

A landscape for success

The Plan for Torbay to 2032 and beyond



Sustainability Appraisal

Non-Technical Summary

Local Plan
Consultation Draft

September 2012

Preface

Purpose of this Document:

This document represents a summary of the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report for the Torbay Local Plan (Consultation Draft - September 2012). The SA report aims to identify the potential social, economic and environmental impacts of the Local Plan.

The SA Report has been compiled for consultation purposes and your comments are welcome (please see details below to comment).

We Want Your Views!

The Strategic Planning Team welcomes feedback on the SA Report, particularly in regard to your views on the following:

Have all potential social, economic and environmental impacts of implementing this Plan been identified?

Are the recommendations suggested sufficient to prevent, reduce and, as far as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the plan?

Do you have any further comments or suggestions relating to monitoring the plan to assist in tracking its likely social, economic and environmental implications?

If you wish to comment on the Sustainability Appraisal Report please use the contact details below. The consultation period runs in parallel to that of the Local Plan, from Friday 28th September to Friday 9th November 2012.

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For further information regarding the Sustainability Appraisal or to request an alternative format or language please contact the Strategic Planning Team Tel: (01803) 208804 or e-mail strategic.planning@torbay.gov.uk

Reference copies of the Sustainability Appraisal Report and the accompanying Appendices will be made available at Council Libraries and Connections Offices and at Roebuck House and can also be accessed via the internet at www.torbay.gov.uk/newlocalplan

1 Introduction

This non-technical summary of the Sustainability Appraisal Report should be viewed alongside the full Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and the Torbay Local Plan. The SA forms part of the evidence base and justification for the policies within the Local Plan. It has been an ongoing process which has evaluated and informed the identification of options, decisions around how these options were taken forward and development of the policies within the Local Plan. This Report aims to provide information which will support evaluation of the Local Plan policies by stakeholders and members of the public and assist in the provision of feedback on the Local Plan.

Sustainability appraisal is a systematic process, required by the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive, undertaken during the preparation of a plan or strategy. Its role is to assess the extent to which the emerging policies and proposals will help to achieve relevant environmental, social and economic objectives. In doing so, it provides an opportunity to consider ways in which the plan or strategy can contribute to improvements in environmental, social and economic conditions, as well as a means of identifying and addressing any adverse effects that draft policies and proposals might have.

The Sustainability Appraisal guidance comprises five key Stages. Stage A sets the context, establishes the baseline and decides on the scope, Stage B develops and refines options and assesses effects, Stage C relates to preparing the SA report, Stage D deals with consulting on the SA Report and finally, Stage E monitors the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan policies. This non-technical summary represents Stage D of the SA process.

2 The Torbay Local Plan

The Local Plan deals with different aspects of planning in Torbay and covers the period 2012 – 2032. The Local Plan is intended to inform Neighbourhood Plans, which express the aspirations of communities at a local level.

The Local Plan aims to regenerate Torbay and increase economic prosperity in a sustainable manner. These have been identified as the most important issues for the area in the Torbay Community Plan ‘Turning the Tide for Torbay’ and the Economic Development Strategy.

The Local Plan includes matters that relate not only to the use of land but also to other things such as funding and infrastructure (roads, schools, water supply, climate change, Peak Oil etc). For this reason it is called a “spatial plan”. There is more information on the Local Plan at www.torbay.gov.uk/newlocalplan

3 The Structure of the Sustainability Appraisal Report

Throughout its development, the Local Plan (previously known as the Core Strategy) has been assessed at various points to determine its impacts on local social, economic and environmental aspects. The SA Report has been compiled to summarise the sustainability appraisal work that has been carried out so far and show how sustainability has been accounted for as the Local Plan evolved in the planning progress.

Following this introductory section, the SA Report is sub-divided into further nine sections:

Section 2: outlines key stages of the sustainability appraisal process, the compliance with the SEA Directive and also outlines who was consulted, when and how.

Section 3: summarises the previous stages of the Sustainability Appraisal.

Section 4: compares the Local Plan aims and aspirations against the Sustainability Appraisal objectives.

