



SOUTH WORCESTERSHIRE LOCAL PLAN:

Targeted Consultation on
Significant Changes to the
Preferred Options
July 2012:

Sustainability Appraisal
(Integrated Appraisal) &
Habitats Regulations
Assessment Update



MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL, WORCESTER
CITY COUNCIL, WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

SOUTH WORCESTERSHIRE LOCAL PLAN: TARGETED
CONSULTATION JULY 2012

Sustainability Appraisal (Integrated Appraisal) of Significant Changes

for and on behalf of Enfusion Ltd

<i>date:</i>	<i>V 0.1 Work in Progress 21 June 2012 V0.2 Report for consultation 12 July 2012</i>	
<i>prepared by:</i>	<i>Toney Hallahan Alastair Peattie Barbara Carroll</i>	
<i>checked by:</i>	<i>Barbara Carroll</i>	

enfusion

environmental planning and management for sustainability



Treenwood House
Rowden Lane
Bradford on Avon
BA15 2AU
t: 01225 867112
www.enfusion.co.uk

	CONTENTS	Page
	Summary of findings	
1.0	Introduction	1
	Introduction	
	The South Worcestershire Local Plan	
	Integrated Appraisal	
	Commenting on this Integrated Appraisal Report	
2.0	Consideration of Consultation Responses	3
	Responses to SA of Preferred Options	
3.0	Integrated appraisal of changes to the South Worcestershire Local Plan	4
	Changes to the South Worcestershire Local Plan since Preferred Options stage	
	Sustainability Appraisal of Changes	
	Equalities & Health Impact Assessment of Changes	
	Habitats Regulations Assessment of Changes	
4.0	Update to Integrated Appraisal Baseline	9
5.0	Summary & next steps	9
	Appendices	
	Appendix 1- Consultation responses to IA of Preferred options	
	Appendix 2- SA of Significant Changes	
	Appendix 3- Updated Baseline	

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 0.1 This document accompanies the South Worcestershire Local Plan (SWLP) Targeted Changes on consultation (6 August – 14 September 2012). It provides an Integrated Appraisal (IA) of the sustainability, equalities and health impacts of the significant changes being proposed to the SWLP. It also considers the implications for the Habitats Regulations Assessment; includes a response to consultation comments received on the previous IA and an update to the IA evidence base (baseline and plans and programmes).
- 0.2 The key changes made to the Plan since the Preferred Options document include an increase in new homes (from 20,360 to 23,200), although these will mostly be met through bringing back empty homes into use and windfall sites. Other key changes include nine new policies, a number of which are designed to protect the natural and historic environment, and changes to the allocations for housing and other uses throughout the South Worcestershire area.
- 0.3 The IA findings of the significant effects of these changes are outlined below:
 - There is potential for increased pressure on existing infrastructure and a requirement for new infrastructure due to the increase in new homes. However the approach to infrastructure has been strengthened in the plan, and an Infrastructure Delivery Plan Interim Position Statement has been included that sets out the position for physical, social and green infrastructure; and it's costing, funding mechanisms and delivery. Once further developed and implemented, this will have a significant positive effect for infrastructure, economy and the community.
 - Bringing back empty homes into economic use has positive effects for communities and the economy, making use of existing resources and helping regeneration.
 - As a response to concerns raised in consultation and the previous IA, the strengthening of existing policies and addition of new policies on landscape, protection of the AONBs, biodiversity/ geodiversity and the historic environment will all help to protect and enhance South Worcestershire's natural environment and mitigate the potential negative effects of new development. This will have significant positive effects on the SA objectives relating to the natural and built environment (including landscape/townscapes, biodiversity and heritage).
 - A new policy on housing for the elderly will better help the area cater for an ageing population, with positive effects for Equalities and Health.
 - When considered cumulatively, the changes to the site allocations are unlikely to have a significant effect on the South Worcestershire area as a whole, however there are a number of

localised effects (both positive and negative), and these are discussed in the detailed appendices.

0.4 The HRA findings, progress and next steps are outlined as follows:

- The key changes to the Plan that relate to the HRA are the increase in new homes and the changes to proposed site allocations. These changes are unlikely to significantly affect the scope and findings of the HRA (AA) Report (September 2011).
- A revised HRA (AA) Report has been produced to take account of the changes to the Plan and comments from Natural England. The report takes forward and updates the findings of the previous HRA (AA) Report that accompanied the SWDP Preferred Option document on consultation in September 2011. The revised HRA (AA) Report (July 2012) and Appendices are available for comment alongside this IA Report.

