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Appendix A: Quality Assurance Checklist and SEA Definitions

SEA Quality Assurance Checklist

Objectives and context	Where identified
The plan's or programme's purpose and objectives are made clear.	Section 1 and Section 2 sets out the background to the requirement for the Sustainability Appraisal including the SEA. It identifies that the SA is undertaken in relation to the Local Plan. It sets out the plan period, the area covered and the purpose of the plan. It includes a brief history of the withdrawn local plan and the sub regional context of Ashfield.
Environmental issues and constraints, including international and EC environmental protection objectives, are considered in developing objectives and targets.	Sustainability issues have been considered through: - A review of Plans, Policies and Programmes set out in 2 and Appendix C. - An analysis of baseline conditions set out in Section 3.
SEA objectives, where used, are clearly set out and linked to indicators and targets where appropriate.	Section 4 and Table 4.2, The Sustainability Framework and Table 18, Consideration of Significance for Strategic Options and Policies links the SA/SEA themes with objectives, decision-making criteria and potential indicators.
Links with other related plans, programmes and policies are identified and explained.	Key messages, the source of messages and implications for the SA Framework are set out in Section 2, Table 2.1 and Appendix C.
Conflicts that exist between SEA objectives, between SEA and plan objectives and between SEA objectives and other plan objectives are identified and described.	Potential conflicts between SA objectives have been identified in Section 5 and will be identified in the on-going SA analysis and reports.
Scoping	Where identified
Consultation Bodies are consulted in appropriate ways and at appropriate times on the content and scope of the Environmental Report.	The Environmental Agency, Natural England and Historic England together with other parties were consulted on the Scoping Report in December 2019. A summary of the responses received to the Scoping Report are set out in Appendix B.
The assessment focuses on significant issues.	Sustainability issues have been identified in Section 2, Baseline data and characteristics of Ashfield and identifies sustainability issues and the consequences of not having a Local Plan. Section 3.14 sets out the summary of the key sustainability issues.
Technical, procedural and other difficulties encountered are discussed; assumptions and uncertainties are made explicit.	Section 4.5 sets out the range of uncertainties and assumptions including recognition of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the baseline data.
Reasons are given for eliminating issues from further consideration.	No issues have been knowingly eliminated from this SA Report.
Baseline information	Where identified

Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and their likely evolution without the plan or programme are described.	Section 3 of this SA Report presents the baseline analysis of the district's social, economic and environmental characteristics including their likely evolution without the Local Plan.
Environmental 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.	Section 3 identifies baseline data, where appropriate identifying areas which may be affected by the Local Plan.
Difficulties such as deficiencies in information or methods are explained.	Section 4.5 sets out the range of uncertainties and assumptions including recognition of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the baseline data.
Prediction and evaluation of likely significant effects	Where identified
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.	Section 5 summarises the appraisal of the sustainability performance of the Local Plan Preferred Option in terms of the Local Plan Vision and Strategic Objectives, preferred development requirements and Spatial Strategy, site allocations and policies. Detailed appraisal matrices are also provided at Appendix E, F, G, I and J that have been developed to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive.
Both positive and negative effects are considered, and where practicable, the duration of effects (short, medium or long-term) is addressed.	Both positive and negative effects are considered, and where practicable, the duration of effects (short, medium or long-term) is addressed. Positive and negative effects are considered within the appraisal matrices and within Section 5. Potential effects are identified in the short, medium and long-term.
Likely secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects are identified where practicable.	The cumulative effects of the Local Plan are considered in Section 5.8.
Inter-relationships between effects are considered where practicable.	Inter-relationships between effects are identified in the assessment commentary, where appropriate.
Where relevant, the prediction and evaluation of effects makes use of accepted standards, regulations, and thresholds.	These are identified in the commentary, where appropriate.
Methods used to evaluate the effects are described.	These are described in Section 4 and Appendices M and N.
Mitigation measures	Where identified
Measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the plan are indicated.	These are identified within the appraisal matrices.
Issues to be taken into account in development consents are identified.	These are identified within the appraisal matrices.
The SA Report	Where identified
Is clear and concise in its layout and presentation.	The SA Report is clear and concise.

