



**NEWARK &
SHERWOOD**
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Newark & Sherwood Local Development Framework

**Draft Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary
Planning Document (SPD)**

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL SCREENING REPORT

December 2013

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Sustainability Appraisal Screening Report

Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The District Council has produced a Draft Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to supplement the Policies within the Newark and Sherwood Local Development Framework.
- 1.2 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a tool that is used to improve the sustainability of LDF documents. It uses a range of sustainability objectives and indicators to test whether the plans, policies and proposals can deliver sustainable development. SA can be viewed as a yardstick against which the social, economic and environmental effects of the plan can be tested. Integrated into the SA are the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive¹. However, the sustainability appraisal covers wider social and economic effects of plans, as well as the more environmentally-focused considerations in the SEA Directive.
- 1.3 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required that all Local Development Documents, including DPDs (now local plans) and SPDs be subject to SA prior to publication. Alterations to Section 19(5) of the 2004 Act under the Planning Act 2008 removed the requirement for local authorities to produce an SA for SPDs. The rationale behind this is that SPDs do not contain any new policies, but provide supplementary guidance relating to policies set out in overarching local plans that have been subject to SA.
- 1.4 However, a SPD may occasionally be found likely to give rise to significant effects which have not been formally assessed in the context of a higher-level planning document. Therefore, local authorities need to screen their SPDs to ensure that legal requirements for SA are met where there are impacts that have not been covered in the appraisal of the parent plan or where an assessment is required by the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.
- 1.5 The District Council does not believe that a SA/SEA is likely to be required for the purpose of the draft Landscape Character Assessment SPD as outlined in this report and sets out the assessment on which the Council's screening opinion is based.

¹ European Directive 2001/42/EC transposed into United Kingdom law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004,

2. Developer Contributions and Planning Obligations SPD

- 2.1 The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a District- level assessment of landscape character which forms part of the wider assessment for the County. Its preparation has followed the County-level methodology and the document provides an explanation of the differences between landscapes that is based around a sense of place, local distinctiveness, characteristic wildlife, and natural features. In identifying specific Landscape Policy Zones (LPZs) and related actions the LCA will play an important role in the planning framework and in decisions over new development.
- 2.2 Reflecting this importance the LCA has been a key part of the evidence base informing the production of the Core Strategy (CS) and the Allocations & Development Management (A&DM) Development Plan Documents (DPDs). The Assessment has been a significant factor in the making of decisions on site allocations within the A&DM DPD.
- 2.3 Core Policy 13 (Landscape Character) of the Core Strategy sets out that the Local Development Framework (LDF) will introduce a comprehensive landscape assessment of Newark and Sherwood which will identify the landscape character condition and sensitivity of each Landscape Policy Zone. The policy also sets out the expectation that development proposals will positively address the implications of the LPZs and demonstrate that the aims and objectives for that area would be contributed to.
- 2.4 The LCA offers an objective methodology for assessing the varied landscape within Newark and Sherwood and gives a greater understanding of what makes the landscape within the District locally distinctive. This is reflected through the identification of Policy Zones across the 5 Landscape Character Types represented within Newark and Sherwood. The Landscape Character Assessment provides the basis for the implementation of Core Policy 13 and as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) of the LDF will be capable of being a material consideration within the planning process.

3. Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.1 Firstly, the screening process ascertains whether the Draft Landscape Character Assessment SPD gives rise to significant environmental effects, using the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC and Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 3.2 Paragraph 10 of the SEA Directive only requires SEA for plans which 'determine the use of small areas at a local level' or, which are 'minor modifications' to plans, when these are determined to be likely to cause significant environmental effects. Therefore the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects as listed in SEA Directive 2001/42/EC Annex II and the Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 have been reviewed to determine whether the exception applies to the draft Landscape Character SPD.
- 3.3 Appendix 1 sets out the assessment of the draft Landscape Character Assessment SPD issues against the SEA criteria. The results of the assessment clearly demonstrate that the SPD should not be subject to a SEA.

