



Centre for Sustainability

St Albans City and District Council

Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic
Environmental Assessment)

Working Note for the Emerging Core Strategy

June 2009

Report Number: CPR419

Authors: Clare Harmer and Rob Gardner

Quality reviewed: Anne Binsted and Rob Gardner

Client: St Albans City and District Council

Copyright: TRL Limited June 2009

This report has been prepared for St Albans City and District Council and is unpublished and should not be referred to in any other document or publication without the permission of St Albans City and District Council. The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of St Albans City and District Council.

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	2
1.1	BACKGROUND	2
1.2	ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY	4
2	ASSESSMENT RESULTS.....	5
2.1	DISTRICT VISIONS AND OBJECTIVES	5
2.2	EMERGING CORE STRATEGY CHAPTERS.....	9
2.3	STRATEGIC SITES	15
3	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	16
4	NEXT STEPS.....	18

APPENDIX A – SA FRAMEWORK

APPENDIX B – EMERGING CORE STRATEGY ASSESSMENT TABLES: SEPARATE DOCUMENT

APPENDIX C – STRATEGIC SITES ASSESSMENT: SEPARATE DOCUMENT

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

New regulations require planning authorities to replace their Local Plans with Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). As part of their Local Development Framework, St Albans City and District Council (SADC) produced and consulted upon a Joint Issues and Options Document in May 2006 which focused on issues and options for the development of all of the required LDF documents, including the Core Strategy, Site Allocations and Development Control Policies. In July 2007, SADC then prepared a second Issues and Option Consultation Document focusing on the Core Strategy. The views expressed during both of these consultations have helped to inform the development the Emerging Strategy Core Strategy (along with other LDF documents), which begins to firm up SADC's approach to planning within the City and District.

Local Development Frameworks must be subject to both Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) which implement European Directive 2001/42/EC, known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. Although the requirement to carry out both an SA and SEA is mandatory, it is possible to satisfy the requirements of both pieces of legislation through a single assessment process. Government guidance for undertaking SEA¹ and SA of Development Plan Documents² in particular details how the SA and SEA should be integrated into one process.

The SA/SEA process helps planning authorities to fulfil their objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development by providing a structured assessment of the objectives and strategies against key sustainability issues as a basis for plans.

C4S is currently undertaking an SA/SEA of the Emerging Core Strategy for St Albans City and District Council. SA/SEA is an iterative process involving several stages that are closely linked to the development of the Core Strategy. The stages include:

- Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope;
- Stage B: Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects;

¹ A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (ODPM, 2005)

² Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents (ODPM, 2005)

- Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal/Environmental Report;
- Stage D: Consulting on the draft plan or programme and the Sustainability Appraisal/Environmental Report; and
- Stage E: Monitoring the implementation of the plan or programme.

In February 2006, a Scoping Report was produced and then consulted upon, which focused on the scope of the assessment that would be undertaken. Issues and Options Working Papers were then produced in May 2006 and July 2007. These assessed the options outlined in the Council's Issues and Options Consultation Documents.

This Working Note summarises the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), on the St Albans City and District Council Emerging Core Strategy. This Working Note should be read alongside the Emerging Core Strategy Document.

The Working Note does not form a formal part of the SA/SEA reporting process. It has been produced to contribute to the ongoing plan-making process, by providing an independent assessment of the Emerging Core Strategy, with a view to guiding the next stage of its development. Sustainability Appraisal is a decision aiding tool rather than a decision making one and the contents of this report should therefore be considered in this light.

This Working Note will be posted alongside the Emerging Core Strategy Consultation Document and the Council will invite comments on its content. It will then be followed by a Sustainability Appraisal Report which will accompany the publication of the Core Strategy Pre-Submission Document. The SA Report will assess the preferred options against the established SA/SEA Framework.

The format of this working paper is as follows:

- Section 1: Introduction and a description of the appraisal approach taken;
- Section 2: The sustainability of the emerging strategy put forward within SADC's Consultation Document is discussed;
- Section 3: Recommendations have been made related to identified sustainability issues for consideration by SADC in the next stages of developing Preferred Options for the Core Strategy;
- Appendix A: The Sustainability Appraisal Framework;

- Appendix B: Sustainability Appraisal assessment tables for the Emerging Core Strategy; and
- Appendix C: Assessment of Strategic Sites.

1.2 Assessment Methodology

The appraisal approach taken within this working paper utilises the SA/SEA Framework Objectives that were developed for the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for St Albans City and District Council. This SA Framework has been updated as a result of consultation comments received on the Scoping Report. The SA Framework is provided in Appendix A.

The Emerging Core Strategy's Objectives have been assessed for their compatibility with the SA objectives. The other chapters of the Emerging Core Strategy have been assessed against the SA framework objectives in terms of their overall performance ranked from 'very sustainable' to 'very unsustainable', using the scoring criteria outlined below.

Significance Assessment	Description
✓✓	Very sustainable - Option is likely to contribute significantly to the SA/SEA objective
✓	Sustainable - Option is likely to contribute in some way to the SA/SEA objective
?	Uncertain - It is uncertain how or if the Option impacts on the SA/SEA objective
–	Neutral - Option is unlikely to impact on the SA/SEA objective
x	Unsustainable - Option is likely to have minor adverse impacts on the SA/SEA objective
xx	Very unsustainable - Option is likely to have significant adverse impacts on the SA/SEA objective

The effects have also been forecast in terms of their:

- Permanence: permanent or temporary;
- Scale: local (within St Albans City and District), regional (the East of England region or nearby authorities in the South East and London), national/international (UK or a wider global impact); and
- Timescale: in the short term (1-10 years), medium term (10-20 years) or long term (after the life of the plan).