0.5 The IA work on the SA of Targeted Changes will be placed on the consultation website alongside the targeted changes. Any further significant changes to the Local Plan as a result of the targeted changes consultation will be subject to Integrated Appraisal (SA, SEA, EqIA, HIA). A Final IA Report that documents the IA process since 2007 will be prepared and it will accompany the Pre-Submission SWLP on public consultation in November 2012.

1.0 Introduction

Introduction

- 1.1 This document accompanies the South Worcestershire Local Plan (SWLP) Targeted Changes on consultation (6 August – 14 September 2012). It provides the following information:
- An Integrated Appraisal (IA) of the sustainability, equalities and health impacts of the significant changes being proposed to the SWLP;
 - Consideration of the implications of the changes for the Habitats Regulations Assessment;
 - A summary of and response to consultation comments received on the IA of the Preferred Options document; and
 - An update of the baseline and plans and programmes review used to inform the IA.
- 1.2 It should be considered alongside the September 2011 document: Sustainability Appraisal (Integrated Appraisal) Report of South Worcestershire Development Plan: Preferred Options document, available on the South Worcestershire Development Plan website: http://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/?page_id=254 .

The South Worcestershire Local Plan

- 1.3 The South Worcestershire Local Plan (SWLP) sets the long term vision and objectives for Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon District Council areas up to the year 2030. It brings together the development strategy, site specific allocations and development management policies for the three local authority areas, setting out the long term vision, strategic objectives, site allocations and development management policies. It also considers the options available through the planning system to the Councils and communities in the South Worcestershire area.

Integrated Appraisal

- 1.4 Throughout the development of the SWLP, the Plan has been subject to Integrated Appraisal to consider the environmental, social, economic, health and equalities impacts of the Plan. The key component of Integrated Appraisal is Sustainability Appraisal (SA). SA is a systematic process designed to evaluate the social, economic and environmental effects of development planning, and incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), a process that considers the effects of development planning on the environment. For further information about the Sustainability Appraisal work to date, please refer to the South Worcestershire Development Plan website: http://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/?page_id=254

- 1.5 In addition to the SA/SEA requirement, the Integrated Appraisal of the SWLP has also incorporated Habitats Regulations Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) (both statutory requirement for LDFs), and non-statutory Health Impact Assessment (HIA).

Commenting on this Integrated Appraisal Report

- 1.6 This Report is available for comments alongside the South Worcestershire Local Plan Targeted Changes consultation from 6 August – 14 September 2012. All responses should be sent to:

South Worcestershire Local Plan (SWLP)
Orchard House
Farrier Street
Worcester
WR1 3BB

Email: contact@swdevelopmentplan.org

Responses may be made using the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWLP) website

<http://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/>

2.0 Consideration of Consultation responses

Responses to IA of Preferred Options

- 2.1 Sixteen responses were received by the Council that included specific reference to the Integrated Appraisal of the SWDP Preferred Options Document. Responses included additional comments on the evidence base, concerns in relation to the SA method and detailed information about new potential sites for development that were not previously considered. A detailed table providing a summary of the comments received and a response to those comments is provided in Appendix 1 of this report.

HRA consultation responses

- 2.2 The HRA (AA) Report was subject to consultation advice from Natural England (NE) who stated that many of the uncertainties identified through the AA could be resolved and that the Plan needs to include more specific and robust mitigation for any remaining potential adverse effects on integrity. NE recommended that if further connections are made between the effects of the policy, potential environmental pathways and the sensitivities of the European sites. A table summarising the consultation comments and how they will be addressed is provided in Appendix 1 of this report.

3.0 Integrated appraisal of changes to the South Worcestershire Local Plan

Changes to the South Worcestershire Local Plan since Preferred Options stage

- 3.1 The SWDP Preferred Options Document was placed on an 8 week consultation between 26 September 2011 to 18 November 2011. Since this time, the Local Authorities have made further focused changes to the document to account for the findings of the consultation exercise and the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal. The changes also reflect significant recent changes to the planning system including the introduction of the Localism Act and cancellation of most national Planning Policy Statements, the planned revocation of regional spatial strategies, and enabling the development of more locally derived housing targets.
- 3.2 The changes to the document since the Preferred Options consultation can be summarised as follows:
 - Introduction of nine(9) new policies
 - Further changes to Preferred Option policies including minor changes to wording and strengthening of some policies with regard to landscape
 - Requirement to accommodate an additional 2,840 homes
 - Changes to the proposed allocation of sites included in the Preferred Options document.
- 3.3 The changes are detailed in Part 1 of Appendix II.

