPD. ● B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects. ● B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the SPD.
<p>Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● C1: Preparing SA Report.
<p>Stage D: Consulting on draft SPD and Sustainability Appraisal Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● D1: Public participation on the SA Report and the draft SPD. ● D2: Assessing significant changes.
SPD Stage 3: Adoption
SA stages and tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● D3: Making decisions and providing information.
<p>Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the SPD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● E1: Finalising aims and methods for monitoring. ● E2: Responding to adverse effects.

A Quality Assurance checklist is provided in **Appendix 4** of this guidance to help LPAs ensure that the quality of the process and SA Report is sufficient to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive, the Act and the Local Planning Regulations.

The common use of sustainability appraisal information for SPDs

- 4.1.8 SPDs must relate to policies in the DPD (or 'saved' plan) and may be prepared in parallel with the DPD where the detail provided in the SPD is fundamental to the early delivery of policies. The appraisal should be designed to reflect the different scales and levels of detail that will be appropriate while also drawing on, and being consistent with, the SA of the DPD.
- 4.1.9 The different forms of SPD that may be prepared will necessitate a relatively flexible approach to SA to ensure that it is appropriate and relevant. When producing the SA on SPDs, SA material from a RSS revision, DPD or SPD can be used, particularly for Stage A of the process (see Figure 10).
- 4.1.10 In most cases the SA of SPDs will draw extensively on appraisals undertaken at the higher level for policies within the DPD, and the need for new work may be limited. Generally, due to the nature of an SPD, its SA is likely to focus on a more limited range of potentially significant effects although in some cases it may be appropriate to consider these in more detail. The SA may therefore be produced more quickly and be of interest to a more limited number of stakeholders.
- 4.1.11 The SA of the SPD of a saved plan will however need to set out the likely significant social, environmental and economic effects of the DPD policy or that saved policy it is helping to implement. This will provide the baseline against which the effects of the SPD itself can be considered. However, it is not necessary for a SA of a SPD to document the significant effects of the DPD or saved plan as a whole or of alternatives to the DPD policy or saved policy. These should have already been considered during preparation of the DPD and may have been considered during preparation of a saved plan. This is advised to be undertaken at Stage B of the SA process. This section covers the entire SA preparation process through each stage for those authorities that may be preparing their first SA.

Figure 10 – The common use of SA information for SPDs



Public and stakeholder involvement

4.1.12 It is recommended that public and stakeholder involvement on the SA be undertaken in parallel with that of the SPD. This should be tailored to the type of SPD that is being created.

The environmental consultation bodies have issued a statement of the services and standards which they undertake to provide on SEA (see www.environment-agency.gov.uk/aboutus/ and follow links to 'about us', 'policy', 'Strategic Environmental Assessment', 'Roles + services').

Figure 11 – Public involvement in SPDs and SA
SPD Stage 1: Pre-production – Evidence Gathering
Consulting on the scope of SA (5 weeks as required by the SEA Regulations)
<p>The environmental consultation bodies must be consulted.</p> <p>Other community groups and social and economic bodies are recommended to be consulted as the LPA considers appropriate.</p>
SPD Stage 2: Production – Developing the draft SPD options
Public Involvement
<p>Follow the advice in PPS 12 for SPDs ensuring that the relevant SA commentary on the likely significant effects of the options is available at the same time as the draft SPD.</p> <p>When producing the consultation statement in line with Local Development Regulation 17 (I) it may be useful to take the SA into account.</p> <p>Possible methods may include: 'planning for real' exercises; focus groups; steering groups; one-to-one exercises; meetings; and links with local strategic partnerships;</p> <p>It is recommended that notification of the options for the draft SPD and SA data is published on the LPAs website.</p>
Consultation on SA for SPDs (4-6 weeks)
<p>Follow the advice in PPS 12 for SPDs ensuring that the relevant SA information is consulted on at the same time as the draft SPD.</p> <p>Consider the responses on the SA Report as well as the draft SPD.</p>

Figure 11 – Public involvement in SPDs and SA (*cont*)

Methods include publicising the draft SPD and the SA Report: making copies available at the principal office; and other places which the planning authority considers appropriate; publishing on the website; circulating copies to local media (local press, TV, radio, etc.); issuing leaflets/brochures to local community; organising public exhibitions; holding one-to-one meetings; and organising focus groups.

Follow the advice in PPS 12 ensuring that the relevant SA information is consulted on at the same time as the draft SPD.

SPD Stage 3: Adoption of the SPD and SA Report

Copies of the SPD, consultation statement and SA Report should be made available to the environmental consultation bodies, the other specific consultation bodies, the general consultation bodies, and other consultees where relevant.

A summary of the main issues raised on the SA, how these were taken into account in the development of the SPD and the SA Report, and details of monitoring arrangements must also be produced. This may be included as part of the consultation statement mentioned above.

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

SPD Stage 1: Pre-production – Evidence gathering

What the SEA Directive says:

The Environmental Report should provide information on [inter alia]:

- the “relationship [of the plan or programme] with other relevant plans and programmes” (Annex I(a))
- “the environmental protection objectives, established at international, [European] Community or [national] level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation” (Annex I (e))
- “relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme” and “the environmental characteristics of the areas likely to be significantly affected” (Annex I (b), (c))

- “any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC” (Annex I (d))

“...the authorities... which, by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programmes ... shall be consulted when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report” (Article 5.4 and 6.3).

4.2.1 Stage A of the SA process is undertaken during the pre-production stage of SPD, and needs to be integrated with evidence gathering for the SPD.

Developing an appraisal methodology and programme in line with the LDS

4.2.2 When establishing a timetable for the preparation of the SPDs, it is recommended that the SA process is taken into consideration.

Producing an outline of stakeholder and community involvement

4.2.3 The SCI will explain to local communities and stakeholders how they are to be involved in the preparation of SPDs, and the steps that the authority will take to facilitate this involvement. It will set out the standards to be met by the authority in terms of public participation, building on the minimum requirements set out in PPS12.

Task A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives

4.2.4 The LPA must take account of relationships between the SPD and other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives. The SEA Directive specifically requires environmental protection objectives established at international, European Community or national levels to be taken into account. Other relevant documents include the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, PPGs and PPSs, and a range of other plans and strategies at regional and local levels, all of which influence the options to be considered in preparation of the SPD. Information on these relationships will enable potential synergies to be exploited and any inconsistencies and constraints to be addressed.

4.2.5 Where an up to date RSS revision or DPD is in place, the list of policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives may be used for the SPD. This should be updated to include locally specific documents relevant to the production of the particular SPD concerned.

Appendix 5 provides an indicative list of other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives.

Task A2: Collecting baseline information

- 4.2.6 Baseline information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring effects and helps to identify sustainability problems and alternative ways of dealing with them. Baseline information may consist of mainly indicators, although both quantitative and qualitative information can be used. To get the best value from baseline information, it needs to be kept up to date rather than being merely a snapshot of the situation at a particular time.
- 4.2.7 LPAs are advised to collect baseline information during the survey and evidence gathering stage of SPD preparation. They are encouraged to consider what information they already have and what more they will need. They may already hold useful information, in particular from appraisals and monitoring of Local Plans or Unitary Development Plans under the old planning system or DPDs or SPDs under the current system. The review of other policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives, and AMRs, will also provide a considerable amount of information.
- 4.2.8 Much baseline information will be generic to the authority's area rather than specific to the particular SPD on which a SA is being carried out. It could therefore be used to support the SA of future LDDs. These potential uses should be kept in mind when information is being collected.
- 4.2.9 Sufficient information about the current and likely future state of the area covered by the SPD needs to be collected to allow its effects to be adequately predicted. Information collected needs to focus on the social, environmental and economic characteristics of the area that relate to the issues to be tackled in the SPD. The SA Report can then focus on those where significant effects are likely.
- 4.2.10 For each indicator selected, enough information is needed to answer the following questions:
- how good or bad is the current situation? Do trends show that it is getting better or worse?
 - how far is the current situation from any established thresholds or targets?
 - are particularly sensitive or important elements of the economy, physical environment or community affected, e.g. skills shortages, endangered species or rare habitats and vulnerable social groups?
 - are the problems reversible or irreversible, permanent or temporary?
 - how difficult would it be to offset or remedy any damage?
 - have there been significant cumulative or synergistic effects over time? Are there expected to be such effects in the future?

Appendix 6 suggests how baseline information can be collected and presented.
Appendix 7 lists some key sources for baseline information

Task A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

4.2.11 The identification of sustainability issues (including environmental problems as required by the SEA Directive) is an opportunity to define key issues for the SPD and to develop sustainable plan objectives and options.

4.2.12 LPAs will be aware of many sustainability issues or problems which they face when preparing their SPD. They may be able to identify others in conducting the SA of the SPD on the basis of:

- experience with issues identified in the relevant DPD and other policies, plans and programmes including the Community Strategy;
- identification and analysis of possible tensions or inconsistencies with other policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives;
- identification and analysis of possible tensions or inconsistencies between the current or future baseline conditions and proposed objectives, targets or obligations; and
- consultation with authorities with social, environmental and economic responsibilities, other relevant stakeholders and the public.

4.2.13 Any issues identified need, where possible, to be linked to evidence by reference to baseline information and the identification of historical or likely future trends. In particular, it will be helpful to examine whether the existing DPD or saved plan policy is achieving or moving away from its targets.

Appendix 8 gives further information on recording issues and problems.

Task A4: Developing the sustainability appraisal framework

4.2.14 The SA framework provides a way in which sustainability effects can be described, analysed and compared. It is central to the SA process.

4.2.15 The SA framework consists of sustainability objectives which, where practicable, may be expressed in the form of targets, the achievement of which is measurable using indicators. Objectives and indicators can be revised as baseline information is collected and sustainability issues and problems are identified, and can be used in monitoring the implementation of the SPD (see Figure 22 in Appendix 9).

4.2.16 Sustainability objectives are distinct from the objectives of the plan, though they may in some cases overlap with them. They provide a way of checking whether the whether the SPD objectives are the best possible ones for sustainability, and can be seen a methodological yardstick against which the social, environment and economic effects of a plan can be tested.

4.2.17 The number of sustainability objectives, indicators and targets needs to be manageable and developed with input from relevant stakeholders.

4.2.18 Where conflicts arise between sustainability objectives, it may be helpful to consider the following principles:

- the relative timing of the documents concerned;
- the level of consultation undertaken on the plan;
- the degree to which the policies, plans, programmes and objectives are consistent with current policy or legal requirements; and
- the extent to which any appraisal has already been conducted.

Appendix 9 gives further information on developing the SA framework.

Task A5: Consulting on the scope of the sustainability appraisal

4.2.19 To meet the requirements of the SEA Directive, the LPA must seek the views of the four statutory environmental consultation bodies designated in the SEA Regulations (the Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature and the Environment Agency) on the scope and level of detail of the environmental information to be included in the SA Report. These bodies are among the ‘specific consultation bodies’ listed in PPS12 Annex E. It is also desirable for other bodies to be consulted as the LPA considers appropriate, with a balance between those concerned with social, environmental and economic issues. LPAs should allow 5 weeks for this stage of consultation. The rest of the community involvement process on the production of SPDs and SA Reports should be in accordance with PPS12 (see Figure7).

4.2.20 LPAs are recommended to prepare a Scoping Report, setting out the information collected at Stage A of the SA process. One Scoping Report can be prepared for several LDDs, provided that it gives sufficient information at the level of detail required for each of the SPDs concerned. This can be achieved by preparing the Scoping Report in two parts: a general section which sets out the elements common to all of the SPDs, and a second part reporting on each SPD individually (e.g. the objectives of the individual SPD, sustainability issues and problems specific to it, and any broad options to be considered) or making clear where no specific details on a SPD need to be added.

4.3 SA Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects

SPD Stage 2: Production: Prepare the draft SPD

What the SEA Directive says:

“...an environmental report shall be prepared in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated” (Article 5.1). Information to be provided in the Environmental Report includes “an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with” (Annex I (h)).

- 4.3.1 During this stage the LPA appraises in broad terms the effects of strategic options and then in more detail the effects of the preferred options when these have been selected. Elements of Stage B may need to be carried out more than once in the course of the SPD’s development, and some Stage A tasks, including further refining of the baseline characteristics and key issues and problems, may need to continue.

Public participation on the development of the options for the SPD

- 4.3.2 The environmental consultation bodies and each of the specific consultation bodies and general consultation bodies as the LPA considers appropriate are required by Regulation 17 of the Local Development Regulations to be consulted in the development of the SPD options. In addition it is fundamental to the new arrangements that the wider community is also involved. Figure 11 provides some ideas for public involvement at this stage.

Task B1: Testing the SPD objectives against the sustainability appraisal framework

- 4.3.3 The objectives of the SPD set out what it is aiming to achieve in spatial planning terms and set the context for development of options for the SPD.
- 4.3.4 It is important for the objectives of the SPD to be in accordance with sustainability principles. The objectives should be tested for compatibility with the SA objectives. This will help in refining the SPD objectives as well as in identifying options. The SPD objectives also need to be consistent with each other, and the SA objectives will be one way of checking for this. Where there is conflict between objectives, the LPA will need to reach a decision on priorities.

Appendix 10 suggests approaches to testing objectives and policies.

Task B2: Developing the SPD options

- 4.3.5 LPAs will develop options, working with the community and relevant stakeholders, to achieve the objectives of the SPD. For key SPD issues, LPAs are advised to consider a hierarchy of options (see Figures 27 and 28, Appendix 11).

- 4.3.6 Given the duty under the Act on those preparing a SPD to contribute to sustainable development, it is essential for it to set out to improve on the situation which would exist if there were no SPD. It should also aim to improve on the effects of implementing the existing parent DPD policy or 'saved plan policy'. To test this, options considered often include scenarios termed 'no plan' and 'business as usual'. It is important to be aware that baselines will change over time under 'no plan' and 'business as usual' options, as well as under new SPDs.
- 4.3.7 Options need to be sufficiently distinct to highlight the different sustainability implications of each, so that meaningful comparisons can be made. The options need to be compared with each other and with the current social, environmental and economic characteristics of the area which is subject to the SPD and the likely future situation without a SPD. In doing so they need to be tested against the SA framework.
- 4.3.8 The development and appraisal of options (see Tasks B3 and B4) will be an iterative process, with the options being revised to take account of the appraisal findings and consultation responses. This will inform the selection of options and their development in detail for inclusion in the draft SPD to be published for consultation.
- 4.3.9 As each option is refined, a commentary on the key sustainability issues and problems arising must be prepared, with recommendations on how each of the options could be improved, e.g. through mitigation measures (see Task B5).
- 4.3.10 It may be possible to drop some alternatives from further consideration at this stage, for example because of SA findings, to comply with national or regional planning policy, or for operational reasons, and document the reasons for eliminating them. The SA Report (see Stage C) will need to map the development of the options and the supporting policies by reference to their significant effects or their mitigation of any adverse effects.

Appendix 11 provides more detail on identifying and appraising options.

Task B3: Predicting the effects of the draft SPD

- 4.3.11 The purpose of this task is to predict the social, environmental and economic effects of the options being considered in the SPD process. The potential effects need to be quantified where appropriate, or a judgement made where this is not possible, with reference to the baseline situation. Prediction of effects involves:
- identifying the changes to the sustainability baseline which are predicted to arise from the SPD, including options. The predicted effects of options can be compared both with each other, with 'no SPD' and/or 'business as usual' scenarios, and against the SA objectives; and
 - describing these changes in terms of their magnitude, their geographical scale, the time period over which they will occur, whether they are permanent or temporary, positive or negative, probable or improbable, frequent or rare, and whether or not there are secondary, cumulative and/or synergistic effects.

- 4.3.12 Predictions do not have to be expressed in quantitative terms. Hard data may enable a LPA or expert advisors to make detailed quantitative predictions, and this can be particularly useful where a SPD's effects are uncertain, close to a threshold, or cumulative. However, quantification is not always practicable, and broad based and qualitative predictions can be equally valid and appropriate. In current practice, these are often expressed in easily understood terms such as 'getting better or worse' or a scale from ++ (very positive) to - - (very negative). It can be useful to link predictions to specific objectives, e.g. 'will the SPD help prevent climate change?'
- 4.3.13 However, qualitative does not mean 'guessed'. Predictions should be supported by evidence, such as references to any research, discussions or consultation which helped those carrying out the SA to reach their conclusions.
- 4.3.14 The SA Report must document any uncertainties or limitations in the information underlying both qualitative and qualitative predictions. Assumptions, for instance about underlying trends, should be clearly stated. To enhance transparency, LPAs are encouraged to state briefly the reasons for their decisions to pursue a quantitative or qualitative approach to prediction of effects. Many sustainability problems result from the accumulation of multiple, small and often indirect effects rather than a few large obvious ones. The SEA Directive requires an assessment of secondary, cumulative, and synergistic effects which should be incorporated in the SA.

Appendix 12 gives further guidance on prediction and appraisal of effects.

Appendix 13 provides guidance on secondary, cumulative, and synergistic environmental effects to be assessed.

Task B4: Evaluating the effects of the draft SPD

- 4.3.15 Having identified and described the likely effects of the SPD, an evaluation of their significance needs to be made. When forming a judgement on whether a predicted effect will be significant, LPAs need to consider the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects, including secondary, cumulative, and synergistic effects. The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected) need to be considered. The value and vulnerability of certain areas and populations may also influence the appraisal, particularly where thresholds or standards may be exceeded.
- 4.3.16 The following principles may be helpful in appraising the significance of effects:
- significance has to be determined individually in each case. Effects which are significant in one situation are not necessarily significant in another;
 - analysis of significance needs to be proportionate, carried out in reasonable time, and effort expended to assess significance should be proportionate to the expected severity of the effect;

- flexibility is important so that individual cases can be assessed. Criteria should be used as guidelines, not rules; and
- mathematical models are difficult to use to determine significance. Many aspects can be covered by descriptions. The use of numeric models could give rise to fictitious precision. An attempt at quantifying qualitative and semi-quantitative aspects will not lead necessarily to an increase in objectivity.