Where uncertainties were identified, possible measures to offset these effects have been considered, with recommendations provided. The majority of the recommendations have

been formulated as part of the ongoing plan making process and have been adopted through continuous improvement of the Core Strategy.

The assessment methodology used to assess the strategic sites is outlined in Appendix C.

2 Assessment Results

The following section provides a summary of the assessment results. Full assessment tables providing more detailed information can be found in Appendix B.

2.1 District Visions and Objectives

The Core Strategy sets two separate visions, one for the city of St Albans (City vision) and the other referred to as the Rural Vision.

The City Vision was assessed as either compatible or having no relationship with the SA objectives. Providing a prosperous economy which responds to changing and emerging markets, such as green technologies, is compatible with the economic objectives by supporting a sustainable local economy. Providing a range of shops and services is compatible with the social and economic objectives, for example through improving access to local services and facilities and providing local employment opportunities in the retail sector. The City Vision is also compatible with a number of the environmental objectives, in particular allowing St Albans to become a sustainable transport centre where walking and cycling are a mainstream form of travel is compatible with reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants.

The Rural Vision was assessed as compatible with the majority of the environmental SA objectives. However, there is some uncertainty over its compatibility with several of the social and economic objectives. Ensuring that new development is appropriate in its scale and location could restrict necessary housing and employment growth.

The Local Development Framework sets a list of objectives which will help to achieve these visions. The majority of the District's objectives are assessed as compatible or having no relationship with the environmental, social and economic SA objectives (**Error! Reference source not found.**). However, a number of incompatibilities and uncertainties have been forecast and these are discussed below.

A number of the potential incompatibilities identified are, however, likely to be mitigated by other strategic objectives, for example the incompatibilities between promoting St Albans city centre as a competitive and commercial location (RSO08) and greenhouse gas

emissions could be mitigated by the strategic objective which supports sustainable travel (RSO10).

Key to assessment

G	Compatible
N	Not Compatible
?	Uncertainty over compatibility
-	No relationship

Figure 1: Compatibility Assessment Vision and Objectives vs. SA Objectives

SA Objectives	Biodiversity	Maintain/enhance water quality/quantity	Flood risk	Soils	Greenhouse gas emissions	Climate change proof	Air quality	Use of brownfield sites	Resource efficiency	Historic & cultural assets	Landscape & townscape	Health	Sustainable locational development	Equity & social exclusion	Good quality housing	Community identity & participation	Crime & fear of crime	Sustainable prosperity & growth	Fairer access to services	Revitalise town centres
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Vision and Strategic Objectives																				
City Vision - Integrated Living for 2030: a creative and pioneering city for all, which values the past and embraces the future.	C	-	-	-	C	-	C	-	-	C	-	C	-	C	C	C	-	C	C	C
Rural Vision - The rural areas and communities within the District can be enhanced through the promotion of sustainable measures to boost the local economy and increase integration.	C	-	-	C	C	-	C	-	-	C	C	C	-	C	?	C	-	?	?	C
S01 - Actively protect, manage and improve the green belt to maintain the district's distinctiveness and to benefit quality of life.	C	C	-	C	-	-	-	C	-	C	C	C	-	C	-	C	-	-	-	-
S02 - Protect natural and historic assets and ensure any change is sustainable and enhances these assets for the benefit of the community.	C	C	C	C	-	-	C	-	C	C	C	C	-	C	-	C	-	-	-	-
S03 - Provide sufficient land for development as required by the Government, in sustainable locations, capable of being served by appropriate physical, social and green infrastructure and accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.	C	-	-	C	C	-	C	-	C	-	C	C	C	C	-	C	-	C	C	C
S04 - Deliver high quality, inclusive, safe, sustainable and locally distinctive design, creating excellent built and green environments which respect local character and makes best use of land in urban areas.	C	C	C	C	C	-	C	C	C	C	C	C	-	C	C	C	C	C	-	C
S05 - Establish St Albans as a regional cultural hub and premier location for recreation, culture, leisure, heritage and tourism. Encourage participation in sport and recreation by providing new and improved facilities catering for all levels of ability.	?	-	-	-	?	-	?	-	-	C	-	C	-	C	-	C	-	C	C	C
S06 - Provide more affordable homes and support a diverse housing market which provides access to good quality housing for all the district's residents.	N	N	?	N	N	-	N	-	-	?	N	-	-	C	C	C	-	C	-	-
S07 - Support a sustainable, prosperous and diverse economy and build the district's economic competitiveness by responding positively to economic change.	N	-	?	N	N	-	N	-	-	?	N	-	-	C	-	-	-	C	C	C
S08 - Promote St Albans city centre as an attractive, vibrant and competitive place for commercial, civic and cultural activity and improve the vitality and viability of the centre.	-	-	-	-	?	-	?	-	-	C	-	-	-	C	-	C	-	C	C	C
S09 - Enhance the vitality and viability of Harpenden town centre and the district, local and village centres.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	C	-	C	-	C	C	C
S10 - Support sustainable travel by public transport, walking and cycling; reduce growth in car travel and congestion; manage parking facilities; and enhance St Albans's role as a Regional Transport Node by creating a better integrated transport system.	-	-	-	-	C	-	C	-	C	-	-	C	-	C	-	-	-	C	-	-
S11 - Create well balanced, strong, safe, vibrant and sustainable communities, reduce deprivation and improve wellbeing by meeting everyone's needs through: supporting a vibrant voluntary and community sector; supporting community participation; providing equality of opportunity and access to homes, jobs, health care, education and training, recreation, and social and cultural facilities for the whole community; supporting initiatives for young people and the ageing population and supporting the provision of social and community facilities.	-	-	-	-	C	-	C	-	C	-	-	C	-	C	C	C	C	C	C	-
S12 - Development must contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change by making prudent use of resources, minimising pollution and waste, increasing energy efficiency and using low carbon and renewable energy sources.	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	-	C	?	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	C	-	-
S13 - Seek to achieve delivery of the strategy through the respective strategies, plans and programmes of all relevant delivery partners.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

2.1.1 S05: Establish St Albans as a regional cultural hub and premier location for recreation, culture, leisure, heritage and tourism. Encourage participation in sport and recreation by providing new and improved facilities catering for all levels of ability.

