



SCOTT WILSON Planning & Environment
Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment
Guildford Borough Council Guildford Development Framework

Town Centre Area Action Plan Preferred Options
Sustainability Appraisal Non-technical Summary

June 2006



SA / SEA Guildford Borough Council
Guildford Development Framework
Town Centre Area Action Plan Preferred Options
Sustainability Appraisal Report Non-technical Summary
18/06/2006

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Scott Wilson was commissioned in 2006 by Guildford Borough Council to undertake the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Guildford Development Framework (GDF) Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) Preferred Options.

1.1.2 This document summarises the findings of the SA / SEA process so far using non-technical language.

1.2 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.2.1 SEA involves the identification and evaluation of the environmental effects of a plan or programme. In 2001, the EU legislated for SEA with the adoption of Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the 'SEA Directive').

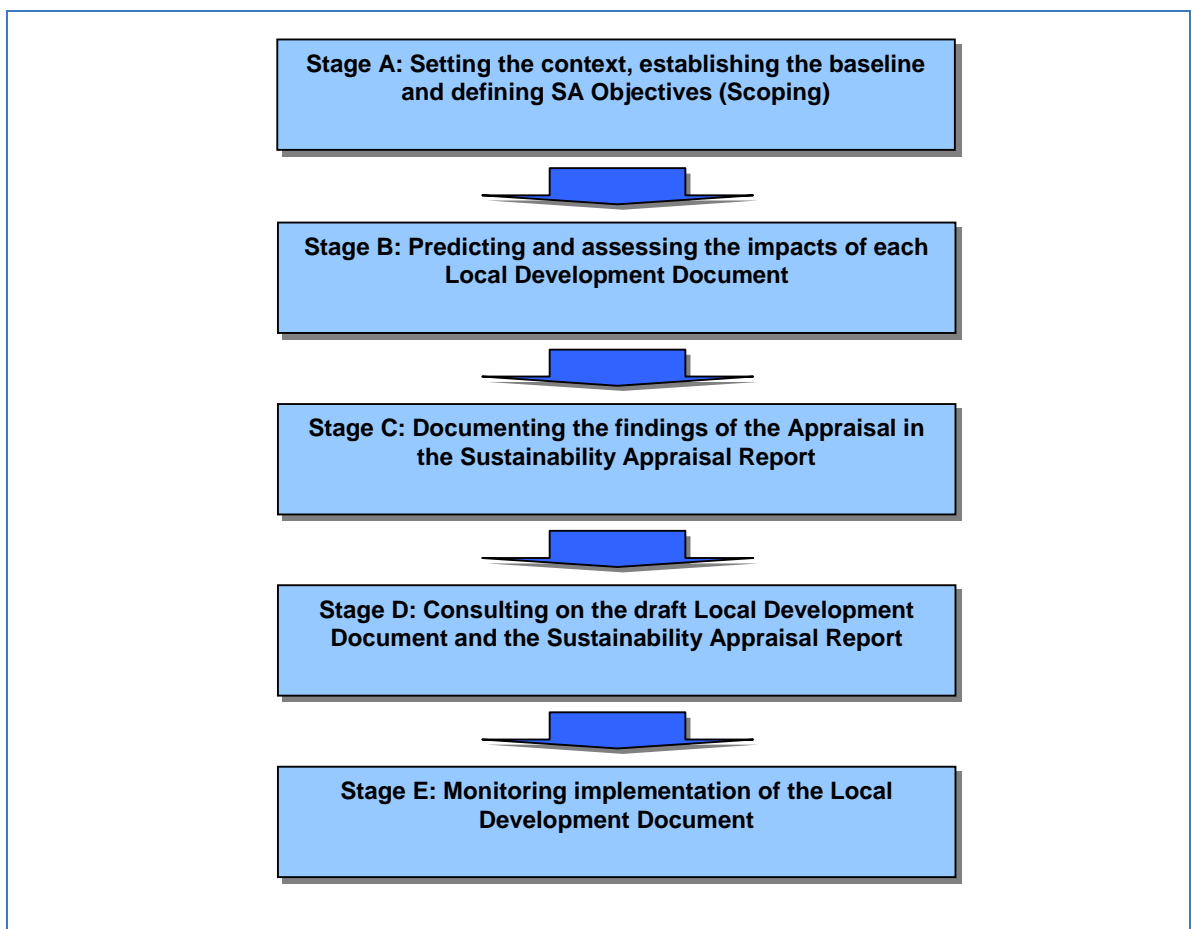


Figure 1.1: Five-stage approach to SA/SEA

- 1.2.2 The aim of the SEA Directive is “*to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes, with a view to promoting sustainable development*”.
- 1.2.3 SA extends the concept of SEA to encompass economic and social concerns. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA), Local Authorities must undertake SA for each of their DPDs and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) – the constituent parts of the LDF. SA is therefore a statutory requirement for LDFs along with SEA.
- 1.2.4 Government guidance advocates a five-stage approach to undertaking SA (see Figure 1.1, above). The SA / SEA of the Town Centre AAP is currently at Stage D and this Non-technical Summary is being made available to facilitate public consultation on the Council's Preferred Options for the Town Centre AAP.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Town Centre AAP objectives and contents