4. Sustainability Appraisal

- 4.1 Government Guidance (Office of Deputy Prime Minister - Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents (2005) suggests that where the authority has made a determination that the plan is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects (and is therefore exempt from the SEA directive) it must consider whether there are likely to be any significant economic or social effects.
- 4.2 Secondly, the screening process therefore considers whether the Landscape Character Assessment SPD gives rise to significant social and economic effects. If these have been formally assessed in the context of the higher-level policies in local plans, it is unlikely that significant social and economic effects arise from the draft Landscape Character Assessment SPD.
- 4.3 The Core Strategy DPD was appraised during its preparation and the appraisal results were reported in a Sustainability Appraisal Report. The SA assessed Core Policy 13 (the parent policy) against a range of social, economic and environmental 'sustainability objectives' using a range of indicators to consider the contribution that each policy makes towards the achievement of each sustainability objective.
- 4.4 The results of this Appraisal are included in Appendix 2, where the social and economic effects of the landscape character issues, elaborated in the draft SPD, are considered against the sustainability objectives of the Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal. Although the likely environmental effects have already been considered within the context of the SEA Directive (Appendix 1), for completeness this included the identification of policies through which the environmental effects of the planning obligation issues have been considered.
- 4.5 A summary of the appraisal results are set out below:

Policy	Commentary
Core Policy 13	The policy through actively categorising, conserving, reinforcing, restoring and creating the distinctive features of the local landscape could lead to positive effects which help to enhance the diversity of the natural, cultural and built environment for the benefit of residents and visitors. The policy makes the most of locally distinctive features and in the removal or mitigating of detracting features. Thus the policy is in support of a number of social and environmental sustainability indicators especially with regard to natural, built, cultural, archaeological assets given that landscapes are intimately related to the cultural and built heritage of an area. The positive effect of a holistic approach can help to enhance the diversity of the natural, cultural and built environment.

Conclusion

- 5.1 The draft Landscape Character SPD does not determine the use of land or constitute a minor modification to a plan. Based on the assessment in Appendix 1, it is demonstrated that the draft SPD does not give rise to significant environmental effects.

5.2 In addition the draft Landscape Character SPD does not give rise to significant social or economic effects. Based on the review in Appendix 2, it has been demonstrated that any social and economic effects that are likely to arise from the draft SPD have been formally assessed in the context of the Core Strategy and that no significant environmental effects have been identified which have not already been mitigated.

Appendix 1 Schedule 1 Criteria	
The characteristics of the Draft Planning Obligations SPD having regard to	
(1a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	The framework is set by the National Planning Policy Framework, the Core Strategy and Allocations & Development Management DPD's. The SPD will supplement this and help to ensure successful implementation at a local level. The SPD will not set the framework for the allocation or levels of development within the District, nor set the framework for individual projects.
(1b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	The SPD will provide detailed local guidance on landscape character to aid the implementation of existing policy within higher tier plans within the Local Development Framework.
(1c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	<p>The SPD has relevance to the integration of environmental considerations and the promotion of sustainable development through aiding the detailed consideration of landscape character as part of decisions over the location and suitability of development proposals.</p> <p>The document will help contribute to the protection and enhancement of landscape character where appropriate and also support the development of specific landscape interventions or projects.</p>
(1d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	There are no specific environmental problems that are relevant to the draft SPD, although it promotes environmental sustainability through enabling the detailed consideration of landscape character as part of development proposals.
(1e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	Not applicable. The draft SPD is not relevant to the implementation of Community legislation on the environment.

Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular to	
(2a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	The proposed SPD will not in itself set out, guide or bring forward development plans or projects. It will purely provide detailed local guidance on landscape character.
(2b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	The SPD is not considered to lead to any cumulative effects.
(2c) the trans-boundary nature of the effects;	Landscape Character does not always conform to administrative boundaries. As a result the Newark & Sherwood Landscape Character Assessment SPD will form part of wider assessment for the County. The preparation has followed a consistent County level methodology allowing for a coherent approach to Landscape Character across administrative boundaries. The SPD is able to provide detailed local guidance on landscape character and where appropriate can be used alongside other areas assessments to provide guidance across administrative boundaries.
(2d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	Not applicable. The Draft SPD does not produce any risks to human health or the environment.
(2e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The draft SPD is applicable district-wide, affects a population of 114,817 and relates to landscape within a geographical area of 65,181 hectares. The SPD will form part of the Local Development Framework but does not set the framework for development.
(2f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to— (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use; and	There are a range of special natural characteristics in Newark & Sherwood including Birklands & Bilhaugh Special Area of Conservation, National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Sites of Interest in Nature Conservation and Local Nature Reserves. As well as a range of heritage assets; that includes historic landscapes, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, listed buildings of various grades and registered historic parks and gardens.