Uncertain compatibilities have been identified with the SA objectives for biodiversity, greenhouse gas emissions and air quality. Establishing St Albans as a premier hub for recreation, culture, leisure, heritage and tourism is likely to lead to increased visitor numbers which could put pressure on biodiversity. It could also result in increased car journeys thereby increasing greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants from transport.

2.1.2 S06: Provide more affordable homes and support a diverse housing market which provides access to good quality housing for all the district's residents.

This strategic objective is identified as incompatible with the objectives for biodiversity, water, soils, landscape, greenhouse gas emissions and air quality. Housing development is likely to lead to increased energy use and increased transport thereby increasing greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants to air. Housing development is also incompatible with water as it is likely to increase water consumption. Housing development on greenfield land is incompatible biodiversity, landscape and soils. Several uncertainties have also been identified, for example there is potential for incompatibility with flood risk as one potential strategic housing site is within a flood zone. There is also potential incompatibility with historic assets depending on the location and design of the housing developments.

2.1.3 S07: Support a sustainable, prosperous and diverse economy and build the district's economic competitiveness by responding positively to economic change.

This strategic objective is identified as being incompatible with the objectives for biodiversity, soils, landscape, greenhouse gas emissions and air quality. Economic development is likely to lead to increased energy use and increased demand for transport thereby increasing greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants to air. Employment development on greenfield land is incompatible with biodiversity, landscape and soils. Several uncertainties have also been identified, for example there is potential for incompatibility with flood risk and with historic assets depending on the location and design of the employment developments.

2.1.4 ***SO8: Promote St Albans city centre as an attractive, vibrant and competitive place for commercial, civic and cultural activity and improve the vitality and viability of the centre.***

There are potential incompatibilities with greenhouse gas emissions and air quality, as promoting St Albans city as a competitive and commercial centre could lead to increased greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants to air.

2.1.5 ***SO12: Development must contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change by making prudent use of resources, minimising pollution and waste, increasing energy efficiency and using low carbon and renewable energy sources.***

This strategic objective could lead to an increase in renewable energy technologies, such as wind turbines, which have the potential to be incompatible with landscape and townscape and historic and cultural assets. The effect will be dependent on the types, design and location of decentralised renewable or low carbon energy supply used in developments

2.2 Emerging Core Strategy Chapters

An assessment has been undertaken of the suggested policy areas contained within each 'policy' chapter of the Emerging Core Strategy. The following sections summarise the assessment undertaken on the chapters contained within the Emerging Strategy.

A number of the chapters of the Emerging Strategy include proposed strategic sites for housing, employment and other community facilities. Although general issues resulting from developing these sites have been included in the chapter assessment more specific assessment of these sites has been undertaken separately and is provided in section 2.3.

2.2.1 Environmental Sustainability

The policy themes within this chapter are forecast as likely to have positive effects on the majority of the environmental and social SA objectives. Policies requiring the use of renewable and low carbon energy and ensuring that development is located appropriately to minimise additional CO₂ emissions should have a positive effect on reducing growth of greenhouse gas emissions.

Requiring new developments to meet the Code for Sustainable Level 3 or BREEAM should have positive effects on 'biodiversity', 'water quality/quantity', 'flood risk', 'greenhouse gas emissions', 'resource efficiency', 'health', 'community identity & participation' and 'crime' due to the various requirements of the standards. For example, the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) requires that the peak rates for run-off into watercourses are no greater for

the developed site than they were for the pre-development site, which could reduce the risk of flooding.

Proposing that all new homes will meet the Government's Lifetime Homes Standards should have positive effects on the 'equality & social exclusion' and 'good quality housing' SA objectives by ensuring that accommodation is accessible and adaptable for everyone.

2.2.2 Green Belt

The policy theme of this chapter is to resist development in St Albans Green Belt. **Significant positive** effects are forecast for the 'landscape & townscape' SA objective as any development allowed within the Green Belt would have inevitable adverse effects on St Albans' landscape, including the erosion of gaps between settlements. The policy themes within this chapter are forecast as likely to have either positive or neutral effects on the majority of the other environmental and social SA objectives. For example, restricting development in the Green Belt should reduce urban sprawl, minimise the need to travel and thereby reduce growth in greenhouse gas emissions and other airborne emissions.

Uncertain effects are forecast for 'water quality/quantity' as it is unclear whether restricting development in the Green Belt would limit the creation of impermeable surfaces on greenfield land.

However, a number of adverse effects are forecast on the economic objectives as restricting development in the Green Belt could restrict the growth of the rural economy by preventing expansion of existing businesses or the development of new ones. Uncertain effects are also forecast on the 'revitalise town centres' SA objectives as although protecting the Green Belt would help to encourage urban living, restricting development in the Green Belt and therefore its villages may have an adverse effect on local centres.