4.3.17 Conclusions on the overall sustainability of the SPD, including options, should be provided. Assumptions used in making judgements on the significance of effects of the SPD should be documented. Any inconsistencies between the objectives of the SPD and its policies should be highlighted, and amendments made where possible to reduce conflicts.

4.3.18 As the SPD is refined, the key sustainability issues (including environmental problems as required by the SEA Directive) should be documented for the SA Report (see Stage C), with recommendations for improving the options. Reasons for eliminating options should also be documented.

Task B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects

4.3.19 The SA Report must include measures to prevent, reduce or offset significant adverse effects of implementing the SPD. These measures are referred to in this guidance as ‘mitigation measures’, but they include proactive avoidance of adverse effects as well as actions taken after effects are noticed. Mitigation measures may also include recommendations for improving beneficial effects.

4.3.20 Mitigation can take a wide range of forms, including:

- changes to the SPD as a whole, including bringing forward new options, or adding or deleting options;
- refining policies in order to improve the likelihood of beneficial effects and to minimise adverse effects, e.g. by strengthening policy criteria;
- technical measures to be applied during the implementation stage, e.g. buffer zones, application of design principles;
- proposals in EIA’s accompanying planning applications; and
- proposals for changing other plans and programmes.

Task B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the SPD

4.3.21 Monitoring allows the actual significant effects of implementation of the SPD to be tested against those predicted in the SA. It thus helps to ensure that problems which arise during implementation can be identified and future predictions made more accurately. It can also be used to collect baseline information for future LDDs. Information and indicators can be drawn from existing sources at national, regional and sub-regional levels to avoid any unnecessary duplication. Proposals for monitoring need to be developed during Stage B for inclusion in the SA Report.

4.3.22 Monitoring is not a separate exercise from the rest of the SPD or SA preparation process. Decisions on what to monitor and how to do it should be considered early on. Stage E provides further information on the requirements for monitoring.

Appendix 14 gives more information on monitoring and describes how LPAs might design a SA monitoring system.

4.4 SA Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report

What the SEA Directive says:

“The environmental report shall include information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, [and] its stage in the decision-making process” (Article 5.2).

Information to be provided in the Environmental Report includes:

- “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” (Annex I (f) and footnote)
- “an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with” (Annex I (h))
- “the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme” (Annex I (g))

Task C1: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report

- 4.4.1 The SA Report on the draft SPD is a key output of the appraisal process, presenting information on the effects of the draft SPD on which formal public consultation is carried out. The relationship between the two documents should be indicated. **The SA Report must show that the SEA Directive's requirements have been met.** This should be achieved through sign-posting the places in the SA Report where the information required by the Directive is provided.
- 4.4.2 In deciding the length and level of detail to be provided in the SA Report, the LPA needs to bear in mind its purpose as a public consultation document. It is likely to be of interest to a wide variety of readers, including decision makers, statutory consultees, other authorities, non-governmental organisations, and members of the public, and needs to be prepared with this range of users in mind. It must include a non-technical summary.

Appendix 15 provides a suggested approach and structure for the Scoping Report and the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

4.5 SA Stage D: Consulting on the draft SPD and the Sustainability Appraisal Report

What the SEA Directive says:

“The authorities [with relevant environmental responsibilities] and the public... shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme” (Article 6(2)).

“The environmental report, ... the opinions expressed [in responses to consultation] ... and the results of any transboundary consultations ... shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption...” (Article 8).

“...when a plan or programme is adopted, the [environmental] authorities [and] the public ... are informed and the following items [shall be] made available to those so informed: (a) the plan or programme as adopted, (b) a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme...[including] the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with, and (c) the measures decided concerning monitoring” (Article 9(1)).

Task D1: Public participation on the draft SPD and the Sustainability Appraisal Report

- 4.5.1 During the public participation stage the SA report must be consulted upon at the same time as the draft SPD. When involving the public on the SPD and its SA Report, LPAs need to make clear that any responses should focus on the effects of the SPD and not the DPD policy or saved policy that the SPD is helping to implement.
- 4.5.2 The findings of the SA and consultation responses must be taken into account and the decision-making process documented (see task D3).

Task D2: Appraising of significant changes

- 4.5.3 If significant changes to the draft SPD are raised during consultation that have not already been subject to SA, it will be necessary for the LPA to ensure that the significant social, environmental and economic effects of these changes are appraised.

SPD Stage 3: Adoption and monitoring

- 4.5.4 During the adoption and monitoring stage of the SPD the remainder of Stage D and all of Stage E of the SA process should be undertaken.

Task D3: Making decisions and providing information

- 4.5.5 Following the adoption of the SPD, a consultation statement must be prepared to show the ways in which responses to consultation have been taken into account. This summary must provide enough information to make clear how the SPD was changed as a result of the SA process and responses to consultation, or why no changes were made, or why options were rejected.
- 4.5.6 The consultation statement can also be used to meet the SEA Directive's requirements to make information available to the public on how the monitoring will be carried out during implementation. The SA Report will have already documented proposed monitoring measures, and they can now be confirmed or modified in the light of consultation responses.
- 4.5.7 The SPD consultation statement and the SA Report, including any revisions, should be made available to the public and the statutory bodies in accordance with the Local Development Regulations.

4.6 SA Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the SPD

What the SEA Directive says:

“Member States shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes in order, *inter alia*, to identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action” (Article 10.1).

The Environmental Report shall include “a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring” (Annex I (i)).

- 4.6.1 Proposals for monitoring must be considered early in the SA process (see Task B6), included in the SA Report (Stage C), and reviewed in the light of any responses to consultation.

Task E1: Finalising aims and methods for monitoring

- 4.6.2 Monitoring arrangements should be designed to provide information that can be used to highlight specific performance issues and significant effects, and lead to more informed decision-making. Monitoring can also be a useful source of baseline information for future SPDs, and LPAs may be able to use it to fill gaps in this information. It may also provide some of the information needed for EIAs of projects.
- 4.6.3 LPAs need to ensure that monitoring information is appropriate to their needs, up to date and reliable, and that sources of information are referenced.
- 4.6.4 The SEA Directive specifically requires monitoring to identify unforeseen adverse effects and to enable appropriate remedial action to be taken. It may be difficult to implement monitoring mechanisms for unexpected effects, or to attribute such effects to implementation of the SPD when they occur. However, in line with the European Commission guidance (2003), this provision may be understood as covering effects which differ from those which were predicted, or unforeseen effects which are due to changes of circumstances.
- 4.6.5 The Act requires LPAs to produce AMRs on progress in implementing LDDs. These need to include the findings of SA monitoring. Further guidance is set out in *Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide* (ODPM, 2005) and *Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) – FAQs and Seminar Feedback on Emerging Best Practice 2004/05* (ODPM, 2005).

Task E2: Responding to adverse effects

- 4.6.6 LPAs are encouraged to consider how to react if monitoring reveals adverse effects. While the SEA Directive does not create new obligations on environmental protection, other legislation, licensing arrangements or policies may require action on the part of either the LPA or another body. Details of any contingency arrangements could be included in the mitigation measures set out in the SA Report and in the SPD itself.

Appendix 14 gives more information on monitoring and describes how RPBs and LPAs might design SA monitoring systems.

Appendix 1 – The SEA Directive’s requirements

Figure 12 – The SEA Directive’s requirements	Where covered in Guide (stage/appendix)
<p>Preparation of an environmental report in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated. The information to be given is (Art. 5 and Annex I):</p>	Appendix 15
<p>a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;</p>	A/Appendix 5
<p>b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;</p>	A/Appendix 6
<p>c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;</p>	A/Appendices 6 & 7
<p>d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;</p>	A/Appendix 8
<p>e) The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;</p>	A, B/Appendices 9 & 10
<p>f) 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. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects);</p>	B/Appendices 11, 12 & 13
<p>g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;</p>	B

Figure 12 – The SEA Directive's requirements (cont)	Where covered in Guide (stage/appendix)
h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	B
i) a description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10;	B, E/Appendix 14
j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.	B, C
The report shall include the information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, its stage in the decision-making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process to avoid duplication of the assessment (Art. 5.2).	C
<p>Consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● authorities with environmental responsibility, when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report (Art. 5.4). ● authorities with environmental responsibility and the public shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2). ● other EU Member States, where the implementation of the plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment of that country (Art. 7). 	<p>A</p> <p>B, D</p> <p>B, D</p>
Taking the environmental report and the results of the consultations into account in decision-making (Art. 8)	D

Figure 12 – The SEA Directive’s requirements (cont)	Where covered in Guide (stage/appendix)
<p>Provision of information on the decision: When the plan or programme is adopted, the public and any countries consulted under Art.7 shall be informed and the following made available to those so informed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the plan or programme as adopted; ● a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme and how the environmental report pursuant to Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of consultations entered into pursuant to Article 7 have been taken into account in accordance with Article 8, and the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and ● the measures decided concerning monitoring (Art. 9 and 10) 	D
<p>Monitoring of the significant environmental effects of the plan’s or programme’s implementation (Art. 10)</p>	B, E/Appendix 14
<p>Quality assurance: environmental reports should be of a sufficient standard to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive (Art. 12).</p>	Appendix 4 – QA checklist

Appendix 2 – Screening and possible exemptions from the SEA Directive

SA is required for all RSSs, DPDs and SPDs under the Act, and must incorporate the requirements of the SEA Directive. However, under Article 3(3) and 3(4) of the Directive, SEA is required for plans and programmes which “determine the use of small areas at a local level” or which are “minor modifications” to plans and programmes and which would otherwise be caught by the Directive, **only where they are determined to be likely to have a significant environmental effects**.

The European Commission guidance (paragraphs 3.33-3.35) suggests that plans or programmes **which determine the use of small areas at a local level** might include “a building plan, which for a particular limited area, outlines details of how buildings must be constructed, determining, for example, their height, width or design...The complete phrase (‘small areas at local level’) makes it clear that the whole of the local authority area could not be excluded (unless it were itself small). ... The key criterion for the application of the Directive, however, is not the size of area covered but whether the plan or programme would be likely to have significant environmental effects”.

Of ‘**minor modifications**’ the Commission guidance at paragraph 3.36 states that these “should be considered in the context of the plan or programme which is being modified and of the likelihood of their having significant environmental effects ... Article 3(3) clarifies the position by recognising that a modification may be of such a small order that it is unlikely to have significant environmental effects, but requiring that where the modification ... is likely to have significant environmental effects then an assessment should be carried out regardless of the scale of the modification”.

ODPM expects that in only exceptional cases will a RSS, DPD or SPD have no significant environmental effects, but the criteria in Article 3.3 may on occasion apply to SPDs in the form of design guides or issues based documents that supplement policies in the DPD.

It is for the RPB or LPA to decide whether to treat a plan as being in one of these categories. Where they do so, Article 3.4 (minor modifications) of the Directive requires the RPB or LPA to follow a screening procedure by consulting the four environmental consultation bodies and making a determination on whether or not there are likely to be significant environmental effects. Under Regulation 11 of the SEA Regulations, within 28 days of making a determination the RPB or LPA must make it available to the public together with a statement of the reasons for reaching it and must also notify the four environmental consultation bodies.

Where the RPB or LPA determines that there are likely to be significant environmental effects, the SA will proceed in the normal way to the scoping report stage. Where it determines that there are unlikely to be any such effects, the RPB or LPA is advised to also include the determination and statement of reasons as part of the SA Report during consultation period of the RSS revision, DPD or draft SPD.

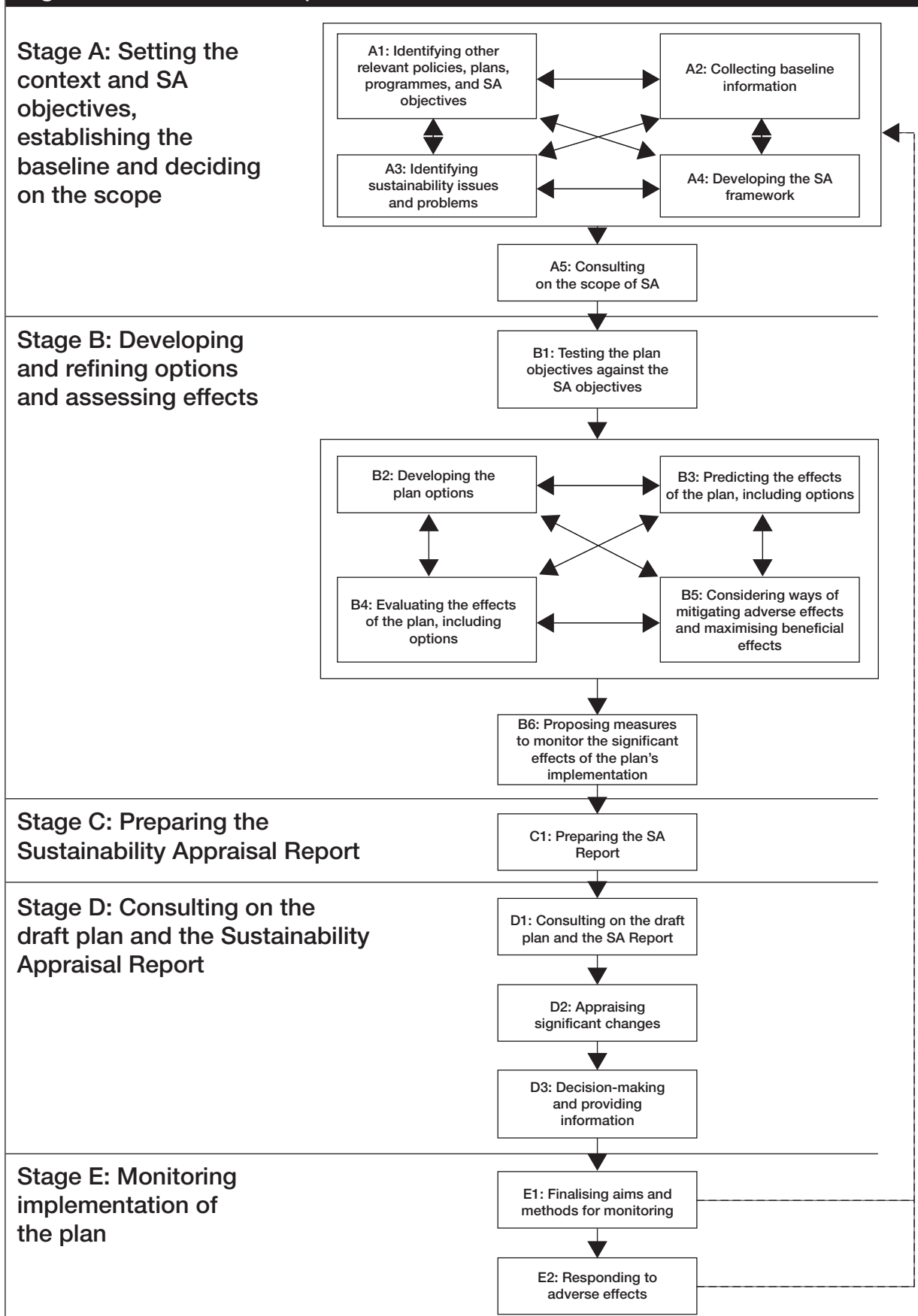
The Act requires an authority to produce a SA Report for all LDDs, including SPDs. Where the authority has made a determination that the plan is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects, it must consider whether there are likely to be any significant economic or social effects.

Where the RPB/LPA considers that the plan has no significant effects, it should make this clear and base the SA Report on relevant material in the SA Report of the relevant plan (RSS, DPD or SPD).

Where the SPD supplements a DPD or saved plan policy or policies which have not been subject to SA, the authority will need to carry out a SA of that policy. This will establish the baseline against which the effects of the SPD can be compared. However, it is not necessary for a SA of a SPD to document the significant effects of the saved plan as a whole or of alternatives to the saved policy or policies.

Appendix 3 – Relationship between Sustainability Appraisal tasks

Figure 13 – Relationship between the SA tasks



Appendix 4 – Quality Assurance checklist

Quality Assurance can be used to help ensure that the requirements of the SEA Directive are met, highlight any problems with the SA Report and show how effectively the appraisal has integrated sustainability considerations into the plan-making process.

The Quality Assurance checklist covers both the technical and procedural steps of the appraisal process and can be applied at any stage of the appraisal to check the quality of work carried out up to that point.

Figure 14 – Quality Assurance checklist
<p>Objectives and context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The plan's purpose and objectives are made clear. ● Sustainability issues, including international and EC objectives, are considered in developing objectives and targets. ● SA objectives are clearly set out and linked to indicators and targets where appropriate. ● Links with other related plans, programmes and policies are identified and explained. ● Conflicts that exist between SA objectives, between SA and plan objectives, and between SA and other plan objectives are identified and described.
<p>Scoping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The environmental consultation bodies are consulted in appropriate ways and at appropriate times on the content and scope of the SA Report. ● The appraisal focuses on significant issues. ● Technical, procedural and other difficulties encountered are discussed; assumptions and uncertainties are made explicit. ● Reasons are given for eliminating issues from further consideration.
<p>Options/Alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Realistic alternatives are considered for key issues, and the reasons for choosing them are documented. ● Alternatives include 'do nothing' and/or 'business as usual' scenarios wherever relevant. ● The sustainability effects (both adverse and beneficial) of each alternative are identified and compared. ● Inconsistencies between the alternatives and other relevant plans, programmes or policies are identified and explained. ● Reasons are given for selection or elimination of alternatives.
<p>Baseline information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and their likely evolution without the plan are described. ● Characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected are described, including areas wider than the physical boundary of the plan area where it is likely to be affected by the plan where practicable. ● Difficulties such as deficiencies in information or methods are explained.