Uses simple, clear language and avoids or explains technical terms. Uses maps and other illustrations where appropriate. Maps and tables have been used to present the baseline information in Section 3 where appropriate.	Maps and tables have been used to present the baseline information in Section 3 and Appendix D where appropriate.
Explains the methodology used.	Section 4 presents the methodology used for assessment whilst consultation arrangements are discussed in Section 1.
Identifies sources of information, including expert judgement and matters of opinion.	Information is referenced throughout the SA Report.
Contains a non-technical summary Included.	Included.
Consultation	Where identified
The SEA is consulted on as an integral part of the plan-making process.	This SA Report is being consulted upon at the same time as the Local Plan Preferred Option.
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.	This SA Report is being consulted upon at the same time as the Local Plan Preferred Option.
Decision-making and information on the decision	Where identified
The SA Report and the opinions of those consulted are taken into account in finalising and adopting the plan.	Responses received to this SA Report will inform the preparation of the Local Plan
An explanation is given of how they have been taken into account.	This information will be provided in subsequent reports.
Reasons are given for choices in the adopted plan, in the light of other reasonable options considered.	Section 5 and Appendix H set out the reasons for the selection of the Council's preferred development requirements and Spatial Strategy in light of the reasonable alternatives considered.

Definitions

The SEA addresses a number of topics but there is no definition in the Regulations as to what they encompass. In the context of the Scoping Report Review, it is taken the various topics include the following:

- Biodiversity - Biodiversity includes all species of plants and animals and the natural systems that support them. The viability and productivity of soils, waters, the climate and other life support systems depends upon the interactions between complex groups of species and their environment. Biodiversity is important in its own right with national and international responsibilities and procedures in place to protect and enhance it. It plays an important role in underpinning our quality of life and giving a 'sense of place'. Biodiversity can be seen as underpinning economic development and prosperity.

- Population - In the absence of detailed SEA guidance on the content of the population topic, 'population' is considered to include information on demographics and generic socio-economic issues.
- Human health; - Human health is taken to include a state of physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. However, human health also has to be considered in relation to other issues such as biodiversity, fauna, flora, soil, water, air and climatic factors as well as environmentally related health issues such as exposure to traffic noise or air pollutants.
- Fauna & flora - Fauna is all of the animal life of any particular region or time while flora is the plant life occurring in a particular region or time. Flora and fauna are building blocks of biodiversity.
- Soil - Soil is a fundamental and essentially non-renewable natural resource. It provides many essential roles including food production, water management and support for valuable biodiversity and ecosystems. It is also a large store of carbon
- Water - There are a variety of issues that come within water. These include water and biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage, water resources and quantity, water quality and quantity, flooding and flood risk, and recreation.
- Air - In relation to air, the emphasis is on the impacts of poor air quality in relation to health, biodiversity, landscape, and water quality.
- Climatic factors - Climate Change encompasses the causes and impacts of climate change. The emission of greenhouse gases contributes significantly to climate change through the greenhouse effect.
- Material assets - Material Assets includes housing and infrastructure relating to areas such as energy, water and transport networks. It is also taken to include social infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and other public buildings.
- Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage; - Heritage can be defined as building structures and artefacts of cultural importance handed down from the past. However, cultural heritage will encompass a variety of different types of sites, buildings, landscapes as well as non-tangible elements of heritage. There is a cross over with natural heritage as natural feature forms part of both the cultural heritage and natural heritage.
- Landscape - The European Landscape Convention 2005 sets out "'Landscape' means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. The term 'landscape' is defined as a zone or area as perceived by local people or visitors, whose visual features and characters are the result of the action of natural and/or cultural (that is, human) factors. This definition reflects the idea that landscapes evolve through time, as a result of being acted upon by natural forces and human beings. It also underlies that a landscape forms a whole, whose natural and cultural components are taken together, not separately". Landscape extends beyond terms such as quality, character and tranquillity as it should also, in the context of the Local Plan, reflect access to natural areas for recreational purposes and the effects of human activity on the landscape.