2.2.3 Housing

The proposed housing growth outlined within this chapter of the Core Strategy is forecast as likely to have adverse or uncertain effects on the environmental SA objectives. The level of housing required in the District will require development in the Green Belt, which is likely to have adverse effects on 'biodiversity', 'soils' and 'landscape'. Building a minimum of 10,800 new homes will have adverse effects on 'water quality/quantity' and 'greenhouse gas emissions', for example:

- Direct pressure on already 'over abstracted' water resources. In the long term the effect is considered likely to be **significant** as more dwellings are built and the risk of periodic water shortages increases.
- Increase in greenhouse gas emissions of approximately 78,300 tonnes CO₂³.

Positive effects are forecast on the majority of the social and economic SA objectives. In particular, **significant positive** effects are forecast as likely on the 'housing' SA objective as a result of the affordable housing policy, which aims to provide at least 100 affordable homes per annum, and the target of 35 or 40% affordable dwellings within housing developments.

2.2.4 Employment

Providing and expanding employment opportunities in the District will have a **significant positive** effect on the economic SA objectives by supporting the local economy and providing local employment opportunities. However, similar to the proposed housing growth the proposed employment growth outlined within the Core Strategy is forecast as likely to have predominantly adverse or uncertain effects on the environmental SA objectives. For example, providing new employment land will put direct pressure on currently 'over abstracted' water resources. The effect is forecast as likely to become more **significant** over time as the risk of periodic water shortages increases. Other adverse effects on 'biodiversity', 'soils', 'landscape & townscape', 'air quality', and 'greenhouse gas emissions' have been forecast as a result of the potential for new employment land to be developed in the Green Belt.

Positive effects have been forecast for a number of the environmental objectives as a result of the policy safeguarding existing employment land in urban areas which could reduce the need to travel and therefore reduce growth in greenhouse gas emissions and other airborne emissions. Safeguarding existing urban employment land and therefore reducing the need to travel is also forecast as likely to have positive effects on a number of the social objectives as it could encourage the use of more active modes of travel, such as walking and cycling.

³ This is based upon estimated per capita domestic CO₂ emissions of 2.9 tonnes multiplied by the average number of occupants per household in the District of 2.5 [Source: Audit Commission Local Area Profile].

2.2.5 Shopping

The policy themes within this chapter are forecast as likely to have positive or neutral effects on the majority of the environmental, social and economic SA objectives. Providing additional comparison and non-comparison floorspace in St Albans should help to support the local economy, provide employment opportunities and improve the city centre's vitality and viability. Providing additional retail opportunities in the District, focused in St Albans and Harpenden, should improve access to these services, while the policy should also protect the vitality and viability of the district and local and village centres, which should maintain access to local shops.

Improving retailing in the District could reduce the need to travel outside of the District therefore reducing growth in greenhouse gas emissions and other airborne emissions. Maintaining the retail hierarchy by focusing retail opportunities in town centres should also have positive effects on the 'greenhouse gas emissions' and 'air quality' objectives as town centre shopping centres tend to be more accessible by sustainable modes of transport.

2.2.6 Transport

The policy themes within this chapter are forecast as likely to have positive effects or neutral effects on the social and economic SA objectives. Measures to improve bus usage, walking and cycling could improve access to community facilities and encourage increased daily physical activity. Reducing traffic congestion in the City Centre should improve the quality of the urban environment making the city a more attractive place in which to live, work and visit and should be beneficial for local businesses as deliveries, employees and customers are less likely to become caught in traffic.

Measures to improve bus usage, walking and cycling should have a positive effect on helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other airborne emissions. Reducing traffic congestion in the city centre through the development of the Western Orbital Route, traffic restraints and improved conditions for pedestrians and cyclists may reduce emissions from transport. However, in order to lock in these benefits other traffic restraint measures may need to be implemented. The overall success of these measures will be dependent on a behavioural change shifting people from their cars into more sustainable modes of transport.

Also, new and improved roads may result in induced traffic and this will need to be considered as the Core Strategy progresses. The effects on 'greenhouse gas emissions' and 'air quality' therefore remain uncertain.

The policy themes within this chapter are also forecast as likely to have adverse effects on a number of the environmental SA objectives. The proposed part and ride sites and part of the Western Orbital Route will require development on greenfield land within the Green Belt and therefore adverse effects are forecast for 'biodiversity', 'water quality/quantity', 'soils', 'use of brownfield sites', and 'landscape & townscape'. Part of the route will also require development close to an archaeological preservation area.

2.2.7 Social and Community Facilities

The policy themes within this chapter are forecast as likely to have positive effects or neutral effects on the social SA objectives. The provision of new or expanded education, healthcare and other community facilities should improve access to local services. Considering the needs of an ageing population when providing social and community facilities may improve the health and well-being of older residents.

A number of adverse effects have been forecast for a number of the SA objectives as a result of the potential provision of new schools in the Green Belt, which could have an adverse effect on 'biodiversity', 'water quality/quantity', 'soils', 'use of brownfield sites' and 'landscape & townscape'.

2.2.8 Building Safer and Stronger Communities

The policy themes within this chapter are forecast as likely to have positive or neutral effects on the environmental, social and economic objectives. Improving access to jobs, education, training, healthcare, greenspaces and cultural and social facilities for those without access to a car is forecast as likely to have a positive effect on the following SA objectives: 'greenhouse gas emissions', 'air quality', 'historic & cultural assets', 'health', 'sustainable locations', 'equality & social exclusion', 'community identity & participation' and 'fairer access to services'.

2.2.9 Leisure, Culture and Tourism

The policy themes within this chapter are forecast as likely to have positive effects on the majority of the social and economic SA objectives. Encouraging new and enhanced cultural, entertainment, sport, recreation and tourism facilities should support the local economy, provide local job opportunities and make the District a more attractive place in which to live, work and visit. **Significant positive** effects are forecast on 'equality & social exclusion' as providing additional sport and recreation facilities should reduce the shortfall in this type of

leisure facility. Encouraging new cultural and entertainment facilities in the city centre, along with the development of hotels, should help to revitalise the town centre.