Sustainability Appraisal of Changes

- 3.3 The SA of proposed changes does not repeat the assessment carried out for the SA of the Preferred Options, but instead appraises the changes made to the policies themselves. This report should therefore be read in conjunction with the Preferred Options Consultation Sustainability Appraisal (Integrated Appraisal) SA Technical Report (September 2011) available at: http://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/?page_id=254
- 3.4 In summary, the effects of the changes for Sustainability are:
- There is potential for increased pressure on existing infrastructure and a requirement for new infrastructure due to the increase in new homes. However the approach to infrastructure has been strengthened in the plan, and an Infrastructure Delivery Plan Interim Position Statement has been included that sets out the position for physical, social and green infrastructure; also it's costing, funding mechanisms and delivery. Once further developed and implemented, this will have a significant positive effect for infrastructure, economy and the community.
 - Bringing back empty homes into economic use has positive effects for communities and the economy, making use of existing resources and helping regeneration.
 - As a response to concerns raised in consultation and the previous IA, the strengthening of existing policies and addition of new policies on landscape, protection of the AONBs, biodiversity/ geodiversity and the historic environment will all help to protect and enhance South Worcestershire's natural environment and mitigate the effects of new development. This will have significant positive effects on the SA objectives relating to the natural and built environment (including landscape/townscapes, biodiversity and heritage).
 - When considered cumulatively, the changes to the site allocations are unlikely to have a significant effect on the South Worcestershire area as a whole, however there are a number of localised effects (both positive and negative). In particular, where there is an increase or decrease in housing or employment, there will be changes to the effects on congestion and air pollution. The detailed effects are discussed in the appendices.

Equalities and Health Impact Assessment of Changes

- 3.5 In summary, the effects of the changes for Health and Equalities are:

- A new policy on housing for the elderly will better help the area cater for an ageing population, with positive effects for Equalities and Health.
- Strengthening existing policies and addition of new policies on landscape, protection of the AONBs and biodiversity/geodiversity are all likely to have positive effects for human health.

Habitats Regulations Assessment of changes

- 3.6 The key changes to the Plan that relate to the HRA are the increase in new homes and the changes to proposed site allocations. These changes are unlikely to significantly affect the scope and findings of the HRA (AA) Report (September 2011).
- 3.7 A revised HRA (AA) Report has been produced to take account of the changes to the Plan and comments from Natural England. The report takes forward and updates the findings of the previous HRA (AA) Report that accompanied the SWDP Preferred Option document on consultation in September 2011. The revised HRA (AA) Report (July 2012) and Appendices are available for comment alongside this IA Report.

4.0 Update to Integrated Appraisal Baseline

- 4.1 The original SA scoping report was undertaken by the South Worcestershire authorities in June 2007. The baseline and plans and programmes review in that document helped to identify the key sustainability issues for the plan area.
- 4.2 Since this time there have been a number of changes to policy and governance, particularly the decline of the regional layer of governance. Further information is also available on some topics and the global economic recession has led to economic changes in the plan area.
- 4.3 To illustrate that an up-to-date evidence base has been available to inform the SA and Plan, Appendix 3 provides a focussed update to the original scoping report, incorporating the requirements of Equalities and Health Impact Assessment. This should be considered alongside the South Worcestershire Development Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2010 (and when available the 2011 AMR) and the list of plans and programmes also provided in Appendix 3 for further detailed information about the current baseline. The Integrated Appraisal has sought, where possible to use the most up to date information to inform the assessment, including the evidence base for the Plan itself that includes studies and reports commissioned by the Council throughout the plan-making process.
- 4.4 Notwithstanding these changes to the baseline and plans/programmes review, the key sustainability issues identified in the scoping report and that led to development of the SA Framework remain the same (for example, reliance on the private car, lack of affordable housing and an ageing population).

5.0 Summary & Next Steps

Integrated Appraisal

- 5.1 Any responses received during the Targeted consultation relating to the Integrated Appraisal will be further considered, alongside further changes made to the Plan by the South Worcestershire Authorities. A final Pre-submission IA report will be produced that reports on the entire Integrated Appraisal process and appraises any further significant changes. This report will form part of the evidence base to inform the Plan during examination.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 5.2 The changes to the Plan outlined in this report, along with any further changes as a result of this targeted consultation on the significant changes to the Plan, will be considered in detail in a revised HRA (AA) Report that will accompany the Pre-Submission SWLP on consultation in November 2012. The revised report will take account of NE comments on the HRA (AA) Report (September 2011) and provide an updated screening of Pre-Submission policies that clearly illustrates the links between the potential effects of the policies, the environmental pathways and the sensitivities of European sites. This will help to address some of the uncertainties identifies in the HRA (AA) Report (September 2011) and allow for the development of more focused mitigation measures.