2.1.1 The Town Centre AAP sets out the Council's preferred approaches to the future development of Guildford Town Centre and improvements to 2018.

2.1.2 The Town Centre AAP spatial vision is: *"a thriving, safe and vibrant town centre, accessible to all, which takes pride in its history and local identity. A centre for transport links and a focus for high quality, sustainable new development sympathetic to the historic environment, providing opportunity and a balanced mix of uses, giving choice for future generations"*.

2.1.3 The Town Centre AAP contains the following Preferred Options (in **bold text**), in some cases associated with Indicative Policies:

- **Housing**
- **Town Centre Facilities**
- **Environment**
- **Offices and Other Business Development**
- **Energy Efficiency**
- Indicative Policy TC1 Energy Efficiency and Renewables in Guildford Town Centre
- **Shopping**
- Indicative Policy TC2 Guildford Town Centre Primary Shopping Frontages
- Indicative Policy TC3 Guildford Town Centre Secondary Shopping Frontages
- **Movement**
- **Tourism**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Policies to supplement existing policies in the Local Plan**
- Indicative Policy TC4 Town Centre Gateways
- Indicative Policy TC5 Quality Design (character, views, viewpoints and legibility)
- Indicative Policy TC6 High Quality Public Realm

- Indicative Policy TC7 Services and Parking
- Indicative Policy TC8 The River Wey
- Indicative Policy TC9 Permeability

2.1.4 Within the Town Centre boundary the AAP defines twelve character areas:

- Eastern Commercial Quarter
- Eastern Fringe
- Eastgate Quarter
- Haydon Place and Martyr Road
- Northern Historic Fringe
- Historic Urban Core
- The Castle
- Northern Wey Corridor Riverfront
- Western Commercial Quarter
- Bridge Street
- Southern Fringe
- Southern Wey Corridor Riverfront

2.1.5 Additionally the Town Centre AAP describes eleven potential development sites, some of which were previously identified in the Local Plan. The Western Commercial Quarter contains the largest number of these proposed sites.

3 LIKELY EFFECTS, MITIGATION AND MONITORING

3.1 Likely significant effects

3.1.1 The SA Report discusses the likely significant sustainability effects of the Town Centre AAP Preferred Options in detail. These are summarised below using the SA Objectives set out in the Scoping Report, which outlines the scope and level of detail of the SA. The Scoping Report can be found at:

<http://www.guildford.gov.uk/GuildfordWeb/Planning/PlanningPolicy/Sustainability+Appraisal.htm>

To provide sufficient housing to enable people to live in a home suitable to their needs and which they can afford

3.1.2 Many of the proposed development sites include housing provision and this will assist in meeting the overall housing need of the town and the Borough. The Core Strategy Preferred Options will ensure that about 35% of new houses in larger schemes will be affordable housing.

To facilitate the improved health and well-being of the population

3.1.3 It is not thought likely that the Town Centre AAP will have significant effects on the health and well-being of Guildford or the Borough.

To reduce the risk of flooding

3.1.4 A number of the proposed redevelopment sites are located in the River Wey flood zone, placing them at heightened risk of flooding. While this is inevitable, given that Guildford is an historic town, set on the banks of the Wey, it is not ideal and represents a significant adverse impact in terms of this objective (suitable mitigation measures will be secured before developments are permitted).

To create and maintain safer and more secure communities

3.1.5 No significant effects are thought likely on this objective as a result of the Town Centre AAP Preferred Options.

To reduce poverty and social exclusion

3.1.6 Significant effects on this objective are not thought likely as a result of the Town Centre AAP Preferred Options.

To create and sustain vibrant communities

- 3.1.7 The overall aim of the Town Centre AAP is to create a thriving, safe and vibrant town centre. The long-term cumulative effect of the Preferred Options should be to help achieve this objective.

To make the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

- 3.1.8 All of the proposed development sites are on previously developed land and therefore will contribute significantly to the achievement of this objective.

To ensure air quality continues to improve and noise/light pollution is reduced

- 3.1.9 The Town Centre AAP Preferred Options are not thought likely to have significant effects on this objective.