A number of the proposed new facilities are located on greenfield land within the Green Belt and therefore potential adverse effects are forecast for 'biodiversity', 'water quality/quantity', 'soils', 'use of brownfield sites', 'sustainable locations' and 'landscape & townscape'. Creating new tourism attractions is forecast as having an uncertain effect on greenhouse gas emissions and air quality as new facilities could induce more car trips.

2.2.10 Built and Historic Environment

The policy themes within the chapter are forecast as likely to have positive effects on the majority of the environmental, social and economic objectives. Requiring new developments to be built to a high quality and following good design principles should have positive effects on many of the environmental SA objectives including 'biodiversity', 'water quality/quantity,' 'climate change proof' and 'health'. Creating high quality developments will also have positive effects on the social and economic SA objectives by improving the attractiveness of the urban area and supporting the local economy. The Core Strategy will require proposed developments to be appraised against CABE's "Building for Life" scheme. This scheme should have positive effects on a number of the SA objectives, including 'equality & social exclusion', 'housing', 'greenhouse gas emissions', 'air quality' and 'landscape & townscape'.

The Core Strategy promotes the protection and enhancement of the historic environment, in particular by resisting developments which would harm important archaeological sites, views of the city centre's historic skyline or the character of the Conservation Areas.

2.2.11 Green Infrastructure, Natural Environment and Countryside

Supporting the District's Green Space Strategy should have positive effects on environmental, social and economic SA objectives. The Strategy aims to protect all existing greenspaces, parks and gardens, and provide new corridors in major housing developments and around the main settlements. This should have positive effects on environmental SA objectives such as 'biodiversity', 'soils', and 'landscape & townscape' and social objectives such as 'equality & social exclusion' and 'community identity & participation'. Including a policy which aims to protect and enhance the natural environment and the countryside should also have positive effects, for example providing a high quality environment should help to support the local economy.

Including a policy which will support the District's Playing Pitch Strategy should encourage participation in health activities, as should improving Verulamium Park and protecting other green infrastructure.

2.2.12 *Infrastructure Delivery Policies*

The policy themes within this chapter have not been fully assessed against the SA objectives due to the lack of detail provided with regard to the Council's proposed approach to Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 agreements. Nevertheless, raising money through developer contributions may have positive effects on several of the SA objectives. For example, developer contributions may provide for new green spaces, additional community facilities and services, such as playing pitches or GP surgeries, or new transport infrastructure, such as cycle paths or improved public transport. The effects of this policy will be assessed further as the Core Strategy develops.

2.2.13 *Emerging Spatial Strategy*

The policy themes within this chapter are forecast as likely to have mainly positive effects on the SA objectives. Concentrating development within St Albans, Harpenden and London Colney should help to protect designated biodiversity sites, protect the Green Belt, reduce the need to travel (thereby reducing transport emissions and encouraging active travel), and improve access to services for those without access to a private vehicle. Encouraging higher density developments in the three main settlements where most development in the District will be concentrated could also lead to more efficient use of land, while encouraging lower densities in the villages and other settlements should help to retain their local distinctiveness and character.

However potential adverse effects have been forecast on 'equality & social exclusion' as concentrating development in the three main settlements could lead to rural communities becoming more isolated due to further centralisation and the associated potential for loss of facilities.

2.3 Strategic Sites

The Emerging Core Strategy proposes sites for housing, employment and other community facilities. Each site has been assessed and various sustainability constraints and opportunities have been identified. The assessment is provided in Appendix C.

3 Recommendations

The Core Strategy represents a significant opportunity for St Albans City and District Council to lay the groundwork for sustainability, and as the primary framework for the overall vision for future development in the District the strategy should be solidly grounded in the principles of sustainability. To help improve its sustainability performance there are a number of recommendations and mitigation measures which have been identified during the assessment process that could be incorporated into the evolving Core Strategy or the lower tier development plan documents. These recommendations are summarised below under key themes.

3.1 The Natural Environment

- Consider siting new sensitive development away from areas of existing poor air quality, and also siting development that is likely to result in increased emissions away from areas already suffering from poor air quality so that they do not further deteriorate.
- Consider the use of porous surfaces to reduce run-off.
- Agricultural land quality should be considered when selecting sites in order to minimise the loss of higher grade land.
- Require new development to be landscaped to provide an appropriate setting for the development and to integrate the site with the existing residential areas.
- Require new gypsy and traveller sites to be landscaped to provide an appropriate setting for the pitch and to integrate the site with the existing residential areas.
- Consider measures to control light pollution (particularly in rural areas).
- When developing on greenfield sites measures should be taken to avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity, such as by maintaining and enhancing green corridors and providing green open spaces.
- Consider the protection and enhancement of geodiversity.
- Consider requiring additional tree planting in new developments
- Consider improving and creating new green infrastructure in urban areas. Green infrastructure within settlements will help to 'cool' urban areas and this will be important to help communities adapt to the warmer temperatures forecast as a result of climate change.

3.2 Resource use

- Require developments to meet (as a minimum) 'very good' BREEAM ratings.

- Consider requiring all new developments to generate renewable energy, e.g. through the use of photo voltaic cells, solar panels or mini-wind turbines.
- Encourage minimising levels of household waste and increasing levels of recycling and composting.
- New employment sites within the Green Belt should be serviced by frequent public transport services.
- Only employment sites close to existing settlements which have good provision of community services and facilities should be reallocated for housing or other uses.
- Consider policy wording that supports initiatives aimed at behavioural change to increase the likelihood of reducing average distances travelled.
- Tourism attractions should be required to encourage access by sustainable modes of transport.