Section 5: provides sustainability assessment of the Local Plan Strategic Direction and Sustainable Development Policies

Section 6: provides sustainability assessment of the Local Plan Strategic Direction and Delivery Policies

Section 7: provides sustainability assessment of the Local Plan Place-making and Key Policy Delivery Areas Across Torbay

Section 8: outlines the Sustainability Appraisal key findings.

Section 9: sets out the monitoring framework of the Sustainability Appraisal.

Section 10: provides an indication of the next steps in the Sustainability Appraisal process

4 Consultation

Consultation forms a very important part of the Sustainability Appraisal process. The key points of the consultation carried out for the previous stages of the SA are summarised below.

The consultation on the Scoping Report extended for a five weeks period in May and June 2009. The Scoping Report was made available to the statutory consultees, a number of stakeholders and internal officers. A good level of response was received (36%) which resulted in a number of amendments to the Scoping and Baseline Reports.

The consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy Growth Options took place over an eight week period from September to November 2009. The SA Report was made available alongside the Core Strategy to the statutory consultees, a number of stakeholders, Council Officers and the public. A limited number of responses were received, which have resulted in a number of amendments to the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

5 The Sustainability Appraisal Framework

An overarching Sustainability Appraisal Framework has been identified as a means of describing, analysing and comparing sustainability effects of the Local Plan. This Framework comprises a set of sustainability appraisal objectives, with which to test the plan throughout its evolution, and sustainability indicators with which to measure the effects of the plan in the future.

The Sustainability Appraisal Framework comprises a two tier structure of 6 broad 'High level objectives', explained by 31 more specific sub-objectives outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Sustainability Appraisal Framework

High level objectives	Sub-objective
1. Improve health	1.1 Improve health of all communities in Torbay
	1.2 Reduce health inequality
	1.3 Promote healthy lifestyles
2. Support communities that meet people's needs	2.1 Help make suitable and affordable housing available to everyone
	2.2 Provide everyone with opportunities for education and training
	2.3 Reduce crime and fear of crime

High level objectives	Sub-objective
	2.4 Promote stronger and more vibrant communities
	2.5 Increase access to and participation in cultural activities
	2.6 Provide the required infrastructure and services in line with the rate of population increase
3. Develop the economy in ways that meet people's needs	3.1 Give everyone in Torbay access to work opportunities
	3.2 Reduce poverty and income inequality
	3.3 Meet local needs locally
	3.4 Harness the economic potential of the coast in a sustainable way
	3.5 Reduce the vulnerability of the economy to climate change and harness opportunities arising
	3.6 Contribute to the regeneration and quality and diversity of the tourism industry
4. Provide access to meet people's needs with least damage to communities and the environment	4.1 Reduce the need /desire to travel by car
	4.2 Help everyone access basic services easily, safely and affordably
	4.3 Make public transport, cycling and walking easier and more attractive
	4.4 Encourage a switch from transporting freight by road to rail or water
5. Maintain and improve environmental quality and assets	5.1 Protect and enhance habitats and species
	5.2 Promote conservation and wise use of land
	5.3 Protect and enhance landscape and townscape
	5.4 Value and protect diversity and local distinctiveness including rural ways of life
	5.5 Promote the essential need for green infrastructure
	5.6 Maintain and enhance the historic environment
	5.7 Reduce vulnerability to flooding and sea level rise
6. Minimise consumption of natural resources	6.1 Reduce non renewable energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions
	6.2 Keep water consumption within local carrying capacity limits
	6.3 Minimise consumption and extraction of minerals
	6.4 Reduce waste generation and increase materials efficiency
	6.5 Minimise land, water, air, light, noise and generic pollution

6 Key Findings

The Sustainability Appraisal has found that the emerging Local Plan will generally have a positive effect on sustainability in Torbay. It will have particularly strong benefits for the economy. However, its holistic approach to the further development will also ensure wide-reaching benefits for society and the environment. Table 2 below set out a summary of likely impact of the Local Plan Policies on each of the sustainability objectives, which will enable the overall cumulative and synergistic effect to be clearly seen in relation to one another.

6.1 Significant Positive Impacts

In broad terms the Local Plan performed well against the sustainability objectives. Many of the Policies make a positive contribution towards specific sustainable development. Beneficial impacts arising from the Local Plan are summarised below.