To conserve and enhance biodiversity within the plan area

- 3.1.10 While there are relatively few biodiversity and nature conservation assets within the town centre itself, it is still possible that the growth in population within the town could contribute to adverse effects on the nearby Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). Through the emerging Core Strategy, new housing development will be expected to provide open space to relieve the pressure on the Heaths from recreational use. (The Council is working on a plan to avoid harm to the SPA, including improving accessibility to the existing countryside outside of the Town Centre).

To protect, enhance, and make accessible the natural, archaeological and historic environments and cultural assets of Guildford

- 3.1.11 The Tourism Preferred Option may contribute to enhancement of the historic townscape. Certain of the proposed development sites may have adverse effects on strategic views. These effects could be avoided through sympathetic design.

To reduce road congestion and pollution levels

- 3.1.12 Significant effects on this objective are not thought likely as a result of the Town Centre AAP Preferred Options.

To reduce land contamination and safeguard soil quality and quantity

- 3.1.13 All of the proposed development sites are on previously developed land. It is possible that, in some cases, the prior use may have resulted in contamination to the soils underlying the site. This would normally be remediated as part of any redevelopment, so there is potential that there could be indirect beneficial effects on this objective from such remediation.

To address the causes of climate change and ensure that the Borough is prepared for its impacts

- 3.1.14 The Environment preferred option and indicative Policy TCG1 call for an investigation of the feasibility of combined heat and power (CHP) in larger new developments. This would result in a marginally lower demand for energy, implying a small reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from energy generation.

To reduce the global, social and environmental impact of consumption of resources

- 3.1.15 Significant effects on this objective are not thought likely as a result of the Town Centre AAP Preferred Options.

To reduce waste generation and disposal, and achieve the sustainable management of waste

- 3.1.16 It is not thought likely that significant effects on this objective would result from the Town Centre AAP Preferred Options.

To maintain and improve the water quality of the region's rivers and groundwater, and to achieve sustainable water resources management

- 3.1.17 The Town Centre AAP Preferred Options may increase the demand for water but are not thought likely to have significant effects on this objective.

To increase energy efficiency and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources

- 3.1.18 It is proposed in the Environment Preferred Option and Indicative Policy TCG1 that the feasibility of combined heat and power (CHP) in larger new developments must be investigated before planning permission can be given. If such schemes are implemented they could be significantly beneficial in reducing the demand for energy from the Town Centre.

To maintain low rates of unemployment and high levels of economic activity, by improving skills, training and education

3.1.19 There are likely to be employment opportunities both during construction work and following completion of the redevelopment in the Town Centre. It is perhaps unlikely that many jobs will be generated locally through construction.

To provide for appropriate commercial development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy

3.1.20 The Shopping Preferred Option states that the town centre will be the focus for major retail developments. A number of the proposed development sites include provision for commercial and retail land uses. This suggests that the Town Centre Area Action Plan Preferred Options are likely to have significantly beneficial effects on this objective, although many sites are carried over from the Local Plan.

3.2 Mitigation

3.2.1 Mitigation measures, designed to offset adverse effects or enhance beneficial effects, are shown in Table 3.1. These will be considered by the Council along with the responses received from the current round of public consultation on the Preferred Options.

Table 3.1: Proposed Mitigation

Option / Site / Policy	Proposed Mitigation	Reason
Environment Preferred Option	Add "to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency" to the last bullet point	Stress the need for flood defences for sites at risk of flooding
	Need to direct development away from flood plain in the long term	Adaptation to climate change
Housing Preferred Option	It might be useful to give further details on how housing developments could 'respect existing character' whether it is a design or materials issue	To provide greater clarity
Movement Preferred Option	Remove "the encouragement of" from fourth bullet point	Change the wording to be more definite
Movement Preferred Option	Remove "the encouragement of" from sixth bullet point	Change the wording to be more definite
Movement Preferred Option	Remove "seek" from last bullet point	Change the wording to be more definite
Movement Preferred Option	Could include reference to safety of non-motorised travellers (e.g. pedestrian priority)	Addresses safety issues