3.3 Sustainable Communities

- Consider including a specific reference that requires all new developments to be 'climate proof'. For example, homes and other buildings should be designed so that they stay cool in summer and are warm in the winter.
- Consider the need for key worker housing.
- Consider the integration of both the gypsy and traveller communities and the settled community when locating and designing new pitches to encourage social cohesion and a shared sense of place and community.
- Consider how design can result in crime reduction.
- Make use of the RTPI's new good practice guide on 'Delivering Healthy Communities'.

3.4 Achieving a sustainable economy

- Include measures to ensure that buildings are E-enabled (sufficient access to IT services); this in turn will help support the knowledge based economy.
- The opportunity to provide live-work units and measures to encourage home working should be explored.

4 Next Steps

Following consultation on the Emerging Core Strategy further work will be undertaken by St Albans City and District Council towards preparing the full draft version of the Core Strategy (known as the Pre-Submission document) which will be subject to further public consultation in Spring 2010. The findings of the SA/SEA included in this Working Note, along with other technical work and evidence gathering, will influence how the Core Strategy is developed.

The Pre-Submission document will be accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal Report (incorporating the SEA Environmental Report). This SA Report will be subject to consultation with statutory environmental bodies, other stakeholders and the general public.

Appendix A: SA Framework

Objective	Criteria	Indicators (Bold indicates existing)
Biodiversity		
1. To protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity at all levels, including the maintenance and enhancement of Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species in line with local targets	To protect, maintain and enhance designated wildlife and geological sites (international, national and local) and protected species to achieve favourable condition	Herts QoL WH6 Condition of SSSIs (contextual indicator) and HBRC number, area and condition of SSSIs
	To restore characteristic habitats and species, to achieve BAP targets	HBRC Change in areas designated for their intrinsic value
	To support farming and countryside practices that enhance wider biodiversity and landscape quality by economically and socially valuable activities (e.g. grazing, coppicing, nature reserves)	HBRC Change in Priority Habitats Herts QoL WH3 Wildlife Sites and HBRC number and area of Wildlife Sites HBRC no. of Wildlife Sites lost or degraded by development or gained/secured by agreements Herts QoL WH1 Water voles Herts QoL WH2 Birds (contextual indicator) Herts QoL WH4 Pipistrelle bats Herts QoL WH5 Butterflies HBRC distribution/change of key species in Herts HBRC distribution/change of protected species in Herts COI 8 Changes in areas and populations of biodiversity importance
	To manage woodlands and other habitats of value for biodiversity in a sustainable manner and protect them against conversion to other uses	% woodland cover in District
	To recognise the social/environmental value and increase access to woodlands, wildlife & geological sites and green spaces particularly near/in urban areas	Percentage of wildlife sites accessible by sustainable modes of travel

Objective	Criteria	Indicators (Bold indicates existing)
	To encourage people to come into contact with, understand, and enjoy nature	Number of visitors to wildlife sites
Water		
2. To protect, maintain and enhance water resources (including water quality and quantity) while taking into account the impacts of climate change	<p>To raise awareness and encourage higher water efficiency and conservation by for instance promoting water reuse in new and existing developments</p> <p>To ensure water consumption does not exceed levels which can be supported by natural processes and storage systems</p> <p>To improve chemical and biological quality and flow of rivers and encourage practices which reduce nitrate levels in groundwater</p> <p>To improve flow of rivers</p> <p>To reduce the number and severity of pollution incidents</p> <p>To maintain or restore the integrity of water dependent wildlife sites in the area</p>	<p>Level of awareness of water issues and the need for water saving (contextual indicator)</p> <p>Average household water consumption per capita</p> <p>Commercial water consumption</p> <p>Proportion of housing (existing and new development) with installed water efficient devices/water metres</p> <p>Herts QoL WR3 River quality objectives</p> <p>EA Biological and chemical river quality (contextual indicator)</p> <p>Number and severity of pollution incidents to surface water and groundwater</p>
3. Ensure that new developments avoid areas which are at risk from flooding and natural flood storage areas	<p>To avoid developments in areas being at risk from fluvial, sewer or groundwater flooding (for instance natural flood plains) while taking into account the impacts of climate change</p> <p>To ensure that developments, which are at risk from flooding or are likely to be at risk in future due to climate change, are sufficiently adapted</p> <p>To promote properly maintained sustainable urban drainage systems to reduce flood risk and run off in areas outside Source Protection Zones 1 (SPZ)</p>	<p>Number of properties at risk from flooding</p> <p>Proportion of runoff from new developments which is directed into Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs)⁴</p>
Soil		
4. Minimise development of land with high quality soils and	To safeguard high quality soils, such as agricultural land grades 1, 2 and 3a) from development	Amount of high quality agricultural land degraded/lost to development

⁴ Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) are management practices and physical structures designed to drain surface water in a more sustainable way than conventional systems.

