

Loughborough Devonshire Square Development Brief

Supplementary Planning Document – Consultation Draft

August 2006

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT

Devonshire Square Development Brief Supplementary Planning Document

Sustainability Appraisal Report

Introduction

1. Sustainability Appraisal is an integral part of the process for preparing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). It is about making sure that, by carrying out the proposals set out in such planning documents, the aim of sustainable development is achieved. To achieve sustainable development the Government has 4 objectives:

- Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
- Effective protection of the environment
- Prudent use of natural resources and
- Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment

2. The contribution to sustainable development is a key aim of planning. Sustainable development is simply about ensuring a better quality of life for everyone now and for future generations. A widely used definition was drawn up the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987:

‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’.

3. In applying the principles of sustainable development the Council must consider how its planning documents address the four Government objectives. They should seek to achieve outcomes that enable social, environmental and economic objectives are reached together over time. Sustainability appraisal is a tool for achieving this aim.

Methodology

4. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 makes Sustainability Appraisal a requirement for Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. Alongside this is the requirement to undertake environmental assessment of plans and programmes through the European Directive 2001/42/EC. Regulations on Local Development (SI 2004/2204) and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (SI 2004/1633) as well as draft Government guidance on sustainability appraisal have also been taken into account in developing an approach. This includes the following stages:

- Setting the context, objectives and baseline data
- Developing and refining options
- Appraising the effects of the draft DPD or SPD
- Consultation on the Sustainability Report and draft DPD or SPD
- Monitoring the implementation of the DPD or SPD

5. The approach adopted for this Sustainability Appraisal Report follows the method being developed by Halcrow Group Ltd for Sustainability Appraisal of the documents comprising Charnwood’s Development Framework.

6. A sustainability matrix has been drawn up to assess consistently all the component documents of Charnwood's Development Framework. It takes account of the objectives of national, regional and local planning policy, other strategies, plans and programmes. The matrix assesses the proposals or principles in each document against 27 sustainability objectives in order to establish the economic, social and environmental effects. Where detrimental effects are revealed by this process the document will be revised where possible to reduce or reverse the effect.
7. This Sustainability Appraisal Report focuses on the Devonshire Square Development Brief SPD. However, if you wish to comment on the scope of the appraisal you may do so at this stage.
8. The Sustainability Appraisal for the Devonshire Square Development Brief SPD was undertaken by Council officers in July 2006.
9. Appendix I signposts the components of this Sustainability Report which make up the Environmental Report for the purposes of complying with the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC).

Context

10. The Corporate Plan to 2011/12 'Leading in Leicestershire' sets out the overarching priority for the Council as:

*Ensuring the Borough is recognised as Leading in Leicestershire
for the quality of its living environment for all.*

This SPD will support the Council's overarching priority and is relevant to the key aims of the Corporate Plan. Six aims have been identified to support achievement of the priority:

- A sustainable environment;
- A clean, safe and healthy environment;
- Leisure and cultural opportunities for all;
- Decent homes and neighborhoods;
- An economically prosperous environment;
- An excellent council.

11. The Devonshire Square Development Brief SPD has been prepared in the context of the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan, particularly policies EV/1 and CA/4(a).
12. Policy EV/1 indicates that the Borough Council will seek to ensure a high standard of design in all new developments. The policy sets out a number of criteria against which new development proposals will be judged.
13. To implement policy EV/1 the Council has approved a key document "Leading in Design" which gives guidance on all aspects of design. It has itself been the subject of a sustainability appraisal. It has been closely followed in the writing of the Devonshire Square Development Brief SPD.
14. Policy CA/4(a) seeks to promote comprehensive re-development and appropriate land uses of the Devonshire Square opportunity site. It sets out the basic principles for

redevelopment and the Development Brief expands those principles and seeks to clarify them so that appropriate planning applications will be made.

Background

15. The purpose of the Devonshire Square Development Brief SPD is to establish the design principles and features that are considered necessary to implement redevelopment of the area of Loughborough town centre that comprises Devonshire Square, Wards End and Bedford Square and their relationship to Queens Park.
16. This area has been recognised as an important opportunity site in the context of the Loughborough Town Centre Master Plan in which the Loughborough Inner Relief Road is a key component. The vision for the site is a development of high quality, which will transform an existing discordant building and extensive surface car parking areas into a positive part of the town centre offering a mix of uses, distinctive architecture and an innovative approach to the treatment of the public realm.
17. The aims of the Development Brief are:
 - To ensure that any new development pays due regard to the site context and features, planning objectives for the area and existing amenities; whilst optimising site potential and development quality;
 - To inform investment decisions, and land disposals and acquisitions by clarifying development constraints;
 - To stimulate interest among owners, developers and prospective occupiers so as to bring the land forward for development;
 - To encourage co-operation between owners;
 - To ease the planning process for potential applicants, Council officers and Members by anticipating issues and offering greater certainty;
 - To provide guidance to Council officers and Members to assist in the determination of planning applications.
18. The planning objectives for the area of the opportunity site are:
 - Well planned development following an urban design strategy based on a structure of routes, public spaces, active frontages and new built form;
 - A coherent, distinctive and attractive development which responds to the positive characteristics of its surroundings and relates sensitively to its neighbours;
 - A mix of uses that reflect the site's Core Area location, augments the leisure / cultural quarter defined in the Town Centre Master Plan, and includes a significant residential content;
 - A development that enhances key frontages to Queens Park, Devonshire Square and Granby Street and the 'gateway' John Storer House site;
 - A development that adds to the quality and quantity of public space, including improved linkages between Queen's Park and the town centre.