Figure 14 – Quality Assurance checklist (*cont*)

Prediction and evaluation of likely significant effects

- Likely significant social, environmental and economic effects are identified, including those listed in the SEA Directive (biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climate factors, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape), as relevant.
- Both positive and negative effects are considered, and where practicable, the duration of effects (short, medium or long-term) is addressed.
- Likely secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects are identified where practicable.
- Inter-relationships between effects are considered where practicable.
- Where relevant, the prediction and evaluation of effects makes use of accepted standards, regulations, and thresholds.
- Methods used to evaluate the effects are described.

Mitigation measures

- Measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the plan are indicated.
- Issues to be taken into account in development consents are identified.

The Sustainability Appraisal Report

- Is clear and concise in its layout and presentation.
- Uses simple, clear language and avoids or explains technical terms.
- Uses maps and other illustrations where appropriate.
- Explains the methodology used.
- Explains who was consulted and what methods of consultation were used.
- Identifies sources of information, including expert judgement and matters of opinion.
- Contains a non-technical summary.

Consultation

- The SA is consulted on as an integral part of the plan-making process.
- The consultation bodies, other consultees and the public are consulted in ways which give them an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinions on the draft plan and SA Report.

Decision-making and information on the decision

- The SA Report and the opinions of those consulted are taken into account in finalising and adopting the plan.
- An explanation is given of how they have been taken into account.
- Reasons are given for choices in the adopted plan, in the light of other reasonable options considered.

Figure 14 – Quality Assurance checklist (*cont*)

Monitoring measures

- Measures proposed for monitoring are clear, practicable and linked to the indicators and objectives used in the SA.
- Monitoring is used, where appropriate, during implementation of the plan to make good deficiencies in baseline information in the SA.
- Monitoring enables unforeseen adverse effects to be identified at an early stage. (These effects may include predictions which prove to be incorrect.)
- Proposals are made for action in response to significant adverse effects.

Appendix 5 – Other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives

The SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to provide information on the plan's or programme's "relationship with other relevant plans and programmes" and "the environmental protection objectives, established at international, [European] Community or [national] level, which are relevant to the plan... and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation" (Directive Annex I a, e)

Identifying relationships with relevant policies, plans, programmes, and sustainability objectives will help:

- to identify any external social, environmental or economic objectives that should be taken into account in the SA of the plan;
- to identify other external factors, including sustainability issues that might influence the preparation of the plan; and
- to determine whether other policies, plans and programmes might give rise to cumulative effects when combined with the plan that is subject to the SA.

No list of relevant policies plans, programmes or objectives can be definitive, but a selection is given in Figure 15.

Figure 15 – Selected policies, plans, programmes and sources of sustainability objectives	
Policies, plans and programmes of possible relevance to the SA of RSS	Policies, plans and programmes of possible relevance to the SA of LDF (in addition to those relevant to RSS)
International Context	
The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development	
European Spatial Development Perspective	
European Directives, including the Habitats, Birds, Nitrates, Air Quality, Water Framework and Waste Framework Directives	
European programmes, such as Objective 1 and Objective 2, Interreg	
Aarhus Convention	
EU Sixth Environmental Action Plan	

Figure 15 – Selected policies, plans, programmes and sources of sustainability objectives (cont)	
Policies, plans and programmes of possible relevance to the SA of RSS	Policies, plans and programmes of possible relevance to the SA of LDF (in addition to those relevant to RSS)
National, Regional and Local Context	
The Regional Spatial Strategy	
UK Sustainable Development Strategy	
White Papers (e.g. Urban, Rural, Aviation)	
Planning Policy Guidance/Statements	Regional Spatial Strategies, Regional Transport Plan, Local Transport Plans
Minerals Planning Guidance	
Sustainable Communities Plan	Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies, Pathfinder Strategies
Regional Sustainable Development Framework (or Integrated Regional Strategy)	Community Strategies or Plans
Neighbouring RSSs	Neighbouring authority plans and National Park Plans
Social	
Social inclusion strategies	
Cultural strategies	
Education and skills strategies	
Health strategies, NHS Improvement Plans, Choosing Health Plans	
Housing strategies	
Crime and disorder reduction strategies	
Environment	
Environment strategies	
Climate change strategies (mitigation and adaptation) including Kyoto Agreement	
Energy efficiency and renewable energy strategies	
National and regional air quality strategies	Local Air Quality Action Plans
Regional Flood Risk Assessment	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Figure 15 – Selected policies, plans, programmes and sources of sustainability objectives (<i>cont</i>)	
Policies, plans and programmes of possible relevance to the SA of RSS	Policies, plans and programmes of possible relevance to the SA of LDF (in addition to those relevant to RSS)
Environment Agency River Basin Management Plans, Catchments Flood Management Plans, Water Resources Strategies, Flood and Coastal Defence Strategies, Shoreline Management Plans	
National and regional Biodiversity Action Plans, Species Action Plans, Habitat Action Plans, Coastal Habitat Management Plans	Local Biodiversity Action Plans, Species Action Plans, Habitat Action Plans
Tree and woodland strategies	
Waste strategies	
Economic	
Regional Economic Strategy	Local Economic Development Strategies
Business competitiveness strategies	
Innovation strategies	
Economic sector specific strategies	
Cluster strategies	
Tourism strategies	
Rural Development Plans and Rural Action Plans	Countryside Strategies
Minerals strategies	

Figure 16 provides an example of how the findings of this review can be summarised. Not all plans or programmes include specific targets. The second column of the table can be omitted where this applies.

Figure 16 – Example table for documenting the requirements of other plans and programmes		
Key objectives relevant to the RSS/LDD	Key targets and indicators relevant to plan and SA	Implications for the RSS or LDD
Draft PPS – Housing		
Plan to meet the housing requirements of the whole community, including those in need of affordable and special needs housing Provide greater choice and a better mix in the size, type and location of housing	National target – 60% of additional housing should be provided on previously-developed land or through conversions	Compare plan target for delivery of housing on previously developed land with national target
Regional Environment Strategy		
Accommodate population and economic growth whilst protecting the environment Reduce the need to travel and achieve a switch to more sustainable modes of transport	No targets, but strategy includes a range of baseline information and indicators related to key objectives	Consider how plan can contribute to Environment Strategy objectives
Regional Economic Strategy		
Enterprise – Accelerate business start-ups and improve the survival rates of young companies Growth and innovation – enable existing businesses to adapt, prosper and grow through innovation	Baseline – average annual increase in GVA per head 3.1% (1991-2001); target by 2012 – 3.2% average annual increase	Develop policies that support the Knowledge Economy

Appendix 6 – Collecting and presenting baseline information and trends

Deciding what information to collect

In theory, collection of baseline information could go on indefinitely and a practical approach is essential. Where there are gaps, it will be important to record any resulting uncertainties or risks in the appraisal. Provisions should also be made to fill any major gaps for future plans or reviews.

Figure 17 provides examples of the nature of questions to ask when deciding on the baseline information to collect.

Figure 17 – Questions to help decide what baseline information to collect	
Regional Spatial Strategies (including sub-regional strategies)	Local Development Frameworks (additional information to that required for RSSs)
Social questions	
What is the population of the region, and how has this changed over time?	What is the population of the plan area, and how has this changed over time?
What is the broad distribution of population between main urban centres, smaller towns, and rural areas?	What is the precise distribution of population between main urban centres, smaller towns, and rural areas?
Are there locations that are suffering from concentrations of social deprivation at the regional scale?	Which wards are experiencing the worst levels of social deprivation?
What is the employment/unemployment rate for the region as a whole, and in different parts of the region?	Are there concentrations of high unemployment, and does this affect particular sectors in communities (e.g. ethnic minorities)?
What is the pattern of average earnings across the region?	Which sectors of communities experience low earnings, and high dependence on benefits, and where is this most pronounced?
What is life expectancy across the region, and are there any parts of the region where life expectancy is particularly poor?	What are the main reasons for ill-health and mortality in those areas expecting high death rates or lower life expectancy?
What are the patterns of education (skills, qualifications) across the region, and which areas perform particularly poorly?	Which sectors of communities are most associated with poorer skills and qualification achievements, and where is this most pronounced?

Figure 17 – Questions to help decide what baseline information to collect (cont)

Regional Spatial Strategies (including sub-regional strategies)	Local Development Frameworks (additional information to that required for RSSs)
Which areas are suffering most from lack of housing in general, and lack of affordable housing in particular?	Which sectors of communities are least able to afford a home, and where is this most pronounced? Which locations have houses that are judged unfit to live in? Where is homelessness concentrated?
Which settlements are associated with above average rates of crime?	Which sectors of communities are most associated with higher crime rates, and where is this most pronounced?
Which settlements offer poor quality living surroundings?	Which neighbourhoods are particularly associated with poor quality and neglected surroundings?
What is the distribution of community services and facilities – which settlements or broad locations are poorly served?	Which neighbourhoods or communities do not have easy local access to services and facilities (e.g. shopping, community, education, health, sport, leisure, open space, etc.) without having to use car?
Environmental questions	
Which habitats are nationally/ internationally important, where are they, and what condition are they in?	Which features are locally important habitats for wildlife? Are there any locally designated wildlife sites?
What are the regional priorities for biodiversity included in Biodiversity Action Plans?	What are the local priorities for biodiversity included in Biodiversity Actions Plans?
Which parts of the region are rich in cultural heritage, and are they at risk of damage or neglect?	Where are features of cultural heritage importance (e.g. listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens, views and vistas, etc.), and what state are they in?
Which areas have been designated because of their landscape quality (National Parks, AONBs)?	Has the landscape and townscape character of the plan area been defined, and which are those locations that should be conserved, restored or enhanced?
What is the pattern in the efficiency of use of land (e.g. densities per hectare)?	What is the pattern of development density across the plan area – are there any locations where density could be increased?
Where are there concentrations of derelict, degraded or underused land and properties?	Where are the derelict, degraded or underused land and sites? Which sites are suffering from contamination?

Figure 17 – Questions to help decide what baseline information to collect (cont)	
Regional Spatial Strategies (including sub-regional strategies)	Local Development Frameworks (additional information to that required for RSSs)
Which areas are at risk all types of flooding?	Where and how many properties are at risk of flooding?
Which areas are suffering from poor air quality?	Are any areas subject to Air Quality Management Plans?
What is the quality of water in rivers and other water bodies – are there significant areas where improvements are required?	Which locations are contributing to poor water quality and why?
Are there parts of the region that are experiencing, or likely to experience, shortages in water supply taking into account effects on the environment (e.g. water-dependent habitats)?	Are there particular activities (e.g. industry, agriculture) that are high consumers of water in areas of shortage?
Which areas are at risk of subsidence, taking into account climate change?	Which locations have suffered significantly from subsidence in the past?
Where is the best and most versatile agricultural land?	Are there locations where agricultural land is degraded?
Are there any parts of the region that have been defined as tranquil areas, and how have these changed over time?	Are there any parts of the plan area that suffer from excessive noise levels?
How much waste does the region generate, and what is the record of recycling?	Which locations have been identified for recycling and waste disposal (e.g. landfill), and what constraints do they experience?
Where are the main unexploited mineral reserves in the region and what are the record in the use of recycled and secondary aggregates?	Are there any significant local environmental issues arising from mineral activities?
Economic questions	
What is the total output of the economy, and how has this changed over time relative to other regions?	How is the economy of the plan area performing in terms of total output (GVA)?
What is the performance and pattern of productivity (GVA per capita) in the region?	Are there any discernible differences and patterns in productivity across the plan area?
Which parts of the region are under-performing economically?	Which parts of the plan area are struggling most economically?

Figure 17 – Questions to help decide what baseline information to collect (cont)

Regional Spatial Strategies (including sub-regional strategies)	Local Development Frameworks (additional information to that required for RSSs)
Which parts of the region are in danger of over-heating economically?	Are there parts of the plan area where the economy is in danger of over-heating?
How have disparities between economic performance in different parts of the region changed over time?	Have different parts of the plan area been experiencing converging or diverging economic performance over time?
Are there parts of the region that have concentrations of specific industrial sectors (e.g. clusters)?	Which economic sectors are strong and which are weaker in the plan area?
Which economic sectors have been experiencing above average growth, which below average growth, and which decline, and how have these varied across the region?	What reasons do local businesses give for success or lack of success in different sectors and locations in the plan area?
What is the set-up and survival rate of businesses in the region, and which sectors/areas perform best or worst?	Which parts of the plan area experience poor business survival rates?
What is the rate and pattern of indigenous investment in the region?	What is the rate and pattern of indigenous investment in the plan area?
What is the rate and pattern of inward investment in the region?	What is the rate and pattern of inward investment in the plan area?
What is the pattern of industrial and office rental costs?	What is the local pattern of industrial and office rental costs?
What is the pattern and rate of R&D (research and development)?	What is the local pattern and rate of R&D (research and development)?
In what sectors and parts of the region are there skills shortages?	In what sectors and communities in the plan area are there skills shortages?
What are the strengths and weaknesses of infrastructure in the region, in terms of supporting the economy?	What are the strengths and weaknesses of infrastructure in the plan area, in terms of supporting the economy?

Types and Sources of Baseline Information

It is often useful to map information, to show how it varies across the plan area. Using time data series, it is also possible to show how changes have occurred over time. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are particularly useful in this respect. They enable layers of information to be built up, and it is possible to examine how closely one set of information relates to another. In this way, geographical patterns and linkages can begin to be established and explored. Where data cannot be mapped, the use of graphs, diagrams and other visual forms of representation can help to make the information easier to understand.

Baseline information may be both quantitative or qualitative, and it is often useful to include a combination of both. Quantitative data sets are usually built up from existing monitoring and research activities while qualitative information is likely to be based on judgement. For the purposes of SA qualitative information needs to be supported by reasoned evidence.

Planning authorities will probably already hold some of the social, environmental and economic information they need, but there may be gaps in the information that need to be filled in order to provide an appropriate baseline for the SA process. There are many different sources and forms of information, and it is important to explore all avenues before deciding that new information needs to be collected. Some sources of information include:

- information included in other legislation, strategies, plans or programmes, which set the context for plan preparation (see Appendix 5);
- service providers (e.g. Consultation Bodies, Primary Care Trusts etc.), who may be able to provide technical advice and information.
- other consultees, including representative bodies and members of the public, who often have a wealth of knowledge and understanding of the strategy or plan area, e.g. local conservation groups.

Not all information may be available immediately. The SA team should consider whether improvements are needed to current information collection to fill existing gaps. Ways of improving the availability of information can be included in proposals for monitoring the implementation of the plan.

Identifying Trends

Much information will record the state of the environment at a point or points in time, providing a historic record or a snapshot. Where possible, however, it is important to examine likely future trends under the 'do nothing'/'no plan' or 'business as usual' plan scenarios. It is important for there to be agreement about what these scenarios are. 'Do nothing' might mean no further development in an area, while 'business as usual' often means a continuation of the current plan. In particular, it will be useful to examine whether trends demonstrate that existing plans are achieving agreed targets or moving towards or away from targets. This trend analysis can help to highlight existing and potential future problems.

The Use Of Modelling

Modelling allows the use of baseline information to explore the implications of different approaches to planning for the future. Many aspects of sustainability can be modelled, however one key area where modelling has been used is in transport and travel planning and appraisal. Transport and travel modelling involves building up an understanding of the journeys made in an area, including why and how they are made. Using this basic information, it is possible to get an understanding of the contribution of transport to greenhouse gas emissions, air pollutants, and noise. This can be used to explore how a plan might be able to influence travel patterns.

Presenting Baseline Information

Figure 18 gives an example of how baseline information can be organised and presented.

Figure 18 – Possible way of organising and presenting baseline information					
SA Objectives	Indicator	Quantified information (for Responsible Authority unless otherwise noted)	Comparators and targets	Trend	Issues/ constraints
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH	% of people in authority's area describing their health as not good	5.8% in 2001	England and Wales 9.2% (2001)	6.4% in 1999: getting better	Favourable situation. Lower than national average and getting better
	% of population not getting minimum level of healthy exercise	10% of people exercise 30 minutes or more 5 or more days of the week	This is the lowest rate for any district in the region. (1999/2000)	No trend available, although Dept. of Health now has data	Unfavourable situation – low level of exercise, insufficient exercise to benefit health
	No. of people affected by ambient noise	Awaiting information	DEFRA noise map	No trend available	Unable to identify situation
	Public concern over noise	Noise is not perceived to be a problem (2003)	DEFRA noise map	No trend available	Favourable situation

Source – Levett-Therivel Sustainability Consultants (based on multiple sources including SEA pilot: Taunton urban extension, 2003). Figures are illustrative only

Appendix 7 – Sources of baseline information

Figure 19 lists a selection of sources of information for describing the baseline in a SA. The first section lists information sources that cover multiple topics, while the following sections list sources that focus on specific SA topics. Figure 19 does not claim to be comprehensive. In particular, regional and county level monitoring sites are very useful sources of additional information.

The websites are correct as of October 2005.