Objective	Criteria	Indicators (Bold indicates existing)
minimise the degradation/loss of soils due to new developments	To limit contamination/degradation/loss of soils due to development	<p>Area/percentage of contaminated land remediated</p> <p>Number of development sites having a policy to safeguard soils</p> <p>Area of proposed new developments on greenfield sites</p>
Climatic Factors		
5. Reduce the impacts of climate change, with a particular focus on reducing the consumption of fossil fuels and levels of CO ₂	To minimise greenhouse gas emissions (particularly CO ₂) for instance through more energy efficient design and reducing the need to travel	<p>NAIE Emissions of greenhouse gases (particularly CO₂) per capita grouped per type of source</p> <p>BV 63 Energy efficiency - average SAP rating of authority dwellings</p> <p>BV 80a (i) Actual/'Typical' energy consumption LA buildings - electricity</p> <p>BV 80a (ii) Actual/'Typical' energy consumption LA buildings - fossil fuels</p> <p>Herts QoL EN1 Energy efficiency in homes - overall reduction in CO₂ emissions %</p> <p>Herts QoL EN2 Energy efficiency in public buildings</p>
	To promote increased carbon sequestration e.g. through increases in woodland cover	
	To adopt lifestyle changes which help to mitigate and adapt to climate change, such as promoting water and energy efficiency (through for instance higher levels of home insulation)	
6. Ensure that developments are capable of withstanding the effects of climate change (adaptation to climate change)	To promote design measures which enable developments to withstand and accommodate the likely impacts and results of climate change (for instance through robust and weather resistant building structures)	<p>Percentage of new developments considered to be 'climate change proof'</p> <p>(For indicators regarding renewable energy see section on material assets)</p>
Air Quality		
7. Achieve good air quality, especially in urban areas	To reduce the need to travel by car through planning settlement patterns and economic activity in a way that reduces dependence on the car and maintains access to work and essential services for non-car-owners	<p>NAIE Levels of key air pollutants (e.g. Benzene, 1,3-Butadiene, CO₂, Lead, NO₂, PM10, SO₂) within the local authority area, and within the East of England</p> <p>Herts QoL QoL27 Air Pollution</p>
	To integrate land use and transport planning by for instance:	

Objective	Criteria	Indicators (Bold indicates existing)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promoting Green Transport Plans, including car pools, car sharing as part of new developments ▪ Ensuring services and facilities are accessible by sustainable modes of transport <p>To ensure that development proposals do not make existing air quality problems worse</p> <p>To address existing or potential air quality problems</p>	<p>Herts QoL TR1 Volume of motor traffic</p> <p>Herts QoL TR2 Modal split</p> <p>Number of days when air pollution reported as moderate or higher within the local authority area</p> <p>Number of designated AQMAs</p>
Material Assets		
8. Maximise the use of previously developed land and buildings, and the efficient use of land	<p>To concentrate new developments on previously developed land (PDL)</p> <p>To avoid use of Greenfield sites for development</p> <p>To maximise the efficient use of land and existing buildings by measures such as higher densities and mixed use developments</p> <p>To encourage the remediation of contaminated and derelict land and buildings</p>	<p>COI 1(a) & (c) Amount of land developed for employment by type and percentage which is on previously developed land</p> <p>COI 1(b) Amount of land developed for employment by type, which is in development and/or regeneration areas defined in the LDF</p> <p>COI 2(b) Percentage of new and converted dwellings on previously developed land</p> <p>COI 2(c) Percentage of new dwellings completed at: less than 30, between 30 and 50 and above 50 dwellings per hectare</p> <p>Herts QoL LU3 Residential development on previously developed land</p> <p>BV106 % of new homes built on previously developed land</p>
9. To use natural resources, both finite and renewable, as efficiently as possible, and re-use finite resources or recycled alternatives wherever possible	<p>To encourage maximum efficiency and appropriate use of materials, particularly from local and regional sources</p> <p>To require new developments to incorporate renewable, secondary, or sustainably sourced local materials in buildings and infrastructure</p> <p>To safeguard reserves of exploitable minerals from</p>	<p>Amount and percentage of secondary and recycled materials (including minerals and aggregates) used in construction</p> <p>BV82a Household waste - percentage recycled</p> <p>BV82b Household waste - percentage</p>

Objective	Criteria	Indicators (Bold indicates existing)
	<p>sterilisation by other developments</p> <p>To promote renewable energy sources as part of new or refurbished developments</p> <p>To increase recycling and composting rates and encourage easily accessible recycling systems as part of new developments</p> <p>To promote awareness regarding waste/recycling and renewable energy issues through education programmes in schools and the community</p>	<p>composted</p> <p>BV82c Household waste - percentage of heat, power and other energy recovered</p> <p>BV82d Household waste - percentage landfilled</p> <p>BV84 Kg of household waste collected per head</p> <p>Herts QoL WS1 Household waste per capita</p> <p>Herts QoL WS3 Percentage of waste recycled</p> <p>Proportion of developments which incorporates design measures to facilitate sustainable household waste management</p>
Cultural Heritage		
<p>10. To identify, maintain and enhance the historic environment and cultural assets</p>	<p>To safeguard and enhance the historic environment and restore historic character where appropriate, based on sound historical evidence</p> <p>To promote local distinctiveness by maintaining and restoring historic buildings and areas, encouraging the re-use of valued buildings and thoughtful high quality design in housing and mixed use developments – to a density which respects the local context and townscape character, and includes enhancement of the public realm</p> <p>To promote public education, enjoyment and access of the built heritage and archaeology</p>	<p>Number of Listed Buildings at Risk</p> <p>Number and condition of Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs)</p> <p>Number and condition of Registered Parks and Gardens</p> <p>Number of Conservation Areas</p> <p>% of Conservation Areas with character appraisals</p> <p>Percentage of historic buildings and structures open to the public</p> <p>Numbers of historic assets taken from the 'at risk' category</p> <p>Number of historic assets restored/reused</p> <p>Number of locally important buildings to be demolished</p>