	<p>These are largely protected, conserved and enhanced by adopted plan policies. The draft SPD is unlikely to have a negative impact on these areas. Indeed where there are issues concerning landscape character the document will guide their detailed consideration and positively inform decisions.</p>
<p>(2g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or protection status</p>	<p>The Draft Landscape Character SPD provides a comprehensive assessment of landscape character within Newark & Sherwood. This guidance will aid the detailed consideration of landscape issues, including those connected to areas which have a recognised national, community or protected status, and will support the implementation of policy that seeks to provide for its protection and enhancement.</p>

Sustainability Appraisal of Relevant Core Policy 13

The Sustainability Appraisal considered the suitability of the relevant Core Strategy policies against the following Sustainability Objectives:

1. To ensure that the housing stock meets the housing needs of the District
2. To improve health and reduce health inequalities
3. To provide better opportunities for people to value and enjoy the District’s heritage
4. To improve community safety, reduce crime and the fear of crime
5. To promote and support the development and growth of social capital across the District
6. To increase biodiversity levels across the District
7. To protect and enhance the rich diversity of the natural, cultural and built environmental and archaeological assets of the District
8. To manage prudently the natural resources of the District including water, air quality, soils and minerals
9. To minimise waste and increase the re-use and recycling of waste materials
10. To minimise energy usage and to develop the District’s renewable energy resource, reducing dependency on non-renewable sources
11. To make efficient use of the existing transport infrastructure, help reduce the need to travel by car, improve accessibility to jobs and services for all and to ensure that all journeys are undertaken by the most sustainable mode available
12. To create high quality employment opportunities
13. To develop a strong culture of enterprise and innovation
14. To provide the physical conditions for a modern economic structure, including infrastructure to support the use of new technologies

The relevant policies have been scored against the objectives using the following:

Key performance:

- +++ Strong and significant beneficial impact
- ++ Potentially significant beneficial impact
- + Supports objective, but beneficial impact may be minor
- 0 Policy has no impact or effect is neutral
- ? Uncertain or insufficient information on which to base the assessment at this stage
- Conflicts with objective and may have adverse impacts
- – Potentially significant adverse impact
- – – Strong and significant adverse impact

Core Policy 13 – Landscape Character

The LDF will introduce a comprehensive landscape assessment of Newark and Sherwood which will identify the landscape character condition and sensitivity of each Landscape Character Zone. Landscape Character Zones will be categorised as one of the following types of areas which require an action to: (See Page 64 of the Publication Core Strategy for table).

When allocating land within the Core Strategy and the Allocations & Development Management DPD, the District Council will need to demonstrate that the allocations impact on the Landscape Character Zone and its Conservation and Enhancement actions have been appropriately addressed.

The District Council will expect development proposals to positively address the implications of the Landscape Character Zones in which the proposals lie and demonstrate that such development would contribute towards meeting Landscape Conservation and Enhancement Aims for the area.

Core Policy 13 - Landscape Character			
SA Objective	Short Term	Long Term	Comments/Proposed Mitigation
1 Housing	0	0	
2 Health and health inequalities	0	0	
3 Access to Recreation and Culture	+	+	Actively categorising, conserving, reinforcing, restoring and creating the distinctive features of the local landscape could lead to increased levels of value being placed on the local landscape by residents and visitors alike.
4 Community Safety/Crime	0	0	
5 Develop Social Capital	0	0	
6 Biodiversity	+	+	Actively categorising, conserving, reinforcing, restoring and creating the distinctive features of the local landscape could lead to increased levels of biodiversity across the District.
7 Natural, built, cultural, archaeological assets	++	++	Landscapes are intimately related to the cultural and built heritage of an area. The positive effect of a holistic approach can help to enhance the diversity of the natural, cultural and built environment.
8 Natural Resources	0	0	
9 Waste and Recycling	0	0	
10 Energy	0	0	

11 Transport	0	0	
12 Employment	0	0	
13 Enterprise & Innovation	0	0	
14 Modern Economic Structure	0	0	