Figure 19 – Sources of baseline information	
Source of information	Examples of available datasets
General	
Audit Commission and IDEa: Library of Local Performance Indicators www.local-pi-library.gov.uk www.audit-commission.gov.uk www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk	Includes a list of quality of life indicators
Countryside Agency www.countryside.gov.uk www.ccnetwork.org.uk	Designated areas and the landscape, landscape character assessment, rural services
Countryside Information Service (DEFRA) www.cis-web.org.uk	Spatial information about the countryside, including landscape features, vegetation habitats and topography
Defra www.defra.gov.uk www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/pubatt/download/pdf/survey2001.pdf Regional Quality of Life Counts: www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/indicators/national/index.htm www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sustainable/quality99	Quality of air, water (including rivers), soil, waste, wildlife, public attitudes to the environment, economic output, investment, employment, poverty and social exclusion, education, health, housing, crime, land use, noise Quality of life counts Strategy: e.g. <i>Securing the Future: The UK Government's Sustainable Development Strategy</i>
Internal Drainage Boards www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/444669/587/7915048015131191?lang=_e www.defra.gov.uk/enviro/bid/policy/intip/2004/idbcomm04.htm	Drainage Issues

Figure 19 – Sources of baseline information (cont)	
Source of information	Examples of available datasets
Environment Agency www.environment-agency.gov.uk/yourenv	Biodiversity Action Plan Species data; Location of landfill sites; Soils data; water quality, groundwater vulnerability maps; Flood risk maps; Regional State of the Environment reports
EUROSTAT – Statistical Office of the European Communities www.europa.eu.int/com/eurostat	General and Regional Statistics; Information on Economy and Finance; Population and Social Conditions; Industry, Trade and Services; Agriculture and Fisheries; External Trade; Environment and Energy; Science and Technology Sustainable Development; Structural; Euro; and Long-Term Indicators
Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment www.iema.net/	Various environmental facts, figures and indicators
The Landscape Institute – library www.l-i.org.uk/lilib.htm	Books, reports, periodicals, slides/audio-visual material and pamphlets on landscape architecture and related subjects covering contemporary and historic material. Selection of British Standards, publications and legislation
Local Authority, County Council and other regional and local monitoring sites (including Annual Monitoring Reports and State of the Environment Reports)	Various environmental facts, figures, indicators and performance outcomes
Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) www.magic.gov.uk	Ward-level GIS information
National Society for Clean Air and Environmental Protection www.nzca.org.uk/pages/index.cfm	Links to policy and legislation, tools and techniques and case studies
National Trust www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/ www.nts.org.uk/web/site/home/home.asp?	Places of historic interest or natural beauty
ODPM – Local Government Performance www.bvpi.gov.uk	Local authority actions and activities, mostly response indicators

Figure 19 – Sources of baseline information (cont)	
Source of information	Examples of available datasets
ODPM – Planning Statistics www.planning.odpm.gov.uk/lucs www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm_index.hcst?n=2586&l=1	Generalised land use change, database statistics, previously-developed land, including brownfield
Office for National Statistics (ONS) www.statistics.gov.uk/ see also www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk www.wales.gov.uk/keypubstatisticsforwales/topicindex/topicindex-e.htm	Population trends, social and economic data, public attitudes etc.
Regional Observatories and Information Partnerships, Intelligence Units www.regionalobservatories.org.uk East Midlands: www.eastmidlandsobservatory.org.uk East of England: www.eastofenglandobservatory.org.uk London: www.london.gov.uk North East: www.n-e-region.com/ www.regionalobservatories.org.uk/north_east.html North West: www.nwriu.co.uk South East: www.see-in.co.uk South West: www.swro.info/www.swenvo.org.uk West Midlands: www.wmro.org.uk Yorkshire and the Humber: www.yorkshirefutures.com	Regional Observatories enable access to key regional data and intelligence. Working on a range of economic, social, and environmental issues, they do this by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing analysis of data and research • Helping to disseminate and widen access to intelligence • Conducting research to fill data gaps.
Royal Institute of British Architects – library www.architecture.com/go/Architecture/Reference/Library_898.html	Research and information on all aspects of architecture
Royal Town Planning Institute – library www.rtpi.org.uk/library/	Publications on planning-related topics, including a wide-ranging collection of current UK local plans, and current periodicals
Environmental	
Action Energy/Carbon Trust www.thecarbontrust.co.uk	Information on energy saving and carbon management
Air Pollution Information System www.apis.ac.uk	Concentrations of carbon dioxide sulphur dioxide etc. and their impacts

Figure 19 – Sources of baseline information (cont)	
Source of information	Examples of available datasets
Air Quality Archive www.airquality.co.uk/archive/data_and_statistics_home.php www.airquality.co.uk/archive/laqm/laqm.php	Concentrations of carbon dioxide sulphur dioxide etc. Local Air Quality Management Plans
Association of Local Government Ecologists www.alge.org.uk	Biodiversity reports and publications
Biodiversity Action Plans www.ukbap.org.uk	Local Biodiversity Action Plans, Species Action Plans, Habitat Action Plans
Botanical Society of the British Isles www.bsbi.org.uk	British Society for Botanical Information – Flora
British Geological Survey www.bgs.ac.uk	Minerals, unstable land, contaminated land, groundwater, flooding, map based information etc.
British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) www.bto.org	Birds
Butterfly Conservation Society www.butterfly-conservation.org	Butterflies
CABE www.cabespace.org.uk	Urban design, culture, landscape
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology www.ceh.ac.uk	Terrestrial and freshwater environment research
Commission for Integrated Transport www.cfit.gov.uk/reports	Transport integration, studies, road safety, expenditure
Countryside Agency www.countryside.gov.uk	State of the Countryside Reports and information, Countryside Indicator Research, Landscape character, rural services survey etc.
Defra www.defra.gov.uk www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics	Inland water quality and use, land use and land cover, agricultural land classification, etc.
Department for Transport www.transtat.dft.gov.uk	Traffic levels, modal split, environmental impact
Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) www.offshore-sea.org.uk	Off-shore oil and gas, renewable energy, marine issues

Figure 19 – Sources of baseline information (cont)	
Source of information	Examples of available datasets
English Heritage www.english-heritage.org.uk	Heritage Counts – State of the Historic Environment Report Record of all National Monuments – listed buildings, scheduled monuments, parks and gardens, and battlefields register
English Nature www.english-nature.org.uk	Designations, Local Authority managed SSSIs etc.
Environment Agency www.environment-agency.gov.uk/ www.environment-agency.gov.uk/yourenv	Environmental facts and figures, Environment Agency indicators (air, climate, land, people and lifestyles, pollution, resources and waste, water, wildlife), water quality, floodmaps, floodplains, waste management etc.
Joint Nature Conservation Committee www.jncc.gov.uk	Habitat, species and marine conservation
Local Authority Historic Environment Record Centres	Designated and non-designated sites
Local Wildlife Trusts and Local Biological Record Centres	Information on biodiversity, flora and fauna for local areas, including non-designated sites of wildlife interest
Macaulay Land Use Research Institute (MLURI) www.mluri.sari.ac.uk/	Soil, plants, water
Met Office www.metoffice.co.uk	Weather patterns etc.
National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory www.naei.org.uk/	Concentrations of carbon dioxide sulphur dioxide etc.
National Biodiversity Network www.nbn.org.uk www.searchnbn.net www.ukbap.org.uk	Habitats and species. Provides access to the network of Local Record Centres as well as other significant biodiversity datasets
NETCEN www.netcen.co.uk/	Air quality, contaminated land, etc.
ODPM www.planning.odpm.gov.uk/lucs	Land use change, flood risk etc.
ODPM www.housing.odpm.gov.uk/factsheet/dwelling	Housing statistics, research and factsheets

Figure 19 – Sources of baseline information (cont)	
Source of information	Examples of available datasets
ODPM www.press.dtlr.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2000_0260	Green Belt
Plantlife www.plantlife.org.uk	Wild plants
Renewable Energy Statistics Database www.restats.org.uk/www.etsu.com/RESTATS	Renewable energy sites, capacity and generation etc.
RSPB www.rspb.org.uk www.rspb.org.uk/science/birdweb England: www.rspb.org.uk/england/index.asp	Bird monitoring and survey work
Soil Resources Institute www.silsoe.cranfield.ac.uk/nsri	Sustainable management of soil and land resources
The Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM) www.ofgem.gov.uk/ofgem	Combined Heat and Power (CHP) energy providers and statistics
UK Climate Impacts Programme www.ukcip.org.uk	CO ₂ emissions, climate change effects
Various transport related agencies and organisations	Information collected for Local Transport Plans, Regional Transport Strategies and the TAN8 decision tool
Woodland Trust www.woodland-trust.org.uk/	Native woodland heritage
Social	
Association of Public Health Observatories (APHO) – coordinating body for PHOs (one in each of the 9 government regions in England). PHO websites can be accessed via that of APHO: www.apho.org.uk	Various public health and related statistics, including census data, morbidity and mortality, reports on wide range of topics including health inequalities
British Geological Survey www.bgs.ac.uk	Information on potentially harmful elements in soils and water
Defra www.defra.gov.uk/environment/noise	Noise policy, research and mitigation

Figure 19 – Sources of baseline information (cont)	
Source of information	Examples of available datasets
Department for Transport www.dft.gov.uk/ www.transtat.dft.gov.uk	Traffic levels, accidents, modal split, etc.
Department of Health www.dh.gov.uk www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/fs/en www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/HealthInequalities/fs/en www.dh.gov.uk/publicationsAndStatistics/Legislation/HealthAssessment/fs/en Choosing Health-Making healthy choices easier www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4094550&chk=aN5Cor The Health Survey for England www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/PublishedSurvey/HealthSurveyForEngland/fs/en	Statistics and surveys of health levels and health care provision Health and Social care topics Health inequalities Health Assessment issues Plans for improving health and reducing health inequalities Comprises a series of annual surveys beginning in 1991
Empty Homes Agency www.emptyhomes.com	Vacant properties
Food Standards Agency www.food.gov.uk	Food surveys, information sheets, reports
Health and Safety Executive www.hse.gov.uk	Health in employment related statistics
HealthPromis http://healthpromis.hda-online.org.uk	Evidence-based public health, health promotion and health inequalities
Health Protection Agency www.hpa.org.uk	Information on infectious diseases, chemicals and poisons, radiation and emergency response
HM Treasury http://greenbook.treasury.gov.uk/	General guidance on distributional analysis, valuing non-market impacts etc.

Figure 19 – Sources of baseline information (cont)	
Source of information	Examples of available datasets
Home Office – Crime reduction www.crimereduction.gov.uk	Recorded crime statistics
Home Office – Research and Statistics www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.htm	Crime, fear of crime statistics, patterns of criminality, etc.
Hospital Episode Statistics www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Statistics/HospitalEpisodeStatistics/fs/en	Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) is the national statistical data warehouse for England of the care provided by NHS hospitals and for NHS hospital patients treated elsewhere
General Household Survey www.statistics.gov.uk/ssd/surveys/general_household_survey.asp	A multi-purpose continuous survey carried out by the Social Survey Division of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) which collects information on a range of topics from people living in private households in Great Britain. The survey started in 1971
National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) www.publichealth.nice.org.uk www.publichealth.nice.org.uk/HIAGateway/	Provides national guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health. Health Impact Assessment – techniques, impacts of determinants of health on human beings etc.
NHS London Healthy Urban Development Unit www.healthyurbandevlopment.nhs.uk	Documents on health in planning, planning models and consultations
ODPM www.housing.odpm.gov.uk/statistics/publicat	Housing completions, tenant satisfaction, etc.
ODPM – Social Exclusion Unit www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk	Information on the levels of social exclusion
Office for National Statistics www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nscl.asp?ID=7433	Health statistics including mortality is published quarterly
Public Health Electronic Library www.phel.gov.uk/	Various public health and related statistics
Public Health Statistics www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Statistics/StatisticalWorkAreas/StatisticalPublicHealth/fs/en	Data on indicators of the nation's health, such as morbidity rates, smoking drinking and drug use, and abortion statistics
Regional Public Health Indicators www.pho.org.uk/pages/indicators.htm	Second report on Regional Indicators in the English Regions, published by the Association of Public Health Observatories

Figure 19 – Sources of baseline information (cont)	
Source of information	Examples of available datasets
Regional Public Health websites, available as links through Government Offices in the Regions and following the 'Public Health' link: www.gos.gov.uk/	Regional public health information covering a wide range of topics such as mental health, hospital activity, child health, population, physical activity, obesity, smoking
Road Casualty Statistics www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=3874&More=Y	Road Casualties in Great Britain Department for Transport
Economic	
Defra www.defra.gov.uk	Agriculture and farming production
Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) www.dti.gov.uk/regions/regionalstats.htm	Business Competitiveness Indicators, Public Service Agreement Performance Indicators, as well as information on productivity, R&D expenditure, labour markets, business survival rates, etc.
Department for Transport www.transtat.dft.gov.uk	Road traffic statistics and casualties, transport trends
Department for Work and Pensions www.dwp.gov.uk	Population of working ages, over state pension age, income support, etc.
HM Treasury www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/	Economic information and tools

Appendix 8 – Recording sustainability issues and problems

Figure 20 provides an example of how to record key sustainability issues (including environmental problems as required by the SEA Directive) highlighted through the baseline information collection process.

Figure 20 – Example of documenting key sustainability issues and problems (local level)	
Key issues and problems	Source
<p>Social</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The town has a higher than average elderly population, with concerns raised about the out-migration of young skilled people, and the future needs of the elderly population. 2. The plan area contains some of the most deprived areas in the UK, including wards which falls within the top 10% worst deprived in the country. 	<p>Regional Housing Strategy and Regional Economic Strategy (review of other plans and programmes)</p> <p>Index of Local Deprivation (review of baseline information)</p>
<p>Environment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The town is constrained by environmentally designated and important land. The green wedges are an important feature of the town that should be maintained: they restrict development. 4. The southern fringe of the town is located in the floodplain. 	<p>English Nature (SSSI citations), plus Landscape Character Assessment (review of baseline information)</p> <p>Environment Agency (floodplain maps, from review of baseline information), Strategic Flood Risk Assessments</p>
<p>Economic</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. There is high traffic congestion at peak hours at the junction of the motorway. 6. There are skills shortages in high-tech and health sectors. 	<p>Highways Agency (pers comm.), and Regional Transport Strategy (review of other plans, programmes)</p> <p>Regional Economic Strategy (review of other plans, programmes)</p>

Appendix 9 – Devising a sustainability appraisal framework

A SA framework consists of sustainability objectives which, where practicable, may be expressed in the form of targets, the achievement of which is measurable using indicators. Sustainability objectives provide a way of checking whether the DPD objectives are the best possible ones for sustainability and can be seen as a methodological yardstick against which the social, environment and economic effects of a plan can be tested.

SA objectives will need to address the full cross-section of sustainability issues, including social, environmental and economic factors laid down by law or policy or in other plans and programmes and others devised specifically in relation to the context of the plan being prepared (see Appendix 5). Other plans and programmes of particular relevance in developing SA objectives will be the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, the Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks, and at the local level Community Strategies or Plans. Baseline information collected and sustainability issues (including environmental problems as required by the SEA Directive) identified at earlier stages in the SA can also be especially useful in identifying objectives and indicators.

Planning authorities may also choose to include more detailed decision making criteria and related indicators in their SA framework. Detailed decision making criteria can help to ensure that all the key issues to be considered in the SA are incorporated in the SA framework. Care must be taken to ensure that the requirements of the SEA Directive (e.g. the identification of environmental protection objectives, such as those relating to EC legislation) are met. Planning authorities are however encouraged to ensure that the number of objectives is manageable.

SA objectives and indicators can be used in monitoring the implementation of the plan. However, state of the environment indicators are not always applicable. Instead the indicators should help the decision-making process and may not necessarily be the same during the assessment as in monitoring.

It may be useful to develop SA objectives, indicators and targets in consultation with the environmental consultation bodies and relevant stakeholders, and review them in the light of baseline information and any problems identified.

Objectives

An objective is a statement of what is intended, specifying a desired direction of change. For this guidance, a distinction needs to be made between three types of objectives:

- Plan Objectives: the objectives adopted for the plan, usually through the process of expert consideration, public consultation and political approval. Government policies and guidance increasingly require these to be based on sustainability considerations, and the development of SA objectives may promote ideas for making them more sustainable.
- External objectives: are other objectives to which RPBs or LPAs need to have regard independantly from the SA process. They may include social, environmental or economic objectives which, if binding, must be covered in the SA Report).

- SA objectives: devised to test the environmental effects of the plan or to compare the effects of alternatives. They provide a methodological yardstick against which the social, environmental and economic effects of the plan can be tested. These objectives are distinct from the plan and external objectives, though they will often overlap with them. They may be ‘inherited’ from the sustainability objectives reviewed in Stage A, but may also include additional (often more locally focused) objectives.

Objectives can be expressed so that they are measurable (e.g. an objective to ‘reduce greenhouse gas emissions’, could be expressed as “reduce CO₂ emissions by 12.5% by 2010”). The achievement of objectives is normally measured by using indicators.

SA objectives can often be derived from sustainability objectives identified in other plans and programmes or from a review of baseline information and sustainability problems.

Figure 21 provides examples of policy and SA objectives. A planning authority can adapt these to take account of local circumstances and concerns, for example by adding or deleting local objectives. A plan concerned with minerals, for example, could include more objectives for soil and water quality, maintenance of the hydrological regime, and mineral reserves, and could express them in more detailed terms.

Figure 21 – Examples of LDD and SA objectives*	
LDD Objectives	SA Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To locate development where it will provide the opportunity for people to satisfy their day-to-day needs for employment, shopping, education and other services locally or in locations which minimise the need to travel and where there are modes of transport available in addition to the motor car. • To ensure that the area’s built and natural heritage is protected and that new development identifies and protects cherished townscape assets of local urban design and conservation importance. • To create new and distinctive sustainable communities with high quality public transport and other non-car modes of transport. • To locate development where it will ensure the maximum use of previously developed land and minimise the loss of countryside and the best and most versatile agricultural land. 	<p><i>Land and water resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise the irreversible loss of undeveloped land and productive agricultural holdings. <p><i>Biodiversity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid damage to designated sites and protected species. <p><i>Landscape, townscape and archaeology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid damage to areas and sites designated for their historic interest, and protect their settings. <p><i>Climate change and pollution</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce emissions of greenhouse gasses and other pollutants (including air, water, soil, noise, vibration and light). <p><i>Healthy communities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and enhance human health. <p><i>Inclusive communities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality, range and accessibility of services and facilities (e.g. health, transport, education, training, leisure opportunities). <p><i>Economic activity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to their skills, potential and place of residence.