Objective	Criteria	Indicators (Bold indicates existing)
		<p>Changes inconsistent with historic landscape</p> <p>Quality in the built environment as measured by public perception surveys</p> <p>A measure of increased public access or interpretation of sites</p>
Landscape		
11. To conserve and enhance landscape and townscape character and encourage local distinctiveness	To protect and enhance landscape and townscape character	<p>CQC Changes inconsistent with (local) landscape character</p> <p>Area of designated landscapes affected by/lost to development</p> <p>CPRE Light pollution and tranquillity mapping</p>
	To evaluate the sensitivity of the landscape to new/inappropriate developments and avoid inappropriate developments in these areas	
	To protect 'dark skies' from light pollution, and promote low energy and less invasive lighting sources while considering the balance between safety and environmental impacts	
	To minimise the visual impact of new developments	
Population and Human Health		
12. To encourage healthier lifestyles and reduce adverse health impacts of new developments	To promote the health advantages of walking and cycling and community based activities	<p>Length and condition of cycle / footpath network</p> <p>Number and condition of sports facilities</p> <p>COI 4(c) Percentage of eligible open spaces managed to green flag award standards</p> <p>Percentage of population with access to public open space</p> <p>Herts QoL NO1 Noise complaints received per 1000 population</p> <p>Herts QoL NO2 Source of noise complaints</p>
	To identify, protect and enhance open spaces, such as rivers and canals, parks and gardens, allotments and playing fields, and the links between them, for the benefit of people and wildlife	
	To include specific design and amenity policies to minimise noise and odour pollution, particularly in residential areas	
	To narrow the income gap between the poorest and wealthiest parts of the area and to reduce health differential	
13. To deliver more sustainable patterns of location of	To reduce the need to travel through closer integration of housing, jobs and services	Percentage of health facilities accessible by sustainable modes of travel

Objective	Criteria	Indicators (Bold indicates existing)
development	To promote better and more sustainable access to health facilities	Herts QoL TR2 Modal spilt Accessibility modelling
Social Factors		
14. Promote equity & address social exclusion by closing the gap between the poorest communities and the rest	To include measures which will improve everyone's access to high quality health, education, recreation, community facilities and public transport	Index of Multiple Deprivation BV156 % of local authority buildings suitable for and accessible by disabled people BV170a Number of visits to/usage's of museums per 1,000 population BV 117 Visits to libraries Number per capita Herts QoL SE3 Transport: access to public services COI 3(b) Percentage of new residential development within 30 minutes of a GP, hospital, primary & secondary school, employment and major health centre Herts QoL ED1 GCSE performance Herts QoL ED2 Adult education level 2* Herts QoL QoL9 Young people with Level 2 qualifications BV38 % of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* - C or equivalent % pensioners in households with below average income % children in households with below have half average income
	To ensure facilities and services are accessible by people with disabilities and minority groups	
	To encourage people to access the learning and skills they need for high quality of life	
	To ensure that the LDF does not discriminate on the basis of disability, ethnic minority, or gender	
15. Ensure that everyone has access to good quality housing that meets their needs	Promote a range housing types and tenure, including high quality affordable and key worker housing	COI 2(d) Affordable housing completions BV184a LA homes which were non-

Objective	Criteria	Indicators (Bold indicates existing)
		<p>decent at start of year</p> <p>BV184b Change in proportion on non-decent homes (negative means deterioration in stock)</p> <p>Herts QoL HS1 Affordable housing (house price/earnings affordability ratio)</p> <p>Herts QoL HS2 Statutorily unfit homes</p> <p>Herts QoL HS3 Homelessness</p>
16. Enhance community identity and participation	<p>To recognise the value of the multi-cultural/faith diversity of the peoples in the region</p> <p>To improve the quality of life in urban areas by making them more attractive places in which to live and work, and to visit</p> <p>To encourage high quality design in new developments, including mixed uses, to create local identity and encourage a sense of community pride</p>	<p>Number of community facilities per 10,000 population</p> <p>Town centre health checks</p> <p>CABE design review of schemes with significant impacts (if conducted)</p>
17. Reduce both crime and fear of crime	<p>To reduce all levels of crime with particular focus on violent, drug related, environmental and racially motivated crime</p> <p>To plan new developments to help reducing crime and fear of crime through thoughtful design of the physical environment, and by promoting well-used streets and public spaces</p> <p>To support government-sponsored crime/safety initiatives, maximising the use of all tools available to police, local authorities and other agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour</p>	<p>BV126a Burglaries No. per 1,000 households</p> <p>BV127a Robberies per 1000 population and percentage detected</p> <p>BV127b violent offences committed in a public place per 1,000 population</p> <p>BV127c violent offences committed in connection with licensed premises per 1,000 population</p> <p>BV127d violent offences committed under the influence per 1,000 population</p> <p>BV128a Vehicle crimes No. per 1,000 population</p> <p>BV174 Number of recorded racial</p>

Objective	Criteria	Indicators (Bold indicates existing)
		incidents per 100,000 population Fear of crime statistics
Economic Factors		
18. Achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth	To support an economy in the Authority which draws on the knowledge base, creativity and enterprise of its people	Herts QoL EC1 Percentage rise in GVA Herts QoL UN1 Long term unemployment Herts QoL QoL1 Proportion of people of working age in employment COI 1(f) Amount of employment land lost to residential development Business start up failures
	To promote and support economic diversity, small and medium sized enterprises and community-based enterprises	
	To support the economy with high quality infrastructure and a high quality environment	
19. Achieve a more equitable sharing of the benefits of prosperity across all sectors of society and fairer access to services, focusing on deprived areas in the region	To encourage local provision of and access to jobs and services	Herts QoL QoL5 The percentage increase/decrease in the number of local jobs In/out commuting balance Rate of growth of businesses (urban and rural)
	To improve the competitiveness of the rural economy	
20. Revitalise town centres to promote a return to sustainable urban living	To promote the role of local centres as centres for sustainable development providing services, housing and employment, drawing on the principles of urban renaissance	COI 4(b) Percentage of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centres
	To encourage well-designed mixed-use developments in the heart of urban areas, create viable and attractive town centres that have vitality and life, and discourage out-of-town developments	