Appraisal of Devonshire Square Development Brief SPD Principles

19. The Vision and Planning Objectives of the Development Brief and the Development Principles in the Brief have been assessed against the objectives of Sustainability. The results are set out in the table in the centrefold of this report.

		Devonshire Square Development Brief SPD												
	Objective	Vision & Planning Objectives	General Principles	Appropriate Uses	Built Form & Layout	Scale of Development	Shop Fronts and Signage	The Public Realm	Access for Servicing and Car Parking	Cycle Facilities	Access for People with Disabilities	Public Art	Sustainability	
Natural Environment	To maintain and enhance biodiversity, flora and fauna	○	The General Principles follow the guidance in the Council's adopted SPD "Leading in Design" which has been the subject of Sustainability Appraisal.	○	○	↓	○	↑	○	○	○	○	↑	
	To maintain and enhance the landscape and townscape character	↑		↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	○	○	↑	○	
	To protect and improve surface and groundwater quality	○		D	↑	D	○	D	D	○	○	○	○	↑
	To minimise water consumption	○		D	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	↑
	To improve air quality	○		D	↑	○	○	↑	○	○	↑	○	○	↑
	To conserve soil resources and quality	○		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	To reduce contributions to climate change	○		D	D	D	○	↑	○	○	↑	○	○	↑
	To reduce vulnerability to climate change	○		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	↑	○	○	↑
Heritage	To conserve and enhance the historic and cultural environment	↑		↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	○	○	○	○	↑	↑
	To increase the re-use of previously developed land and buildings	↑		↑	↑	○	↑	↑	○	○	○	○	○	○
Material Assets	To reduce the extraction of new and increase the reuse and recycling of minerals and aggregates resources	D		D	D	○	○	○	○	○	↑	○	○	↑
	To manage waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy in all sectors (i.e. household, commercial and industrial)	○		D	D	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	↑
	To minimise the use of energy and optimise the use of renewable resources	○		D	D	○	↑	○	○	○	↑	○	○	↑
	To increase sustainable design and construction	○		○	↑	↑	○	↑	○	○	↑	○	○	↑
Social	To increase the population's access to a full range of appropriate public, private, community and voluntary services	↑		↑	↑	○	○	○	D	○	○	↑	↑	○
	To increase access to the countryside, open spaces and semi urban environments (eg parks)	○		↑	↑	○	↑	○	○	○	○	↑	○	○
	To promote a strong community where people feel they have a say in the future	○		↑	↑	○	↑	○	↑	○	↑	↑	↑	○
	To reduce crime, anti social behaviour and increase community safety	○		↑	↑	○	↑	○	↑	○	○	○	↑	○
	To increase the population's access and opportunity to participate in culture, media and sport	↑		↑	↑	○	↑	○	○	○	○	↑	↑	○
	To ensure that the housing stock meets the housing needs of all sections of the community	↑		↑	↑	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	To reduce poverty and social exclusion	○	↑	○	○	↑	○	○	○	○	↑	○	↑	
	To increase learning, skills and employability for all sections of the community	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	↑	○	○	
	To increase the vibrancy and viability of settlements	↑	↑	↑	○	↑	○	↑	○	↑	↑	↑	○	
	To increase healthy life styles	○	↑	↑	○	○	↑	↑	↑	↑	○	↑	↑	
Economy	To encourage a sustainable economy	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	○	○	↑	↑	↑	↑	
	To increase efficient patterns of movement to support a sustainable economy	○	↑	↑	↑	○	↑	○	↑	↑	○	○	↑	
	To reduce disparities in economic performance	○	↑	↑	○	↑	○	○	○	↑	↑	○	↑	

↓	Significant negative effect (i.e. a move away from the objective)	↑	Significant positive effect (i.e. a move towards the objective)	D	Effect depends on how the policy is implemented	○	There is no relationship or no significant relationship between the objective and the policy
↓	Marginal negative effect (i.e. a move away from the objective)	↑	Marginal positive effect (i.e. a move towards the objective)	?	Not known whether the policy will move towards or away from the objective	T	Denotes a temporary effect. Effects are permanent if this symbol is not used.