Movement Preferred Option	Additional park and ride facilities might have an impact on biodiversity or landscape assets	Need to consider placement of new facilities
Shopping Preferred Option	Would a case-by-case assessment of the need to retain vacant shops be preferable to the current option?	Efficiency in re-use of land and buildings
Offices Preferred Option	Would a case-by-case assessment of the need to retain vacant offices be preferable to the current option?	Efficiency in re-use of land and buildings
Site 1	May be necessary to address issue of overshadowing and obstruction of views at project level assessment of effects	This development proposes high density against a backdrop of existing low-density housing
Site 4	Should the cultural heritage value (if any) of the Civic Hall be taken into account when considering whether to refurbish or redevelop	Protection of potential cultural heritage assets
Site 5	Site in River Wey corridor - does this require special measures for flood risk management?	Adaptation to climate change
	Green space should be designed with emergency storage of flood water in mind	Additional flood management measure
Site 6	If possible use an alternative site, otherwise stress the need to consider flood risk in building design	Adaptation to climate change
	Is housing the most appropriate use for this site? It appears to be isolated from other residential areas. What does the Urban Capacity Study say?	
Site 7	If possible use an alternative site, otherwise stress the need to consider flood risk in building design	Adaptation to climate change
	Is the 0.04 hectare area correct?	Possible typographic error
Site 8	Site in River Wey corridor - does this require special measures for flood risk management?	Adaptation to climate change
	Green space should be designed with emergency storage of flood water in mind	Additional flood management measure
	Site in area of high archaeological potential - archaeological survey recommended prior to development	Potential for loss of cultural heritage assets
Site 9	Site in River Wey corridor - does this require special measures for flood risk management?	Adaptation to climate change
	Site in area of high archaeological potential - archaeological survey recommended prior to development	Potential for loss of cultural heritage assets
Site 10	Is it possible to clarify the design requirements at this stage, or will this be handled more appropriately in a design brief?	This will offer greater certainty to developers

TC8	Add "without being otherwise detrimental to other objectives identified in the Local Plan policy" to the end of the sentence	This supplementary policy shifts the emphasis of the management of the River Wey towards access and away from protection of biodiversity
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3.3 Monitoring

3.3.1 Proposals for monitoring the likely significant effects of the Town Centre are set out in the SA Report. The indicators proposed are as follows:

Population

- Total population
- Population density per hectare
- Population structure by age
- Population structure by sex
- Population structure by ethnic background
- Population structure by social grade

Human Health

- None proposed

Economy

- Counts of VAT-based enterprises by broad industry group
- VAT registrations and de-registrations

Employment

- Employment by occupation
- Job Seekers Allowance claimants

Transport

- Extent and use of cycle and pedestrian networks in the Town Centre
- Modal split of journeys into and out of the Town Centre
- The mode of transport to work in the Town Centre
- Number of parking spaces within the Town Centre

Crime and Safety

- Total offences and offences per thousand population
- Fear of crime
- Road traffic casualties, including child casualties
- Casualties from other accidents

Housing

- Housing completions
- Completions of affordable housing
- Housing built on Previously Developed Land
- Energy efficiency of new housing
- Percentage of homes built to Lifetime Homes standards

Cultural Heritage

- Listed Buildings and Listed Buildings 'at risk'
- Scheduled Monuments and Scheduled Monuments 'at risk'
- Maintenance of Townscape Character of Conservation Areas (in accordance with the Character Area Assessments)

Climate

- Percentage of energy generated from renewable sources in the town Centre
- Percentage of new non-residential developments (over 1000m²) generating 10% of their energy from renewable sources
- Percentage of new residential developments generating 10% of their energy from renewable sources
- Percentage of new non-residential developments (over 1000m²) incorporating combined heat and power schemes

Air

- National statutory air quality objectives
- Number and extent of Air Quality Management Areas in the Town Centre

Soil

- Number of sites known to be at risk of contamination
- Number of sites that undergo remediation as part of redevelopment

Water

- Extent and type of new development & re-development in the Flood Plain (Flood Zones 2 and 3)
- Number of flooding incidents in the Town Centre

Biodiversity

- Condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (available from English Nature website) - this would also capture the condition of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA
- Use of Thames Basin Heaths SPA for recreation
- The number of residential units consented within the buffer zones to the Thames Basin Heaths SPA and the extent and location of the new area of new open space associated with them.
- Population of key bird species within the SPA, notably nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler

Landscape

- Quality of development in landscape character areas
- Maintenance of distinctiveness within and between landscape character areas
- Maintenance of strategic views within and between landscape character areas
- Quality of open space, including 'public realm' areas, within the Town Centre
- Quantity of open space within the Town Centre
- Maintenance of important tree groups/tree preservation order within the Town Centre

3.4 To comment on the Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.4.1 If you would like to comment on the Sustainability Appraisal, or to obtain a copy of the full report, please contact the Guildford Borough Council Planning Policy team:

- Planning Policy
Environmental Policy & Design
Guildford Borough Council
Millmead House
Millmead
Guildford
Surrey GU2 4BB
- By phone, on 01483 444464
- Or by e-mail, planningpolicy@guildford.gov.uk