The level of affordable housing in Torbay is currently below that required to meet local needs. Delivery of housing will increase the amount of affordable homes, provided that policy requirements are met. This will benefit a wide range of the local population currently unable to access the housing they require. The Plan will enable some of the future housing needs to be accommodated at a level that takes into account environmental considerations.

The increase in the amount of employment land proposed will help to increase the employment capability of Torbay, will help to meet the needs of specific sectors that lack affordable and appropriate workspace, and will help to increase the attractiveness of Torbay to major employers, potentially leading to an increase in higher value job creation locally as well as helping support local economic growth. This may indirectly lead to a reduction in out-commuting, therefore reducing the need to travel and having wider environmental benefits.

The Local Plan should lead to improvements in design, quality and sustainability of new build, with particularly high targets established relating to sustainable building design. This should help to reduce the carbon emissions resulting from all forms of new development, having wider environmental benefits and contribute towards reducing the ecological footprint in Torbay.

The local Plan should lead to improvements in access to services, including sustainable transport through direction of development to areas with good transport links, through the protection of the hierarchy of town, district and local centres, and promotion of mixed use development in appropriate locations. In addition, should help to co-ordinate improvements that facilitate walking and cycling throughout the area.

The implementation of the Local Plan, particularly at the operational stage of development has the potential to bring about a range of health benefits, with all of the wider determinants of health being delivered. The key policy benefits to health include improving choice and availability of housing; improving the cultural, historical, leisure and retail industries and associated income and employment opportunities; increasing access and accessibility through public transport and public realm improvements and increasing opportunities for physical activity; improving services and amenities and enhancing the built environment; and increasing and enhancing local biodiversity, greenways and open space. The policies also seek to deliver initiatives that will help to reduce deprivation, as well as deliver improvements to all neighbourhoods

6.2 Significant Negative Impacts

Alongside the many positive effects of the Local Plan, potential negative effects were also identified. These primarily relate to the increased residential and employment development proposed in the Local Plan. Negative effects identified are summarised below.

One of the most significant effects arising from housing development is the potential for an increase in car ownership. This may lead to an increase in journeys made by car, although it is recognised that car ownership does not necessarily equate to trips made. Any increase in journeys made by car will have a direct impact on the local environment, through reduction in air quality and increase in road-related noise, and increased congestion, all of which can have an impact on health. This will also have an impact on the wider environment, through the increase in emissions of greenhouse gases, therefore contributing towards climate change.

Other forms of development, such as major sites for employment, increased retail provision and further leisure and recreation attractions may also increase journeys made by car, some of which will originate from outside the local area. Other employment related journeys may also increase, such as travel to work and deliveries serving local businesses, which can include freight or more polluting vehicles.

The delivery of around 8,000 to 10,000 new homes in Torbay over the Plan period will put pressure on land available. Although the majority of these dwellings can be situated within the built up area on previously developed land, there is the identified need to develop greenfield land to accommodate this requirement, as well as meet wider employment and other infrastructure needs. This will result in the loss of a natural habitat and has potential to harm the wider landscape setting.

Nevertheless, the Council's decision to follow a Constrained Balanced Growth Strategy (Policy SD1) is an approach which seeks to facilitate growth within environmental limits. This Strategy, together with appropriate mitigation through supporting policies, should result in the minimisation of environmental impacts to an acceptable level.

Another significant impact arising from development is the impact on natural resources, particularly water. Although the Local Plan policies require high environmental standards to be met, including minimising water consumption in new build, water consumption will increase with the levels of development proposed, unless there is also significant investment in reducing water consumption in existing housing stock and in buildings of other uses. New development will also increase the need for energy, with an increase in consumption of energy contributing to climate change unless significant amounts are sourced from low or zero carbon sources. The increased population arising, as well as the construction stages of development, will generate an increase in municipal and construction waste.

The increased population arising from the levels of development will also increase pressure on local services and amenities, although it is recognised that certain types of services, such as schools, community and health facilities are required in some policies to help meet identified areas of pressure. The increased population will also significantly increase the pressure on existing open space.