20. The Development Brief has closely followed the guidance in the Council's "Leading in Design" which itself makes a strong commitment to sustainability.
21. For most of the queries in the appraisal there is no significant relationship between the development principles and the objectives. These queries relate in general to the natural environment. This may be expected since the document is concerned about redevelopment of an already urban area.
22. However, the scale of new development some of which is proposed will take place on land which is currently hardstanding and relatively waste land will mean a reduction of habitat.
23. The Development Brief includes a statement that construction should follow principles of sustainable design. If these are effectively implemented there could be some benefits to the natural environment. Nevertheless, the scores have been set at neutral.
24. The Brief contains a recommendation for sustainable design and construction. If the advice is implemented faithfully it is assumed that negative effects will be mitigated as far as is currently possible, although, it is assumed that new building on the scale proposed will mean an increase in the extraction of raw materials.
25. The appraisal demonstrates that serious consideration has been given to sustainability in the Development Brief, particularly in the relationship between the principles and the objectives that seek to conserve and enhance the cultural and built environment.
26. The Development Brief describes improvements regarding access to Queens Park, an area of public open space.
27. Overall, disregarding the neutral scores which are not relevant in an already urban area, the scores are strongly positive:
 - <1% negative scores
 - 52% neutral
 - 6% scores depend on implementation
 - 42% positive scores for:
 - maintaining and enhancing the landscape and townscape character
 - conserving and enhancing where appropriate the historic and cultural environment
 - promoting vibrant and viable settlements.

Implementation

28. The Devonshire Square Development Brief SPD expands on policy CA/4(a) of the Charnwood Local Plan. It will be monitored through the single system for monitoring the Charnwood Development Framework.
29. The Development Brief may be amended to take account of this Sustainability Appraisal after the consultation period and prior to final publication.

How to Comment

30. The Council has produced this Sustainability Appraisal Report to accompany publication of the draft Devonshire Square Development Brief SPD for consultation.
31. The findings of this sustainability appraisal along with any consultation responses will be taken into account prior to finalising the Devonshire Square Development Brief SPD. Any significant and valid responses requiring changes will themselves be subject to sustainability appraisal to ensure that there will be no significant detrimental economic, social or environmental effects.
32. Comments regarding the Sustainability Appraisal Report should be sent to the Council by **Monday 4th September 2006** to:
Conservation & Design Team, Charnwood Borough Council, Council Offices, Southfield Road, Loughborough LE11 2TN or by email to built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk
33. Please contact the Conservation & Design Team if you have any queries concerning this document. Telephone 01509 634769 or email built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk

If you would like to have the content of any part of this document explained to you in your language or to obtain copies in Braille, on audio tape or large print: please phone 01509 634560

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Appendix I - Complying with the SEA Directive

The following table indicates how this sustainability appraisal complies with the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC):

SEA Directive	How this Sustainability Appraisal complies with the SEA Directive.
Article 4 – General Obligations Carry out an Environmental Assessment during the preparation of a plan before its adoption.	The Sustainability Appraisal for the Devonshire Square Development Brief SPD was carried out prior to publication of a draft SPD for public consultation.
Article 5 – Environmental Report Prepare an Environmental Report including information to be provided under Article 5(1), subject to Article 5(2) and (3) of the SEA Directive:	A sustainability report incorporating the environment report was published alongside the draft SPD for public consultation.
(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Refer to paragraphs 15-18 and 11-14.
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan;	The SPD relates to an existing urban area of Loughborough.
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	The SPD relates to an existing urban area of Loughborough.
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan 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;	The SPD relates to an existing urban area of Loughborough.
(e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	Refer to paragraphs 1-3.
(f) the likely significant effects (1) 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;	Refer to paragraphs 19-27.
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan;	Refer to paragraph 28.
(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the	Refer to paragraphs 4-6.

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;	
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10;	Refer to paragraph 28.
(j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.	Refer to paragraphs 19-27.
Consult responsible environmental authorities on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report.	This document includes consultation on the scope of the proposed approach to sustainability appraisal for this SPD.
Article 6 – Consultations Consult with responsible environmental bodies – the Countryside Agency, Environment Agency, English Heritage, English Nature – and the public on the draft plan and the Environment Report before the plan is adopted.	This sustainability report incorporating the environment report is published alongside the draft SPD for public consultation.
Article 7 – Transboundary Consultations Consult with other European Member States where there will be significant effects on the environment in another Member State.	A transboundary consultation is not considered appropriate in the case of the Devonshire Square Development Brief SPD.
Article 8 – Decision Making Take into account the Environment Report and consultation responses during the preparation of the plan before it is adopted	The sustainability report and consultation responses will be taken into account before the Devonshire Square Development Brief SPD is adopted.
Article 9 - Information on the Decision When a plan is adopted responsible environmental bodies, the public and transboundary Member States will be informed of: (a) The plan as adopted; (b) A statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan, how any consultation responses have been taken into account and the reasons for choosing the plan as adopted; (c) The measures for monitoring.	Responsible environmental bodies and the public and other relevant bodies will be informed of the appropriate documents when the Devonshire Square Development Brief SPD is adopted.
Article 10 – Monitoring Monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans to identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects and so to take remedial action.	A single monitoring system for the various components of the Local Development Framework will be developed.