* Adapted from South Cambridgeshire District Council Scoping Report (2004), using approach developed by Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire Councils.

Figure 22 suggests a wide range of potential SA objectives and indicators. These should be adapted to take account of local circumstances and concerns. For instance, adding or deleting local environmental objectives.

Figure 22 – Example sustainability objectives and indicators for use in a typical SA framework

Figures in brackets demonstrate where national sources of indicators may be found. This list is a guide and other sources of information may be used. See Figure 19 on baseline data sources for more information.

- (1) Local Quality of Life Counts (DETR, July 2000)
- (2) Quality of Life Counts (DETR, December 1999)
- (3) Healthy Life Expectancy (DEFRA, February, 2005)
- (4) Audit Commission Voluntary Quality of Life Indicators (Definitions Handbook, Audit Commission, 2002-2003)
- (5) DTI Business Competitiveness Indicators (unitary authority/local authority district/Learning and Skills Council areas)
- (6) Index of Multiple Deprivation (ODPM, 2004)

Headline Objective	Headline Indicator	Detailed decision making criteria	Detailed Indicator
To reduce poverty and social exclusion and health inequalities	Indicators of success in tackling poverty and social exclusion (children in low income households, adults without qualifications and in workless households, elderly in fuel poverty) (2)	Will it reduce poverty and social exclusion and health inequalities in those areas most affected?	Index of multiple deprivation 2004 (6)
			Male and female life expectancy
			Proportion of the population who live in wards that rank within the most deprived 10% and 25% of wards in the country (4)
			Percentage of population of working age who are claiming key benefits (4)
			Proportion of children under 16 living in low income households (4)
			Income deprivation – number of people within families that are dependent on means-tested Income Support benefits (5)
		Benefit recipients (1)	
		Proportion of young people (18-24 year olds) in full-time education or employment (4)	
Will it improve affordability to essential services to the home?			Fuel poverty (2)
			Water affordability (2)

Headline Objective	Headline Indicator	Detailed decision making criteria	Detailed Indicator
To improve health of the population overall	Life expectancy (2)	Will it reduce death rates?	Mortality by cause (1)
			Death rates from cancer, circulatory disease, respiratory illnesses, accidents and suicides (2)
			Work fatalities, injury and sickness rates; working days lost through illness (2)
			Death rate by cause (direct standardised mortality rate per 100,000 population) (4)
			Infant mortality (4)
			Respiratory illness (2)
			NHS hospital waiting lists (2)
		Will it improve access to high quality, health facilities?	Access to a GP or primary care professional (6)
			NHS waiting list (2)
		Will it encourage healthy lifestyles?	Participation in sport and cultural activities (2)
			Proportion of journeys on foot or by cycle
			Access to local green space (2)
			Achievement of 'Accessible Natural Green Space Standards'
			How do school children travel to school? (1) (2)
		Will it reduce health inequalities?	Access to the countryside (2)
Health inequalities (2)			
To improve the education and skills of the population overall	Qualifications of young people (1)	Will it improve qualifications and skills of young people?	Qualifications at age 19 (2)
			16 year olds with no qualifications (2)
			Young people with Level 2 qualifications (a) the proportion of 19 year olds with Level 2 qualifications (5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C or NVQ equivalent) (b) BV38 percentage of 15 year old pupils in schools maintained by the local authority achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C or equivalent (4)
			Adult education (1)
			Learning participation (2)
			Qualifications/skills – percentage of working age population (16 to 64/59) with qualifications to either NVQ Level 1 02/equivalent, NVQ Level 3 or 4 or a trade apprenticeship or with no formal qualifications (5)

Headline Objective	Headline Indicator	Detailed decision making criteria	Detailed Indicator		
To provide everybody with the opportunity to live in a decent home		Will it reduce homelessness?	Homelessness (1)		
			Temporary accommodation/rough sleepers (2)		
		Will it increase the range and affordability of housing for all social groups?	Affordable housing (house price/earnings affordability ratio) (4)		
			Availability of good quality housing for all social groups including low income households, lone parent households, ethnic minorities, disabled and young people		
			Housing completion figures		
			Affordable housing completion figures		
		Will it reduce the number on unfit homes?	Number of unfit homes per 1,000 dwellings (4)		
			Homes judged unfit to live in (1) (2) Homes improved for energy efficiency and affordable warmth		
		To reduce anti-social activity	Recorded crime per 1,000 population (1)	Will it reduce actual levels of crime?	Level of crime (2)
					Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households (4)
Violent offences committed per 1,000 population (4)					
Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population (4)					
Will it reduce the fear of crime?	Fear of crime (1) (2) (a) Percentage of residents surveyed who feel 'fairly safe' or 'very safe' after dark whilst outside in their local authority area (b) Percentage of residents surveyed who feel 'fairly safe' or 'very safe' during the day whilst outside in their local authority area (4)				
Will it reduce actual noise levels?	Noise levels (2)				
Will it reduce noise concerns?	Public concern over noise (1) Anti-Social Behaviour Orders				
	Percentage of residents surveyed who are concerned with different types of noise in their area (4)				

Headline Objective	Headline Indicator	Detailed decision making criteria	Detailed Indicator
To encourage a sense of community identity and welfare	Community spirit (2)	Will it encourage engagement in community activities?	Social participation, patient and public involvement (1)
			Community well being (1)
			Tenant/satisfaction/participation (1)
			Voluntary activity (2)
			Percentage of voluntary/community organisations in a specified locality per 1,000 that performed well or very well in the past year (4)
			Extent of informal volunteering (4)
To offer everybody the opportunity for rewarding and satisfying employment	Employment (5)	Will it increase the ability of people to influence decisions?	Percentage of adults surveyed who feel they can influence decisions affecting their own local area (4)
		Will it improve ethnic relations?	Percentage of people who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds and communities can live together harmoniously (4)
		Will it reduce unemployment overall?	Unemployment (5) Claimant count (5) Proportion of people of working age who are in work (2) (4) Proportion of people of working age in workless households (2)
To offer everybody the opportunity for rewarding and satisfying employment	Employment (5)	Will it reduce long-term unemployment?	Proportion of people of working age out of work for more than two years (2) Proportion of unemployed people claiming benefits who have been out of work for more than a year (4)
		Will it provide job opportunities for those most in need of employment?	Proportion of lone parents, long-term ill and disabled people who are economically active (2) Ethnic minority employment and unemployment (2)
To offer everybody the opportunity for rewarding and satisfying employment	Employment (5)	Will it help to reduce long hours worked?	People in employment working long hours (2)
		Will it help to improve earnings?	Low pay (2) Average earnings – average hourly earnings (including overtime and premium pay) for full-time employees only (5)

Headline Objective	Headline Indicator	Detailed decision making criteria	Detailed Indicator
To improve the quality of where people live	Quality of surroundings (2)	Will it improve the satisfaction of people with their neighbourhoods as places to live?	Percentage of residents who are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (4)
			Percentage of residents surveyed who consider their neighbourhood is getting worse (4)
To improve accessibility to essential services and facilities	Access to key services (1)	Will it improve accessibility to key local services?	(a) Percentage of residents surveyed finding it easy to access key local services (b) Percentage of residents defined as within a distance of 500m (15 minutes walk) of key local services (3)
			Access to a post office (6)
			Access to food shops (6)
			Access to a GP or primary care professional and other primary care facilities (6)
			Access to a primary school (6)
		Will it improve accessibility to shopping facilities?	New retail floor space in town centres and out of town (2)
		Will it improve the level of investment in key community services?	Social investment as per cent of GDP (2)
			Number of childcare places available per 1,000 population of children under 5 not in early education (4)
To improve accessibility for those most in need	People finding access difficult (2)	Will it make access more affordable?	Real changes in the cost of transport (1)
			Distance travelled relative to income (2)
		Will it make access easier for those without access to a car?	Access to services in rural areas (2)
			Access for disabled people (2)
Environmental objectives			
To reduce the effect of traffic on the environment	Average journey length by purpose (2)	Will it reduce traffic volumes?	Road traffic (2)
			Annual average flow per 1,000km of principal roads (4)
		Will it reduce road traffic accidents?	Density of development
		Will it reduce the need for overseas travel	Overseas travel (2)
		Will it reduce the effect of heavy goods traffic on people and the environment?	Heavy goods vehicle mileage intensity (2)

Headline Objective	Headline Indicator	Detailed decision making criteria	Detailed Indicator
		Will it increase the proportion of journeys using modes other than the car?	Passenger travel by modes, cycling and walking (2)
			Percentage of residents surveyed using different modes of transport, their reason for, and distance of, travel (4)
			Percentage of children travelling to (a) primary school and (b) secondary school by different modes of transport (4)
			Leisure trips by mode of transport (2)
To improve water quality	Rivers of good or fair quality (1) (2)	Will it improve the quality of inland water?	Percentage of main rivers and canals as good or fair quality
			Dangerous substances in water (2)
			Nutrients in water (2)
		Will it improve the quality of coastal waters?	Estuarine water quality, marine inputs (2)
			Compliance with Bathing Water Directive (2)
To improve air quality	Days when pollution is moderate or higher (2)	Will it improve air quality?	Number of days of air pollution (1)
			(a) Number of days per year when air pollution is moderate or higher for PM10 (b) Annual average nitrogen dioxide concentration (c) for rural sites, number of days per year when air pollution is moderate or higher for ozone (4)
			Concentrations of selected air pollutants (2)
			Sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxides emissions (2)
			Acidification in the UK (2)
			Population living in Air Quality Management Areas
			Achievement of Emission Limit Values
To maintain and enhance biodiversity, flora and fauna	Populations of wild birds (2)	Will it conserve and enhance natural/semi-natural habitats?	Net change in natural/semi-natural habitats (1)
		Will it conserve and enhance species diversity, and in particular avoid harm to protected species?	Changes in populations of selected characteristic species (1)
			Trends in plant biodiversity (2)
			Biodiversity in coastal/marine areas (2)
			Native species at risk (2) especially protected species
Achievement of Biodiversity Action Plan targets			

Headline Objective	Headline Indicator	Detailed decision making criteria	Detailed Indicator
		Will it maintain and enhance sites designated for their nature conservation interest?	Extent and management of SSSIs (2) The area of land designated as an SSSI which is in 'unfavourable condition' (4) Sites affected by abstraction (2)
		Will it maintain and enhance woodland cover and management?	Area of woodland in the UK (2) Area of ancient semi-natural woodland in GB (2) Sustainable management of woodland (2)
To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes	To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes	Will it reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land?	New homes built on previously developed land (1) (2)
			Vacant land and properties and derelict land (2)
			(a) Proportion of land stock that is derelict (b) percentage of new housing development on previously developed land (4)
			Land covered by restoration and aftercare conditions (2)
		Will it improve the landscape and ecological quality and character of the countryside?	Area under agreement under the Environmentally Sensitive Area and Countryside Stewardship agri-environment schemes (2)
			Area converted to organic production (2)
			Concentrations of persistent organic pollutants (2)
			Pesticide residues in food (2)
			Landscape features – hedges, stone walls and ponds (2)
			Chemical releases to the environment (2)
Will it decrease litter in towns and the countryside?	Percentage of highways that are either of a high or acceptable level of cleanliness (4)		
To conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment	Buildings of grade I and II* at risk of decay (2)	Will it protect and enhance sites, features and areas of historical, archaeological and cultural value in both urban and rural areas?	Loss or damage to listed buildings and their settings
			Loss or damage to scheduled ancient monuments and their settings
			Loss or damage to historic parks and gardens and their settings
			Loss or damage to historic landscapes and their settings
			Percentage of conservation area demolished or otherwise lost
			Loss or damage to historic view lines and vistas

Headline Objective	Headline Indicator	Detailed decision making criteria	Detailed Indicator
To reduce contributions to climate change	Emissions of greenhouse gases (2)	Will it reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by reducing energy consumption?	CO ₂ emissions by end user (2)
			CO ₂ emissions by sector and per capita emissions (tonnes per year) (4)
			Energy use (gas and electricity) (1)
			Energy use per household (2) (4)
			Energy efficiency of the economy (2)
			Thermal efficiency of housing stock (2)
			Energy efficiency of road passenger travel/average fuel consumption of new cars (2)
		Will it lead to an increased proportion of energy needs being met from renewable sources?	Proportion of energy supplied from renewable sources
			Depletion of fossil fuels (2)
		Will it reduce emissions of ozone depleting substances?	Ozone depletion (2)
To avoid, reduce and manage flood risk	Properties at risk of flooding	Will it minimise the risk of flooding from rivers and watercourses to people and property?	Numbers of people and properties affected by flood events
			Frequency of flood events
			Development in the floodplain
			Development in areas at risk of flooding
		Will it minimise the risk of flooding to people and properties on the coast?	Numbers of people and properties affected by coastal flood events
			Frequency of coastal flood events
			Proportion of coastline subject to managed realignment where required
		Will it reduce the risk of subsidence?	Number of properties affected by subsidence
		Will it reduce the risk of damage to property from storm events?	Damage to property from storm events
		To provide for sustainable sources of water supply	Domestic water use (1) and peak demand (2) and availability (2)
Abstractions by purpose (2)			
Water leakage rate from mains and customer pipes (4)			

Headline Objective	Headline Indicator	Detailed decision making criteria	Detailed Indicator
To minimise the production of waste	Household waste and recycling (2)	Will it lead to reduced consumption of materials and resources?	UK materials consumption per head (2)
			Waste arising and management (2)
		Will it reduce household waste?	Household waste arisings (1)
			Will it increase waste recovery and recycling?
		Materials recycling (2)	
		Percentage of the tonnage of household waste arisings which have been (a) recycled (b) composted (c) used to recover heat, power and other energy sources (d) landfilled (4)	
		Will it reduce hazardous waste?	Radioactive waste stocks (2)
			Discharges from the nuclear industry (2)
			Hazardous waste (2)
		Will it reduce waste in the construction industry?	Primary aggregates per unit of construction value (2)
Construction and demolition waste going to landfill (2)			
Amount of secondary/recycled aggregates used compared with virgin aggregates (2)			
To conserve soil resources and quality	[No indicator]	Will it minimise the loss of soils to development?	Net loss of soils to development (2)
			Loss of best and most versatile agricultural land to development
		Will it maintain and enhance soil quality?	Concentrations of organic matter in agricultural topsoils (2)
			Area of contaminated land
Economic objectives			
To encourage sustained economic growth	Total output of the economy (GDP/GVA and GDP/GVA per head) (2) (5)	Will it improve business development and enhance competitiveness?	Percentage change in the total number of VAT registered businesses in the area (4)
			Labour productivity (2)
			Contribution to UK imports, exports, trade balance (2)
			Indicators of competitiveness

Headline Objective	Headline Indicator	Detailed decision making criteria	Detailed Indicator
		Will it improve the resilience of business and the economy?	Survival rates for VAT-registered businesses (5) Diversity of economic sectors represented in the area Relative employment/output growth in different economic sectors in the area
		Will it promote growth in key sectors?	Labour productivity in manufacturing and other services (5) Research and development and employment in high and medium-high technology industries (5)
		Will it promote growth in key clusters?	Growth rates and linkages in cluster sectors Growth in number VAT employed in local businesses
To reduce disparities in economic performance	Regional/local variations in GDP and employment/unemployment (2)	Will it improve economic performance in advantaged and disadvantaged areas?	Regional/local variations in GDP/GVA per head
			Comparative industrial and office rental costs
			Reduction in health inequalities
		Will it encourage rural diversification?	VAT registrations in rural areas Number of planning consents for business premises in rural areas
To encourage and accommodate both indigenous and inward investment	Total investment as a percentage of GDP	Will it encourage indigenous business?	Business start ups and closures (1) (2)
			Enquiries to business advice services (Business Links)
			Growth of local businesses by turnover and employee numbers
		Will it encourage inward investment?	Manufacturing investment and output by UK companies
			Manufacturing investment and output by foreign-owned companies
		Will it make land and property available for business development?	Proposed development of key economic sites
			Employment land availability
			Number of business applications granted planning consent

Headline Objective	Headline Indicator	Detailed decision making criteria	Detailed Indicator
To encourage efficient patterns of movement in support of economic growth	Freight transport by mode (2)	Will it reduce commuting?	Travel to work (1) Location of jobs in proximity to residents
		Will it improve accessibility to work by public transport, walking and cycling?	Proposed development/improvements of key infrastructure/services
			Travel to work by alternative modes (cycling, walking, work transport schemes, car share)
		Will it reduce the effect of traffic congestion on the economy?	Traffic congestion (2)
		Will it reduce journey times between key employment areas and key transport interchanges?	Journey times between key employment areas and key transport interchanges
		Will it facilitate efficiency in freight distribution?	Heavy goods vehicle mileage intensity (2)
To enhance the image of the area as a business location	Consensus views of business organisations	Will it attract new investment and additional skilled workers to the area?	'Image' indices derived from consultations with business and local property specialists as part of the planning process Attract people from deprived areas
To improve the social and environmental performance of the economy	Companies with environment management systems (1) (2)	Will it encourage ethical trading?	Social and community enterprises (1) UK companies implementing ethical trading codes of conduct (2)
		Will it encourage good employee relations and management practices?	Business recognised as Investors in People (2)

Adapted from *Local Quality of Life Counts, Regional Quality of Life Counts*, ODPM guidance on integrated policy appraisal, *Environmental Appraisal of Development Plans: A Good Practice Guide, Guidance on the Methodology for Multi-Modal Studies*, Counsell and Haughton (2001), Sustainable Development Plans Group (2001), Construction Industry Council

Figure 23 provides an example of how a RPB/LPA may record the reasons for choosing the SA objectives and developing the SA framework.

