

Greenspace Strategy
Supplementary Planning Document

Sustainability Appraisal

Consultation Statement

**Health • Social inclusiveness • Accessibility
• Heritage • Biodiversity • Economy
Education • Culture • Resources • Safety
Community • Environment • Health • Social
inclusiveness • Accessibility • Heritage
Biodiversity • Economy • Education •
Culture • Resources • Safety • Community
Environment • Health • Social inclusiveness
Accessibility • Heritage • Biodiversity**

Introduction:

This report has been produced following the adoption of the Greenspace Strategy SPD. The information provided here summarises findings of a sustainability appraisal¹ which has been carried out in parallel to the development of the Greenspace Strategy. For further detail on any of the issues raised below please refer back to the full detailed Sustainability Appraisal and related appendices (available from the locations outlined at the end of this report).

This consultation statement aims to:

- Summarise how the SPD has changed as a result of the SA process
- Provide information on how consultation responses on the SA have been addressed
- Justify the options chosen in developing the SPD
- Confirm the ongoing monitoring arrangements relating to this sustainability appraisal during implementation of the Strategy.

The report has been compiled in accordance with ODPM Guidance on Sustainability Appraisal and meets the requirement under the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive to produce an environmental statement and will be available to the public.

How the SPD was changed as a result of the Sustainability Appraisal process:

The sustainability appraisal process has been beneficial in strengthening existing sustainability issues covered in the SPD and highlighting a number of new areas which should be considered.

- The appraisal of the Greenspace Strategy objectives demonstrated that they were largely sustainable. The following changes were put in place as a result of the appraisal:
 - Creation of an additional objective on biodiversity to address a noted deficiency in the appraisal of objectives.
 - Changing of the wording of objective 7 which previously read '*Exploit* heritage aspects of Torbay's green spaces' to remove the term 'exploit' and replace with '*Promoting and protecting* heritage assets of Torbay's green space'.
- Greater emphasis placed on biodiversity through:
 - Creation of an additional, biodiversity-based overarching Greenspace Strategy objective
 - A new section included in the main Strategy text to highlight the importance of biodiversity in Torbay's Greenspaces
 - Greater reference to the need to protect, enhance and promote biodiversity assets within the actions set out in the Action Plan

¹ Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 those LDDs with a land use implication require a sustainability appraisal to run parallel to its development. This process will ensure that the environmental, social and economic effects of each document are considered during its formulation.

- Specification of biodiversity issues within the Greenspace Management Plans
- The appraisal of the Action Plan helped to identify where sustainability issues had been considered but needed strengthening through more detailed wording. Issues now covered in the action plan that were previously lacking are all detailed in Section 7 (mitigation) of the main sustainability appraisal. These changes have enhanced consideration of social exclusion, coastal management, flooding, water efficiency, waste, facilities for the elderly, climate change, accessibility, historic environments, water quality, importance of green spaces for mental health, social deprivation, provision of education information, biodiversity, renewable energy and recycling.
- An Appropriate Assessment² carried out in parallel to the sustainability appraisal considered impacts of the Greenspace Strategy on the Special Area of Conservation at Berry Head. As a result of this work further detail has been added to the main report, management plan and the action plan to highlight relevant issues. (This is detailed further in Section 7.3 of the main SA report.)
- Management Plans. The appraisal process highlighted that whilst the overarching strategy objectives pointed towards a sustainable strategy the level of sustainability that would actually be achieved in green spaces would be largely dependent on actions on the ground. To meet this end it was felt beneficial to set out in the Strategy what would be required for consideration in the management plans which will need to be prepared for each green space. This is beneficial in highlighting all the sustainability issues which should be considered on a site by site basis.

The negative impacts of the SPD relate largely to missed opportunities to promote sustainable management of greenspaces rather than the creation of significant adverse impacts. The appraisal picked up a number of potential negative impacts relating to, for example, social exclusion in terms of financial accessibility to events and entertainments and possible adverse impacts on biodiversity, cultural heritage and resource consumption through inappropriate or over-intensive use of green spaces.

The textual changes highlighted above aim to address these potential impacts and assist in taking a proactive approach to sustainability by strengthening coverage of sustainability issues. Having dealt with these areas of concern, the sustainability appraisal process indicates that the Greenspace Strategy is unlikely to have any significant adverse impacts. It is anticipated that the monitoring programme proposed will track the effectiveness of above amendments in addressing sustainability issues, as well as identifying any unpredicted effects.