6.3 Mitigation Measures

The SA process has identified opportunities to enhance the positive effects and mitigate the negative effects. This is in addition to the mitigation and enhancement measures already contained within the Local Plan. The majority these recommendations have been incorporated into the current Draft Local Plan. These recommendations may be carried forward to lower tier plans. The main mitigation requirements identified include:

a safe and secure public realm through incorporating secured by design;
incorporating biodiversity features into development to ensure there is no net loss of biodiversity;
requirement for sustainable travel plans for freight;
continue to encourage the use of sustainable drainage systems and flood prevention;
sustainable construction/design of residential and commercial development

7 Monitoring Framework

Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive requires the significant effects of the Local Plan to be monitored. This will be achieved through using some of the indicators to monitor the impacts on the environment, economy and social aspects of Torbay. In particular monitoring will help to address the following questions:

Were the assessment's predictions of sustainability effects accurate?
Is the plan contributing to the achievement of desired SA objectives and targets?
Are mitigation measures performing as well as expected?
Are there any adverse effects? Are these within acceptable limits, or is remedial action desirable?

Monitoring indicators include those which are contextual indicators, core output indicators, national indicators and local output indicators, as well as significant effects indicators. The monitoring will be undertaken on an annual basis and it should be noted that there may be some indicators that cannot be measured annually, depending on the type and nature of the indicator, and these will be monitored according to the timescales that are possible. The findings of these indicators will help measure how well the Local Plan contributes to sustainable development, and inform future reviews of the document.

8 The Next Steps

The next stage in the development of the SA is to take on board the feedback from this consultation and update the SA Report accordingly. Any significant changes made to the Local Plan will be subject to further SA, and a revised SA Report will be published alongside the Local Plan Submission Document.

A statement will be published upon adoption of the Local Plan to indicate how the sustainability appraisal process and consultation responses have influenced the development of the document.

Sustainability Objectives																																
Policy	1.1	1.2	1.3	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.7	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5	
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H7	++	++	++	++	+	++	++	++	++		++	++	++	++		++	++	++									++	++	++	++	++	+
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SDT3	++	++	++	++	++	-	++	++	++	++	+	++	++	++	+	++	++	++		+/-	--	+	-	++		--	--	--	--	--	--	+
SDT4	++	++	++		++	-	++	++	++	++	+	++	++	+	++	++	++	++		--	+	+		+		-	--	--	--	--	?	
SDP1	++	++	++	++	++	+	++	++	++	++	+	++	++	++	++	++	+	++	-	+/-	+/-	+	--	++	+	+/-	--	--	--	--	+	
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SDP3	++	++	++	++	++	+	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	+	+	+	++	-	+/-	--	+	-	++		-	++	--	--	--	+	
SDP4	++	++	++		++	-	++	++	++	++	+	++	++	+	++	++	++	++		--	+	+		+		-	--	--	--	--	?	
SDB1	++	++	++	++	+	-	++	++	++	++	+	++	++	++	++	+	+	+	-	+/-	-	++	++	-	++	--	--	--	--	--	-	
SDB2	++	++	++	++	++	+	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	+	++	-	+	++	-		-	--	--	--	--	--	--	+	
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		Sustainability Objectives				Planning Objectives				Sustainability Indicators				Sustainability Objectives			
		SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	PO1	PO2	PO3	PO4	SI1	SI2	SI3	SI4	SO5	SO6	SO7	SO8
SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	SO5	SO6	SO7	SO8	SO9	SO10	SO11	SO12	SO13	SO14	SO15	SO16	SO17	SO18
SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	SO5	SO6	SO7	SO8	SO9	SO10	SO11	SO12	SO13	SO14	SO15	SO16	SO17	SO18
SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	SO5	SO6	SO7	SO8	SO9	SO10	SO11	SO12	SO13	SO14	SO15	SO16	SO17	SO18
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SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	SO5	SO6	SO7	SO8	SO9	SO10	SO11	SO12	SO13	SO14	SO15	SO16	SO17	SO18
SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	SO5	SO6	SO7	SO8	SO9	SO10	SO11	SO12	SO13	SO14	SO15	SO16	SO17	SO18