Figure 23 – Sources for proposed SA objectives (regional level)				
Source of wording sustainability issue/wording		Other sources indicating importance of issue wording		
Regional SD Framework	SEA Directive	Other plans and programmes	Sustainability issues and problems identified	Proposed SA Objectives
Social objectives				
Quality housing available to everyone	Population and human health	PPG3 – Housing	Homelessness above national average; waiting lists in deprived wards are acute	To provide everybody with the opportunity to live in a decent home
Good quality employment opportunities available to all	Population	Regional Economic Strategy	Difficulty in recruiting and accommodating key workers to major urban conurbations	To offer everybody the opportunity for rewarding and satisfying employment
Improve health for all, reduce health inequalities and promote healthy living	Population	Choosing Health Delivery Plan	Health status affects people's ability to participate actively in society	To create the conditions to improve health, reduce health inequalities and promote healthy living
Environmental objectives				
Biodiverse and attractive natural environment	Biodiversity, flora, fauna	PPG9 Nature Conservation Regional Environment Strategy	30% of SSSIs in unfavourable condition; farmland birds populations falling	To maintain and enhance biodiversity, flora and fauna
Minimise greenhouse gas emissions	Climatic factors	Regional Economic Strategy Regional Climate Change Strategy	CO ₂ emissions are 25% above 1990 levels; emissions from traffic increasing 5% per annum	To reduce contributions to climate change

Figure 23 – Sources for proposed SA objectives (regional level)				
Source of wording sustainability issue/wording		Other sources indicating importance of issue wording		
Regional SD Framework	SEA Directive	Other plans and programmes	Sustainability issues and problems identified	Proposed SA Objectives
Economic objectives				
Reduce inequalities across the region	N/A	Regional Economic Strategy	The region contains 20% of the most deprived (lower quartile) wards in England	To reduce disparities in economic performance
Transport conditions for business success, economic growth and investment	N/A	Regional Economic Strategy	Congestion on motorway network; low proportion of freight by rail	To encourage efficient patterns of movement in support of economic growth

Appendix 10 – Testing the plan objectives

It may be useful to test the internal compatibility of the SA objectives, for instance using a framework such as Figure 24. There may be tensions between objectives that cannot be resolved: the compatibility assessment will clarify these so that subsequent decisions are well based, and mitigation or alternatives can be considered.

Figure 24 – Testing compatibility of SA objectives

SEA objective				
Objective 1				
Objective 2	✓			✓ compatible
Objective 3	✓	X		X incompatible
Objective 4	X			blank: no links
Objective 5	✓	✓	✓	
SEA objective	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4

Some objectives may be more important than others. It may be worthwhile to give a rough ranking of objectives, or to highlight those which are judged to be particularly important – for instance because current conditions are problematic or because they are of particular concern to the public – to help focus the later stages of the SA.

A similar approach may also be used to compare SA and plan objectives, as part of Stage B activities (see Figure 25).

Figure 25 – Example matrix for comparing plan objectives against SA objectives				
Plan Objectives	SA Objectives			
	Objective A	Objective B	Objective C	Objective D
Objective 1	Positive Compatible	Neutral	Positive Compatible	Positive Compatible
Objective 2	Possible conflict	Positive Compatible	Neutral	Positive Compatible
Objective 3	Neutral	Neutral	Positive Compatible	Neutral
Objective 4	Possible conflict	Possible conflict	Neutral	Neutral

Comments and recommendations:

Plan Objective 2 versus SA Objective A: Possible conflict as Plan Objective 2 seeks to deliver housing that meets unmet *demand*, whilst SA Objective A aims to meet local housing *need*. Recommendation: change wording of Plan Objective 2 to ‘need’ rather than ‘demand’.

Plan Objective 4 versus SA Objective A: Possible conflict as Plan Objective 4 is to protect greenfield land from development, but housing capacity study has shown that in order to satisfy housing need, some greenfield development will be required. Recommendation: change wording of Plan Objective 4 to prioritise brownfield development over greenfield, but not to rule out greenfield development completely.

Plan Objective 4 versus SA Objective B: Possible conflict as SA Objective B seeks to deliver development that reduces the need to travel, and some greenfield locations may be better placed to deliver this than some remoter brownfield sites. Recommendation: add to wording of Plan Objective 4 ‘where in line with the objective to reduce the need to travel’.

Whilst the aim should be to achieve consistency between plan objectives, in practice there may be tensions between objectives. Where win-win outcomes cannot be achieved, decision-makers will need to determine where the priorities should lie and this should be recorded explicitly in the SA.

Appendix 11 – Developing and appraising the options

Identifying Options

Only reasonable, realistic and relevant options need to be put forward. It is helpful if they are sufficiently distinct to enable meaningful comparisons to be made of the implications of each.

Some options are discrete, involving a choice between one option and another, as in Figure 26. These are often the broad options considered early in plan preparation. Other options can be combined in various ways. Plan policies are often alternatives of this type. Options may be grouped into scenarios, for instance rapid economic growth, ‘most sustainable’ option, etc.

Figure 26 – Example of discrete options

An analysis of higher-level strategies identified three dimensions related to the provision of new housing as part of a wider exercise to stem population loss:

- The number of new houses needed to create sustainable neighbourhoods and attract households back.
- The density of housing, which has a bearing on house type and design and is a key determinant of what prospective occupiers might find attractive.
- The location of housing: in simplistic terms, greenfield v. brownfield.

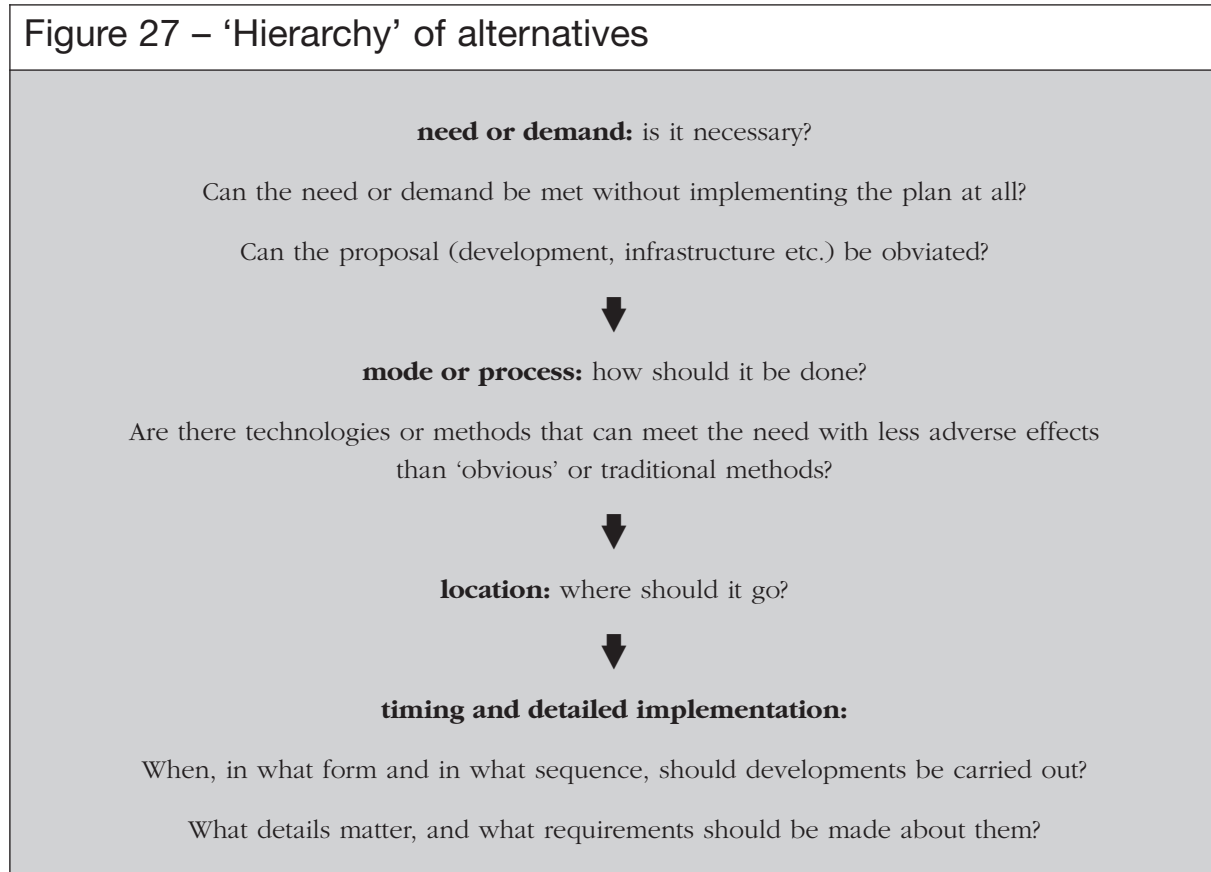
Eight options representing various combinations of these dimensions were identified:

1. Do the minimum: Little or no net new development – new build as replacement for demolition, only modest increases in dwellings through conversion of existing buildings, reduction in vacant properties and land, and more intensive use of buildings. De-allocate all existing greenfield allocations and no windfall developments beyond those already with permission.
2. No change: Maintain existing densities and greenfield allocations and allow development on windfall sites. Modest net increase in housing stock.
3. Meet target of 200 net new dwellings per year through option 1, plus density increase on cleared sites and development on previously developed land not used as open space. De-allocate all existing greenfield allocations.
4. Meet the Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) target through option 1, plus lower density increase than option 2, by retaining existing greenfield allocations.
5. Meet the RPG target through option 1, plus lower density increase than option 3, and increasing density on existing greenfield allocations, seeking up to a maximum 25% of development on greenfield sites.
6. Meet the regeneration strategy target (about 500 net new dwellings per year) through option 3, but with much higher densities.
7. Meet the regeneration strategy target through option 4, but with higher densities.
8. Meet the regeneration strategy target through option 5, with new greenfield allocations.

Clearly there could be many other targets between 200 and 500 net new dwellings per year.

Source – adapted from the SEA pilot: Newcastle City Council UDP Review, June 2003.

For key plan issues, a hierarchy of options should be considered, as shown in Figure 27. Obviation of demand is often more sustainable than providing for demand or rationing consumption through price or limited capacity. For example, better local amenities or services might make some journeys unnecessary; and insulation and design standards can reduce the need for domestic heating. Obviation is not the same thing as restricting or thwarting demands which may simply lead to the displacement of a problem: it should be seen as looking for different, more sustainable, means to achieve human quality of life ends.



To keep the big issues clear, the options considered at this early stage should not be elaborated in too much detail. Only the main differences between the alternatives need to be considered and documented.

Figure 28 gives examples of alternatives which could fall under each of these headings.

Figure 28 – Example of options			
Obviation of need and demand suppression	Mode/Process	Location	Timing and detailed implementation
Economic Development			
Reduce the need to attract a major inward investor by encouraging the growth of indigenous businesses.	Allow for flexible use of buildings for small and medium sized enterprises, and support expansion of existing business premises.	Within major district centres and larger villages, at the neighbourhood level.	Include appropriate policies in LDF, and encourage business support services (e.g. Business Link) to provide advice and guidance to SMEs.
Transport/accessibility			
<p>Reduce the need to travel by locating amenities/ services nearer their users, or housing users nearer the amenities they need; helping people meet more needs at home (e.g. homeworking, information technology).</p> <p>Support community-scale infrastructure and services to reduce need to transport goods, e.g. small-scale incinerators, reservoirs, wind turbines.</p>	<p>Encourage walking and cycling.</p> <p>Support good public transport, matched to journey desires (e.g. provide sites for modal interchange, protect rail corridors).</p>	<p>Locate amenities and services together, so people can accomplish several errands in one trip, e.g. multi-functional town centres.</p> <p>Locate bike stands and bus stops more conveniently than parking.</p>	<p>Have walking/cycling infrastructure and public transport services in place before development comes into use.</p> <p>If extra traffic capacity is unavoidable, design at minimum necessary capacity, avoid discouraging other modes (e.g. design in traffic calming, safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists), minimise noise, land take and visual intrusion.</p>

Figure 28 – Example of options			
Obviation of need and demand suppression	Mode/Process	Location	Timing and detailed implementation
Housing			
<p>Match supply to needs:</p> <p>Encourage adaptation of buildings to maximise the potential for comfortable occupation (e.g. loft and garage conversions, subdivision of large houses).</p> <p>High standard sheltered accommodation for older people as an alternative to staying in unnecessarily large houses. Make best use of existing building stock.</p>	<p>Make best use of land:</p> <p>Encourage infill, development of small sites, rebuilding at higher densities.</p> <p>Promote dense and land-efficient built forms, e.g. terraces, low rise flats, communal open spaces.</p> <p>Maximise density.</p> <p>Use existing infrastructure in new construction.</p>	<p>Minimise new infrastructure demands (e.g. by avoiding locations remote from amenities).</p> <p>Focus new housing on brownfield sites and away from floodplains.</p>	<p>Match timing of housing development to needs and to public service provision.</p> <p>Incorporate energy and water efficiency measures into design.</p>
Energy			
<p>Reduce demand for energy in housing by promoting low energy lighting and appliances, very efficient boilers, high insulation standards, conservatories and lobbies, large southfacing and small northfacing windows etc.</p>	<p>Promote renewable energy, energy from waste, Combined Heat and Power.</p>	<p>Small-scale, Community owned renewable energy installations to minimise transmission loss.</p>	<p>Use best available energy efficiency technologies in building construction and operation; site housing to optimise solar gain; use materials with low embodied energy.</p>

Clearly not all of these options are applicable in all cases. For instance, demand reduction measures are often outside the control of the RPB/LPA. Some options may not be practical, or within a RPB/LPA's powers, while others may not be appropriate to a particular stage or level of plan. A wider range of options will be available at a regional level than at a local level, and decisions made at the 'higher' level will close off some options. Nevertheless, 'up the hierarchy' thinking could suggest a wider, and more sustainable, range of options than hitherto considered.

Stakeholders may usefully be involved in the generation and assessment of both strategic and more detailed options through consultation. Demonstrating that there are choices to be made is an effective way of engaging stakeholders in the process. The options considered throughout the process must be documented and reasons given as to why they are or are not taken forward.

Appraising options

Options may be described as the range of rational choices open to plan makers for delivering the plan objectives. The assessment of options should be made against the SA framework, provided there is sufficient detail to identify the significant effects of each option. Ultimately, the aim should be to work towards a detailed appraisal of the options.

When appraising options, it may be helpful to ask:

- Are the options distinct and clearly presented?
- Are they likely to have any adverse effects? Can these be prevented, reduced or offset?
- Can positive effects be enhanced?
- Can any of the effects be quantified in a meaningful way?
- Who are likely to be the 'winners', and 'losers' for each option (e.g. rural versus urban dwellers; young versus old; people with cars versus those without; future versus current generations, etc.)?
- Are any effects of the options unclear or ambiguous? Is any further analysis appropriate?
- Are the effects likely to be variable over the short, medium and long-term?

Planning authorities are encouraged to use a matrix similar to the examples provided in Figure 29 or 30 to document the prediction and appraisal of plan options against the SA framework. It may be useful in selecting options, to summarise the assessment results for the different options in one table. This can help to identify the most sustainable option overall, or different options that promote different aspects of sustainability. It can also suggest new, more sustainable, options composed of different aspects of the initial options.

However, it is not the role of the SA to determine the option(s) to be chosen as the basis for the preferred options and the draft plan. This is the role of those who have to decide which strategy is appropriate. The role of the SA is to assist with the identification of the appropriate options, by highlighting the sustainability implications of each, and by putting forward recommendations for improvement.

Symbols or other ways of presenting information regarding the likely effects (e.g. beneficial, adverse, uncertain, not significant) can be used, but should be accompanied by a commentary explaining and justifying the choice of symbol with reference to the baseline situation relevant to the sustainability objective. This helps promote transparency, aids users of the appraisal and provides an opportunity to record options for enhancement or mitigation.

In principle, weighting and scoring can also be used to clarify the decision-making process, by making explicit the preferences decision-makers place on different objectives.

Numerical analysis can be applied to a SA framework in two stages:

- **Weighting** – Numerical weights can be assigned to define the relative value of each objective, between the top and bottom of the chosen scale.
- **Scoring** – The predicted effects of each option can be assigned a numerical score on a preference scale for each objective. For example, more preferred options may score higher and less preferred options may score lower.

The results will highlight the contribution of each option to the achievement of the different objectives. Results can be aggregated for each objective to elicit which options deliver the best outcomes or where options can be revised to improve results. Results can also be analysed on a case by case basis if preferred.

The process of predicting and appraising options will provide a basis for the ongoing monitoring of effects of chosen options. Information derived during the appraisal process will be an important information base for authorities to use in future monitoring and reporting.