² Appropriate Assessments are similar to sustainability appraisals but are focused solely on implications of land use plans on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites (including SACs and SPAs). All land use plans are subject to this assessment under the UK Conservation (Habitats & c) Regulations 1994.

How the consultation responses on the sustainability appraisal have been taken into account

Consultation was carried out at two key stages of the sustainability appraisal process:

- Consultation on the Scoping Report extended between 30th August – 7th October 2005. This timeframe meets the requirements in the SA Guidance which suggests 4-6 weeks consultation for this document. The Scoping Report was made available to a number of stakeholders (listed in Appendix B of the full sustainability appraisal) as well as to the statutory consultees (Environment Agency, Countryside Agency, Natural England and English Heritage). A good level of response was received on the scoping report which resulted in a number of amendments to the baseline, plans, policy and programmes review and SA Framework. How comments have been addressed is noted in section A1 of Appendix C.
- Consultation on the sustainability appraisal of the Regulation 17 Greenspace Strategy took place in June 2006 for a period of 6 weeks (in accordance with SA Guidance). Statutory bodies and other stakeholders (as listed in Appendix B of the main SA report) were consulted. A small number of responses were received as a result of this consultation surrounding, in particular, economic and biodiversity issues. Appendix C (A2) details how the consultation responses have been addressed.

Justification for option choice:

When formulating plans within the LDF it can be useful to establish a number of options by which to progress the plan. However as can sometimes be the case with SPDs, only one clear option has arisen through consultation by which to progress the Greenspace Strategy. In order to ensure that this option will improve the situation which would exist if there were no SPD, a comparison of 'plan' and 'no plan' option has been carried out. Each of the two options were tested against the sustainability appraisal framework (see Section 5.2 of the main SA report).

This appraisal indicated that 'the plan option' holds substantial benefits in providing a co-ordinated and pro-active means of addressing a number of sustainability issues which have been highlighted in the scoping stages. Such issues include declining quality of green spaces, under provision in deprived areas, missed opportunities to promote culture, history and ecological tourism, continued lack of consideration for the need to conserve water and provide further recycling facilities. Under the 'no plan' option these issues are likely to remain unresolved.

Monitoring requirements

An important part of the appraisal process is to ensure that the impact predictions made in this document are accurate and that any unexpected adverse effects of implementing this document are identified and addressed as soon as possible. It is for this reason that a monitoring programme has been set up to provide a checking mechanism. It is anticipated that this data

will be collected on an annual basis where possible and will feed into any future review of the SPD or its related Action Plans.

The SA guidance indicates that the Consultation Statement can be used to make information available to the public on how the monitoring will be carried out during implementation. The proposed monitoring requirements have been set out in the full sustainability appraisal (section 8). As the Regulation 19 stage consultation did not raise any objections to the proposed monitoring programme it has not been amended since the full SA was compiled.

Two sets of indicators will be collected:

- Broad overarching sustainability appraisal indicators (to be monitored in the Annual Monitoring Report)
- A number of indicators specific to issues raised during the appraisal of the Greenspace Strategy. It is anticipated that these will be reported annually as part of the review of the Action Plan.

The indicators in the SPD will be reviewed over time for their appropriateness resulting in possible future removal of, or addition to, the list of indicators. In addition to those indicators outlined above there are further indicators which would be useful to measure sustainability issues in Torbay's green spaces but where data is not yet available. These are indicated in Section 4.3 (Data Gaps) of the main SA report and should be revisited regularly to determine if data can be obtained in the future.

Availability of this document:

Hard copies of this SA consultation document, the full SA Report and related non-technical summary are available to view at Roebuck House or any of the Council libraries and Connections Offices in Torquay, Paignton or Brixham. The adoption version of the Greenspace Strategy SPD upon which this appraisal is based is also available at the above locations.

All of the above documents as well as the original SA Scoping Report are available to view on the Torbay Council website - www.torbay.gov.uk/ldf (click on Greenspace Strategy).

Contact Us:

For further information regarding sustainability appraisals or to request an alternative format or language please contact the Strategic Planning Group:

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