Figure 29 – Example of comparison of options								
	Option 1: multi-function waste treatment facilities (management, storage and processing) in each population centre with >25,000 inhabitants				Option 2: limited function waste treatment facilities (management, recycling, and some treatment) dotted around the county provided on a basis of one facility per 10,000 inhabitants			
SA Objective	Short term	Medium term	Long term	Comments/ explanation	Short term	Medium term	Long term	Comments/ explanation
Limit air pollution to levels that do not damage natural systems	+/-	+/-	+/-	Operating conditions may reduce amount of pollution from waste treatment, but more vehicle trips needed to bring waste to the limited number of sites	+	++	+++	Easier access to treatment facilities should reduce the number and length of trips to assemble waste at the site. Effect is cumulative

Figure 29 – Example of comparison of options								
	Option 1: multi-function waste treatment facilities (management, storage and processing) in each population centre with >25,000 inhabitants				Option 2: limited function waste treatment facilities (management, recycling, and some treatment) dotted around the county provided on a basis of one facility per 10,000 inhabitants			
SA Objective	Short term	Medium term	Long term	Comments/ explanation	Short term	Medium term	Long term	Comments/ explanation
Reduce the need to travel	+/-	+/-	-	Limited number of treatment sites results in more and longer trips. Effect accumulates as the volume of waste produced per capita rises	+	++	+++	As above
Preserve historic buildings, and other culturally important features	O	O	O	Has no obvious impact	-	-	-	Potential impact if new treatment sites affect valued or protected localities or sites. Unquantifiable at present
Key: + positive - negative O neutral ? uncertain + minor +++ major								

Figure 30 – Example table for assessment of alternatives against SA objectives				
SD Objective	Option A – Concentrate development on MOD Site, on northern edge of main market town		Option B – Even development within three main towns, brownfield prioritised	
	Performance	Commentary /explanation	Performance	Commentary /explanation
Environmental Objective 1 – To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes	–	Visual impact of the development, and change in character of the town (e.g. setting) could be significant. Setting aside such a large area of land for development could mean that development of other brownfield sites in the town would become more difficult to develop.	++	Would bring back into use derelict and degraded sites, which are currently causing visual blight across all three towns.
Environmental Objective 2 – To improve air quality	–	Could lead to air quality standards being breached.	+	As brownfield sites are centrally located, should allow for development to take place that would encourage walking and cycling, and less reliance on the car.
Environmental Objective 3 – Summary appraisal against environmental objectives	–	Cumulative effects could be major, without appropriate policies to ensure that landscape quality is maintained, loss of grassland biodiversity is compensated for, and that a significant switch from car use to public transport and/or walking/ cycling is achieved.	+	Generally positive (some minor effects re. ecological value of brownfield sites). Would make most efficient use of land.
<i>etc.</i>				
<p>Key for performance: + positive – negative O neutral ? uncertain +/- minor ++/- – major</p> <p>A distinction could also be made between short, medium and long term, if appropriate</p>				

Appendix 12 – Predicting and appraising effects

Predicting sustainability effects

The most familiar form of SA prediction and appraisal technique is a table such as that of Figure 31.

Figure 31 – Illustration of documentation of effects				
SA objectives (examples only – see Appendix 9 for more information on devising objectives)	Targets (where available)	Can the effect be quantified? (if yes, insert data)	Effects over time	Comments/ explanation (e.g. likelihood/ certainty of effect occurring, geographical scale of effect, temporary or permanent, significance, reversibility etc.)
Protect biodiversity at ecosystem, species and genetic levels	10% increase in the area of land managed for wildlife by 2007	Yes, qualitative and quantitative data on the number, area and condition of wildlife sites	++	This policy is likely to bring significant positive effects in the medium to long term (5-10 years). <i>Likelihood/certainty:</i> high <i>Scale:</i> northern areas <i>Temporary or permanent:</i> permanent <i>Timing:</i> medium to long term
Promote positive health related behaviour	5% increase in proportion of school children walking, cycling or using public transport on journeys to school by 2010	Yes, school children surveys, number of schools with School Travel Plans etc.	+	No research has been undertaken into the link between this policy and opportunities to improve human health. It is considered likely that effects will be positive in the long term. <i>Likelihood:</i> uncertain <i>Scale:</i> northern areas <i>Temporary or permanent:</i> permanent <i>Timing:</i> long term
Increase levels of public transport accessibility	all homes to be within 400m of a bus stop by 2007	Yes, surveys of 'pedsheds'	++	This policy is likely to improve access to public transport in the medium to long term. <i>Likelihood/certainty:</i> high <i>Scale:</i> northern area <i>Temporary or permanent:</i> permanent <i>Timing:</i> medium to long term <i>Recommendation:</i> consider integrating additional public transport facilities into existing development.
+ positive – negative 0 neutral ? uncertain + minor ++ major				

Effects predictions are generally broad-brush and qualitative, e.g.

... get worse over the next 15 years; or

... be mildly negative, on a scale from strongly positive (++) to strongly negative (–); or

... be worse under Scenario A than under Scenario B.

But the predictions could also be more detailed and quantitative, e.g. a measurable effect would

...increase from 10 to 12 parts per million between 2005 and 2020; or

...increase by 20% between 2005 and 2020; or

...increase by 20% by 2020 under Scenario A and by 16% under Scenario B; or

...exceed national standards by 6% by 2020; or

...increase employment over a 'no/existing plan' scenario by 6% (net of displacement) to 2020.

Evaluating sustainability effects

When evaluating the significance of the effect of a policy or plan, planning authorities may need to consider the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects, including cumulative, secondary and synergistic effects. In some circumstances however it isn't possible to advise on the likely duration of effects with any genuine level of accuracy. The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected) should also be considered. The value and vulnerability of certain areas and populations may also influence the assessment, particularly where thresholds or standards may be exceeded (e.g. social deprivation thresholds or standards set in legislation).

When appraising the effects of the plan the following should be considered for each option presented:

- Is it clear exactly what is proposed, and how the options differ from each other or relate to the plan as a whole?
- Is each option likely to have a significant adverse effect in relation to each of the objectives or targets from Stage A?
- If so, can the effect be avoided or its severity reduced?
- If the effect cannot be avoided, e.g. by conditions or changes to the way it is implemented, can the option be changed or eliminated?
- If its effect is uncertain, or depends on how the plan is implemented, how can this uncertainty be reduced?

Planning authorities should also ensure that the analysis of effects includes “short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary ... effects” (Annex I(f) of the SEA Directive). Effects may vary over different timescales; for example, public transport infrastructure may have serious adverse effects in the short term but beneficial ones in the long term. The timescales themselves will also vary depending on the plan and the options being considered. For air pollution, for instance, the short, medium and long terms could be 3, 10 and 25 years, while for climate change they could be 5, 20 and 100 years. Figure 29 allows short, medium and long timescales to be differentiated and specified as appropriate for particular types of effect.

In considering the effects of a plan, some useful rules of thumb may be:

- When using symbols or other ways of presenting information regarding the likely effects (e.g. beneficial, adverse, uncertain, not significant), always explain and justify the choice of symbol with reference to the baseline situation relevant to the SA objective.
- Focus on effects of the plan rather than other factors that may influence the achievement of the SA objective.
- Consider whether the effect is likely to be permanent or temporary, and the timescale over which the effect is likely to be observed.
- Provide detailed and quantitative predictions where possible but avoid using spurious measurements, not grounded in evidence.
- Consider the effects of displacement of sustainability problems to other areas as a result of the plan.
- Clearly state and document where the assessment includes consideration of vulnerability, risk and uncertainty.
- Use the measurement of effects to improve the environmental performance of individual policies as well as the plan or programme as a whole.
- Consider if certain issues and effects are more appropriately appraised at different levels in the planning process. It is useful in relation to planning.

Figure 32 suggests possible prediction and assessment techniques and sources of further information.

Figure 32 – Prediction and assessment techniques for SA						
Technique	SEA stage					Examples or sources of further information (see References for details of publications)
	establish baseline	Identify effects	predict effects	evaluate effects	test for consistency	
Expert judgement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Therivel (2004)
Public participation	✓	✓		✓		Audit Commission (2000)
Quality of Life Capital	✓			✓		Countryside Agency et al. (2001)
Geographical information systems	✓		✓	✓		European Environment Agency (1998)
Network analysis		✓	✓			Therivel (2004)
Modelling	✓		✓			European Commission (1999)
Scenario/sensitivity analysis			✓			Therivel (2004)
Multi-criteria analysis				✓		DETR (2001)
Carrying capacity, ecological footprints				✓		Chambers et al. (2000) European Commission (1999)
Compatibility assessment					✓	Figure 24

Figure 33 gives a fuller explanation of issues to consider when filling in Figure 29. Following this flowchart helps to ensure that prediction, assessment and mitigation are linked and that a full range of mitigation measures are considered.

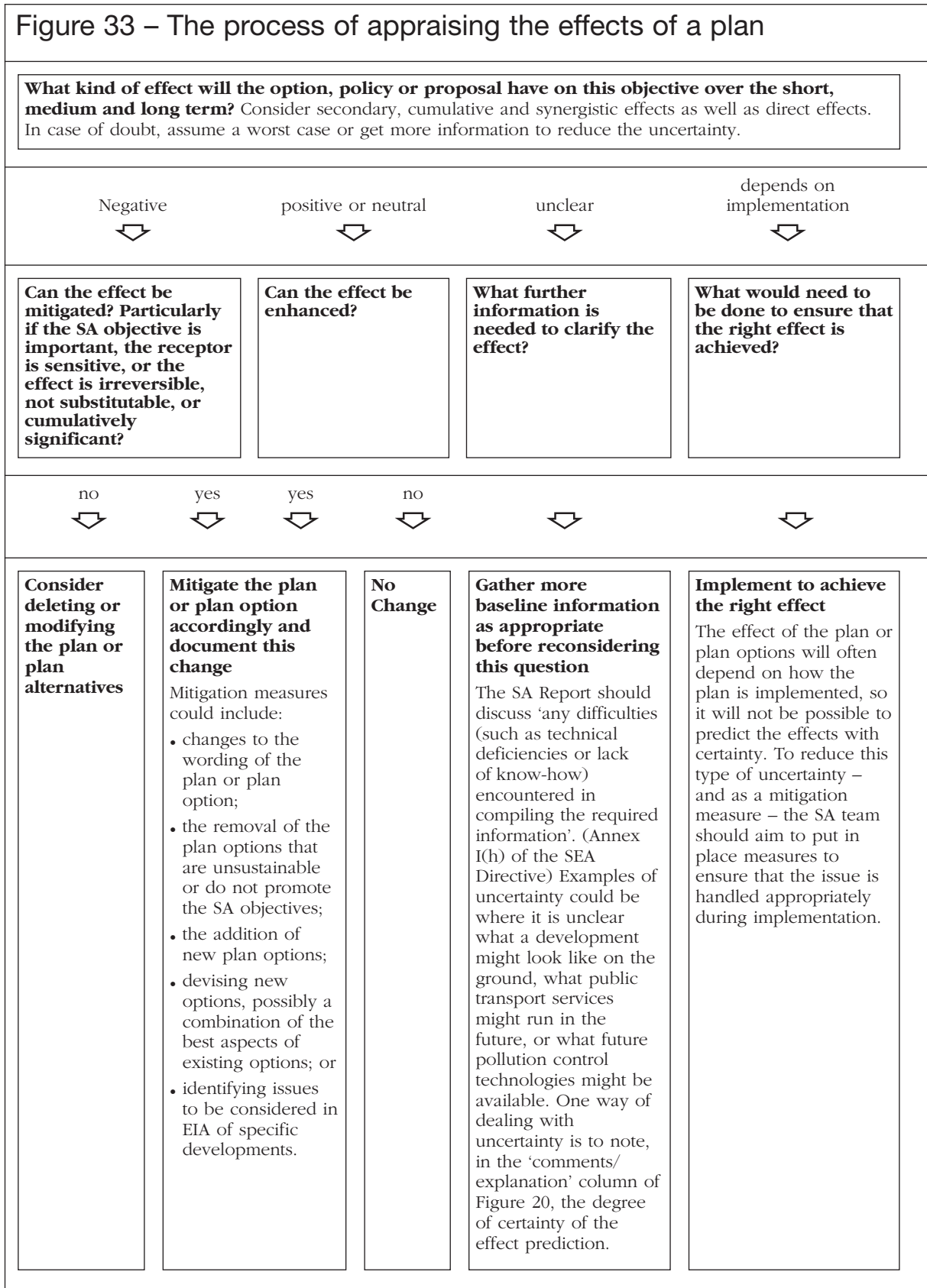


Figure 34 provides an example of tables that can be used for appraisal. The point of the appraisal is not to fill in the table, but to ensure that the option, policy or proposal is as beneficial or sustainable as possible. The table is only an indicative tool for doing this.

Figure 34 – Example matrix for documenting the appraisal of plan policy						
Summary baseline situation/targets	Predicted effects					Justification for assessment, noting: Likelihood/certainty of effect occurring (high/med/low) Geographical scale of effect. Whether temporary or permanent. Assumptions made. Include recommendations for mitigation/improvement
	Indicator	Nature of effect (quantify where possible)	Assessment of effect (see key below)			
			Short term	Medium term	Long term	
Social objectives						
Accessibility indices indicate that 45% of town's population are more than 500m from a post office, GP, local shop. No target.	% of households more than 500m from post office, GP, local shop.	Minor effect	0	0	✓	There is no link made in the plan between this policy and opportunities to provide for mixed development and community services and facilities close to where people live. No research undertaken to determine whether new employment sites may increase demand/viability of community services, but a small positive effect could arise in the longer terms: <i>Likelihood/certainty:</i> low/uncertain <i>Scale:</i> Three towns <i>Temporary or permanent:</i> permanent <i>Timing:</i> Long term <i>Recommendation:</i> consider integrating community facilities with employment use to serve both those working on the site and nearby residents.
Summary appraisal against social objectives			0	✓	✓✓	Will provide for a significant increase in jobs that are likely to meet the skills base of the towns' populations, but lack of integration with other community needs means that opportunities to realise greater benefits not realised.

Figure 34 – Example matrix for documenting the appraisal of plan policy (cont)

Summary baseline situation/targets	Predicted effects					Justification for assessment, noting: Likelihood/certainty of effect occurring (high/med/low) Geographical scale of effect. Whether temporary or permanent. Assumptions made. Include recommendations for mitigation/improvement
	Indicator	Nature of effect (quantify where possible)	Assessment of effect (see key below)			
			Short term	Medium term	Long term	
Environmental objectives						
Brownfield site of 65 hectares in Town A, 85 hectares in Town B, and 12 hectares in Town C. Chalk Hills AONB to the west of the District, the boundary of which is 4km from Town C. Target: reclaim 50% of brownfield land by 2010.	Area of brownfield sites within towns suitable for development.	Two of the strategic employment sites are well located with respect to the town centres, and will involve the remediation of the two brownfield sites. One near market town C is on the western edge of the urban area and can easily be viewed from the nearby AONB.	0	✓/ xx	✓✓/ xx	Strategic employment on the brownfield sites would bring significant positive benefits in the medium to long-term: <i>Likelihood/certainty:</i> high <i>Scale:</i> Towns A and B <i>Temporary or permanent:</i> permanent <i>Timing:</i> Medium to long term Strategic employment on the greenfield site to the western edge of Town C would bring significant adverse benefits in the medium term: <i>Likelihood/certainty:</i> high <i>Scale:</i> Town C, with effects on Chalk Hills AONB <i>Temporary or permanent:</i> permanent <i>Timing:</i> Medium to long term <i>Recommendation:</i> review options for location and design of employment site in Town C. Determine whether visual impact on AONB can be mitigated by design/structural landscaping.
Summary appraisal against environmental objectives			x	✓/ x	✓/ xx	Etc.

Appendix 13 – Assessing secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects

Examples of cumulative, secondary and synergistic effects include loss of tranquillity, changes in the landscape, economic decline and climate change. These effects are very hard to deal with on a project-by-project basis through EIA. It is at the SA level that they are most effectively identified and addressed.

Secondary or indirect effects are effects that are not a direct result of the SPD, but occur away from the original effect or as a result of a complex pathway. Examples of secondary effects are a development that changes a water table and thus affects the ecology of a nearby wetland; and construction of one project that facilitates or attracts other developments.

Cumulative effects arise, for instance, where several developments each have insignificant effects but together have a significant effect; or where several individual effects of the SPD (e.g. noise, dust and visual) have a combined effect.

Synergistic effects interact to produce a total effect greater than the sum of the individual effects. Significant synergistic effects often occur as habitats, resources or human communities get close to capacity. For example, a wildlife habitat can become progressively fragmented with limited effects on a particular species until the last fragmentation makes the areas too small to support the species at all. On the other hand, beneficial synergistic effects may occur when a series of major transport, housing and employment developments in a sub-region, each with their own effects, collectively reach a critical threshold so that both the developments as a whole and the community benefiting from them become more sustainable.

These terms are not mutually exclusive. Often the term ‘cumulative effects’ is taken to include secondary and synergistic effects

Principles of assessing cumulative effects

Assessment of cumulative effects needs:

- to be considered throughout, and as part of the SA and plan preparation, not as a separate process;
- to focus on identifying the total effect of both direct and indirect effects on receptors. Receptors may include natural resources (e.g. air, water, soil), sections of the population (e.g. people living in particular areas or vulnerable members of the community) or ecosystems and species (e.g. heathland);
- to be considered in relation to the nature and extent of the receptors, such as ecosystems and communities, rather than administrative boundaries;
- to be considered in relation to effects of policies within a plan and those which may result from interaction with the effects of other plans and programmes; and
- to take account of how close the plan, in association with other past, present and likely future actions, will bring the receptors to their capacity/threshold to remain productive or sustainable.

- to be aware of the level of uncertainty, which can be considerable. If it is not feasible to eliminate this, the uncertainty needs to be documented. The Directive only requires that SEA (and SA too in this case) is based on information that can reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment.

Assessing cumulative effects as part of Sustainability Appraisal

Figure 35 sets out key points in the assessment of secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects during the SA process.

Key Stages of SA	Key points in the assessment of secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects
<p>Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope</p>	<p>Identifying other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify key receptors which may be subject to cumulative effects. ● Consider any cumulative effects that other current and reasonably foreseeable plans, programmes and strategies may have on key receptors. Some plans may be more influential than others; this should be noted. <p>Collecting baseline information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For each key receptor document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The current status – How this has changed over time, and how it is likely to change in the future without the implementation of the plan – What has led to the present condition – How close to capacity the key receptor is, that is, can it absorb further effects before changes become significant and/or irreversible ● Recognise that the scope of cumulative effects can be very wide and that it is important to focus the assessment. ● Baseline for cumulative effects may be summarised in a format similar to Figure 37. <p>Identifying sustainability issues and problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify receptors that are particularly sensitive, in decline or if practicable are near their threshold (since these components may not be able to cope with the multiple stresses). <p>Developing the SA Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of SA objectives, indicators and targets may be influenced by significant cumulative effects identified and receptor thresholds/capacity. <p>Consulting on the scope of the SA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set out the likely significant cumulative effects of the preferred strategic alternatives and plan to consider cumulative effects as part of the rest of the SA process.

Figure 35 – Stages of SA and the consideration of secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects (*cont*)

Key Stages of SA	Key points in the assessment of secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects
<p>Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects</p>	<p>Test the plan objectives against the SA objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Testing the consistency between plan objectives and SA objectives may help highlight potential cumulative effects. <p>Developing the plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that the different options that are selected for testing as part of the assessment are also assessed for their secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects. ● Recognise that the assessment of secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects of different options could be used to screen out unacceptable options. <p>Predicting the effects of the plan, including options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Predict and assess the cumulative effects of the plan on the key receptors, e.g. the cumulative effects of current and reasonably foreseeable plans, programmes and strategies, with and without the plan. ● Recognise that there is uncertainty in predicting effects and determining significance and this can arise due to the variation in natural systems and their interactions; a lack of information, knowledge or scientific agreement regarding cause-effect relationship; or the inability of predictive models to accurately represent complex systems. ● Accept that the level of risk and uncertainty associated with cumulative effects increases at the higher planning levels because scales are broader and issues are generally larger. ● Document limitations and inadequacies of data/information. ● Recognise that there may be several approaches available to assist in the prediction of cumulative effects, and that there is not a single approach applicable to all situations. <p>Evaluating the effects of the plan, including options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess both in terms of magnitude – the difference between the with and without plan scenarios – and where practicable in terms of the capacity/threshold of the valuable environmental resources. <p>Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Document the measures envisaged to mitigate cumulative effects. <p>Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of the plan's implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Document measures proposed to monitor significant cumulative effects recognising that it may be difficult to determine what 'share' of cumulative effects is due to the given plan.

Figure 35 – Stages of SA and the consideration of secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects (cont)	
Key Stages of SA	Key points in the assessment of secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects
Stage C: Preparing the SA Report	<p>Preparing the SA Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Report cumulative effects in a transparent and accessible way and explain how they were identified and assessed. ● Provide a description of how effects are assessed and which methods were adopted. ● Provide a description of how the various forms of cumulative effects are most likely to occur in the plan. ● Describe the significant cumulative effects of the plan on each receptor, recording assumptions and uncertainty.
Stage D: Consulting and Decision-making	<p>Consulting on the plan and the SA Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use the consultation process to help predict and assess the cumulative effects of the plan. <p>Appraising significant changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Where significant changes are made to the plan identify changes in the cumulative effects. <p>Decision making and providing information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide information on how the cumulative effects, along with other significant effects of the plan, were taken into account in preparing the plan.
Stage E: Monitoring implementation of the plan	<p>Finalising aims and methods for monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitor effects using the appropriate indicators which take account of cumulative effects as well as direct effects. <p>Responding to adverse effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It may be necessary to take action where significant adverse cumulative effects are identified as a result of monitoring.

Methods for assessing cumulative effects

Figure 36 identifies some of the various techniques that may be used in assessing cumulative effects, along with their advantages and disadvantages. It is for the practitioner undertaking the appraisal to choose which method is most appropriate. This may involve the use of various approaches that can be adapted and combined to suit particular needs rather than a single method. When selecting techniques consider:

- ability to organise, analyse and present information;
- stage of the assessment (e.g. scoping, baseline information collection, analysis, reporting);
- types of issues involved and cumulative effects being examined;
- key receptors being examined;
- quality and extent of baseline information; and
- level of expertise available.

Figure 36 – Techniques for assessing secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects			
Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Questionnaires, interviews and panels	Useful in gathering the wide range of information on multiple actions and receptors needed to address cumulative effects. Brainstorming sessions, interviews with knowledgeable individuals and group consensus building activities can help identify the important cumulative effects in the area.	Flexible and able to deal with subjective information.	Cannot quantify effects and comparison of options is subjective.
Checklists	Identify potential cumulative effects by providing lists of common or likely effects and juxtaposing multiple actions and resources. This can be seen as a shortcut to scoping.	Systematic and concise.	Can be inflexible and does not address interactions or cause–effect relationships.
Matrices	Matrices use a tabular format to organise the interactions between human activities and resources of concern (e.g. see Figures 20, 25 37, & 39).	Provides good visual summary and can be used to identify and assess effects to some degree.	Can be complex and cumbersome and do not address cause–effect relationships.
Causal Chain/Network /Systems analysis	Helps to identify the cause–effect relationships resulting in cumulative effects using flow diagrams. Allows the user to analyse the multiple effects of various actions and trace indirect effects on resources that accumulate from direct effects on other resources (see Figure 36, 37 & 38).	Facilitate conceptualisation of cause–effect relationships and identify direct effects.	No spatial or temporal scale and diagrams can be complex and cumbersome.
Modelling	An analytical tool which enables the quantification of cause-effect relations which result in cumulative effects by simulation of conditions.	Addresses cause–effect relationships and gives quantified results. Geographic boundaries and time-frames are usually explicit.	Needs a lot of time and information and extrapolation is still largely subjective. Can be difficult to adapt some models to a particular situation.

Figure 36 – Techniques for assessing secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects (*cont*)

Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Trends analysis	Assesses the status of a resource, ecosystem, human community, or economy over time and usually results in graphical projection of past or future conditions. Changes in the occurrence or intensity of stressors over the same time period can also be determined. Trends can help the analyst identify cumulative effects, establish appropriate baselines or project future cumulative effects.	Addresses accumulation over time and helps to identify problems.	Needs a lot of information and extrapolation is still largely subjective.
Overlay mapping and GIS	Used to identify where effects may occur. Can superimpose effects on receptors or resources to establish where effects may be significant.	Flexible and easy to update. Can consider multiple projects and past, present and future options. Allows clear visual presentation.	Can be expensive and time consuming and difficult to quantify effects.
Expert Opinion	A way of identifying and assessing effects. Expert panels can be formed to facilitate exchange of information and to express views on cumulative effects.	Particularly useful where other methods are not available but significant cumulative effects are considered likely.	Relies on expertise – may affect transparency or acceptance of the assessment process.
Carrying Capacity & Threshold Analysis	Based in recognition that thresholds exist and that cumulative effects can result in thresholds being exceeded.	Useful in addressing accumulation of effects against thresholds and considering trends.	It is not always possible to establish the threshold or carrying capacity for a particular resource or receptor.

Figure 37 – Example of a table for recording cumulative effects and their causes

Cumulative Effect	Affected Receptor	Causes
Habitat fragmentation	Wildlife habitats	Use of land for flood management, transport infrastructure and industrial development.
Climate change	Worldwide	Greenhouse gas emissions from industrial development and increases in traffic volumes.
Loss of tranquillity	Countryside	Industrial development and increases in traffic volumes.
High levels of unemployment	City centre	Poor transport connections, low levels of inward investment, out migration of skills.

Figure 38 – Example of a table for recording cumulative effects of plan policies against sustainability objectives

Effects on SA objectives					
SA Objective Policy No.	SA objective A: Maintain and enhance biodiversity	SA objective B: Protect human health	SA objective C: Reduce need to travel	SA objective D: Minimise the production of waste	SA objective E: To encourage economic regeneration
Policy 1 (e.g. road improvement)	–	–	–	–	+ +
Policy 2 (e.g. road improvement)	0	0	–	–	0
Policy 3 (e.g. Traffic management scheme)	+	+	0	0	+
Policy 4 (e.g. Housing Proposal)	–	0	+	–	+
Policy 5 (e.g. Housing Proposal)	–	0	--	–	–
Etc.					
Cumulative effects of Policy 1 + 2 + 3 + etc.	--	0	--	–	+ +
Commentary for significant cumulative effects (including recommend- ations for improve- ment)	The combined effect of two new roads plus two new housing developments will significantly fragment an area of continuous woodland. Recommend redesigning development to reduce impact and require compensatory planting	No significant cumulative effects identified	Mixed effects but the combination of improved roads and Policy 5 housing proposal will lead to 15% increases in traffic in the town, without offsetting improved public transport	No significant cumulative effects	The new road under Policy 1 will reduce congestion adjacent to the business park, and link with housing proposal (Policy 4), which should provide new housing helping support the skills base of the town
Key to Symbols: + positive, – negative, 0 no effect, ? uncertain effect.					

Analysis of inconsistencies:

Policy 2 versus Policies 3 and 4: Development of 600 homes on remote former airfield (Policy 2) is inconsistent with the aim to guide development to existing urban centres (Policy 3) and the requirement to protect and conserve nature conservation as the airfield has grasslands of local importance for nature conservation. Recommendation: reassess whether option more sustainable, and if not establish the criteria that development of the airfield (e.g. mixed-uses, community facilities, avoidance of grasslands where possible and off-site compensation where development is necessary). If resources allow, use modelling to determine effects of travel patterns, to ensure that there is no increase to journeys arising.

Publications containing further information on cumulative effects assessment:

- *Guidelines for the Assessment of Indirect and Cumulative Impacts as well as Impact Interactions* (European Commission)
- *Addressing Cumulative Environmental Effects* (Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency)
- *Guidelines for Cumulative Effects Assessment in SEA of Plans* (Imperial College)

See “References and Further Information” for details and links.

Appendix 14 – Monitoring

The significant sustainability effects of implementing the plan must be monitored to identify unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action (SEA Directive, Article 10(1). See also Stage E in previous sections of this guidance).

The Act already requires RPBs and LPAs to monitor implementation of RSSs and LDFs. In accordance with guidance (ODPM 2005), they should use an objectives and targets led approach. Some of these may be sustainability objectives, but this will not necessarily be enough to satisfy the SA process or SEA Directive and additional monitoring arrangements may be required. For convenience, this guidance will use the term ‘SA monitoring’ to cover the overall monitoring of sustainability effects.

SA monitoring can be used to answer questions such as:

- Were the assessment’s predictions of sustainability effects accurate?
- Is the plan contributing to the achievement of desired SA objectives and targets?
- Are mitigation measures performing as well as expected?
- Are there any adverse effects? Are these within acceptable limits, or is remedial action desirable?

Proposed monitoring framework

Monitoring may cover several plans as long as sufficient information about environmental effects is provided for the individual plans. There is in other words scope for authority-wide monitoring, providing this can be done in such a way that the requirements of the SEA Directive are met. The appropriate level at which to monitor depends on the type and scale of the plan to be monitored.

Step 1: What needs to be monitored?

The first step is to consider exactly what needs to be monitored. Monitoring measures must be clearly linked to the SA process, for example:

- The objectives, targets and indicators that were developed for the SA (see Stage A);
- Features of the baseline that will indicate the effects of the plan (see Stage A);
- The likely significant effects that were identified during the effects assessment (see Stage B); and
- The mitigation measures that were proposed to offset or reduce significant adverse effects (see Stage B).

Monitoring needs to consider both beneficial and adverse effects.

Effects relate to the plan as a whole, and monitoring must therefore include consideration of secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects over and above the effects of the individual measures in the plan, and effects over the lifespan of the plan.

It is not necessary to monitor everything, or monitor an effect indefinitely. Instead monitoring needs to be focused on significant sustainability effects, e.g. those:

- that indicate a likely breach of international, national or local legislation, recognised guidelines or standards;
- that may give rise to irreversible damage, with a view to identifying trends before such damage is caused; and
- where there was uncertainty in the SA, and where monitoring would enable preventative or mitigation measures to be taken.

Step 2: What sort of information is required?

The type (e.g. quantitative or qualitative) and the level of detail of SA monitoring information required will depend on the characteristics and level of detail of the plan and its forecasted effects.

SA monitoring involves measuring indicators which may establish a causal link between implementation of the plan and the likely significant effect being monitored. The monitoring framework may be established in a way that seeks to take account of external factors and focus upon the links between the plan implementation and the effect. Where it is difficult to establish these links it might be necessary to collect further information on plan output indicators.

It may also be helpful to undertake more contextual monitoring of social, environmental or economic change. This could involve measuring effects or aspects of sustainability that were not identified in the appraisal, or identifying changes in the broader social, environmental or economic context.

When selecting indicators to monitor, consider how they will be analysed. Analysis of indicators may include:

- **Change in indicators:** The effects of plans can be gauged by examining patterns of change in the indicators and the extent to which related indicators have changed. This can be achieved through analysing groups of indicators together to create a profile of the issue being measured.
- **Baselines and predicted effects:** Changes in the direction of indicators can be measured against the baseline position and predicted effects documented in the SA Report.

- **Benchmarking:** Changes in the direction of indicators can also be measured against other comparable locations or receptors to establish whether similar effects are occurring. Benchmarking may help in the assessment of relative performance by taking into account external forces of change, which emphasises the value of qualitative data. This is best achieved by establishing a common set of core indicators. The ODPM has published guidance on *Guide to Improving the Economic Evidence Base supporting Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies* (ODPM, 2005).
- **Use of qualitative and quantitative information:** Monitoring of most indicators will be based on the collection of quantitative data, but there may also be a need to incorporate some qualitative information in the analysis to enrich understanding.
- **Interpretative commentaries:** One task of analysis is providing a considered interpretation of the results. This may be presented via appropriate explanations and commentaries within monitoring reports. The Act requires AMRs to highlight areas where implementation is not occurring, state the reasons, and set out the actions needed to secure delivery. This could include mitigation of adverse effects.

Step 3: What are the existing sources of monitoring information?

Statutory monitoring under the Act should focus on the implementation of a plan against pre-defined plan objectives, targets and indicators. This type of performance monitoring does not necessarily include sustainability effects, unless the RPB/LPA has developed sustainability performance indicators or sustainability best value indicators. But plan performance monitoring can be helpful when considered together with SA monitoring. Other existing monitoring is typically focussed on what is required by regulations and legal requirements, but may provide information which is useful either directly or with some degree of analysis or manipulation.

Wherever possible, use existing monitoring arrangements to obtain the required information identified in Step 2. Consider issues such as:

- What are the existing monitoring arrangements for the plan, and does this provide any of the required information?
- What are the existing monitoring arrangements for other plans, programmes or projects within the authority, and is there scope for aggregating or disaggregating data to obtain any of the required information?
- Is any of the required information available from other sources, e.g. higher or lower level authorities or data sources used for establishing the sustainability baseline?
- What organisational arrangements are needed to deliver the monitoring?

Step 4: Are there any gaps in the existing information, and how can these be filled?

Additional information may be required to monitor those aspects selected in Step 1. Some ways in which the required information can be obtained in a cost-effective and efficient way include:

- incorporate SA monitoring into existing performance monitoring for plans;
- expand other existing monitoring systems to include additional parameters; and
- where applicable, enter into agreements with other authorities to standardise monitoring methods and share information.

Step 5: What should be done if adverse effects are found?

The SEA Directive does not require a plan to be modified if monitoring reveals adverse effects on the environment. However, SA monitoring is intended to enable mitigating activities to be taken, and action may be required either by the Responsible Authority or other bodies. It may be useful to establish a mechanism or framework to identify if and when remedial action is needed in response to adverse effects, including:

- criteria or thresholds for remedial action (e.g. what are the social, environmental or economic conditions that would be regarded as undesirable or unacceptable).
- potential remedial actions that could be taken if a significant effect was identified (e.g. review aspects of the plan that are causing the effects and make amendments, develop mitigation measures).
- those responsible for taking the remedial action (e.g. another authority or agency may be responsible for taking the remedial action and may need to be consulted).

Documentation of monitoring programmes in tabular form can be useful, and might include the following information:

- What needs to be monitored (effects, other trends)?
- What sort of information is required (indicator)?
- Where can the information be obtained (sources of information)?
- Are there any gaps in existing information and how can these be resolved?
- When should remedial action be considered?
- What remedial action could be taken?

Step 6: Who is responsible for the various monitoring activities, when should these be carried out, and what is the appropriate format for presenting the monitoring results?

When documenting the monitoring strategy consider:

- the time, frequency and geographical extent of monitoring (e.g. link to timeframes for targets; and monitoring whether the effect is predicted to be short, medium or long-term);
- who is responsible for the different monitoring tasks, including the collection, processing and evaluation of social, environmental and economic information; and
- how to present the monitoring information with regard to its purpose and the expertise of those who will have to act upon the information (e.g. information may have to be presented in a form accessible to non-environmental specialists).

A table can be a useful format for documenting how the monitoring process could be managed, and might include information on:

- monitoring activity to be undertaken;
- responsibility for undertaking the monitoring;
- when the monitoring needs to be carried out (dates and frequency);
- how results should be presented and in what format; and
- status of monitoring and any problems encountered.

Appendix 15 – Reporting

The Scoping Report

The SA Scoping Report should include:

- the other plans, programmes and objectives relevant to the plan, with information on synergies or inconsistencies;
- baseline information, either already collected or still needed, with notes on sources and any problems encountered;
- social, environmental, and economic issues identified as a result of the work undertaken;
- the SA framework, including the suggested SA objectives and indicators (and targets where these are proposed), and how they were chosen; and
- proposals for the structure and level of detail of the SA Report.

The Sustainability Appraisal Report

Figure 40 sets out information to be included in the final SA Report and proposes a structure. This is adapted for SA from Annex I of the SEA Directive which sets out information that the Environmental Report must include.

In deciding the length and the level of detail to be provided in a SA Report, the RPB/LPA needs to bear in mind its purpose as a public consultation document. It is likely to be of interest to a wide variety of readers, including decision-makers, other plan/programme-making authorities, statutory consultees, non-government organisations, and members of the public, and needs to be prepared with this range of users in mind. It must include a non-technical summary. It should cover the strengths as well as weaknesses brought out in the SA. A Quality Assurance checklist is provided in this guidance (Appendix 4) to help planning authorities ensure that the quality of the Report is sufficient to meet the requirements of the Directive.

Figure 40 – 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7.1. Links to other tiers of plans and programmes and the project level (EIA, design guidance etc.) 7.2. Proposals for monitoring

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ISBN 1-851127-98-4



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