

Torquay Harbour Area Action Plan
Development Plan Document

Sustainability Appraisal

Regulation 25 Consultation Draft

Non-Technical Summary

• 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

Torquay Harbour Area Action Plan

Development Plan Document

Sustainability Appraisal of Regulation 25 Draft Document

(Incorporating SEA Requirements)

Non-Technical Summary

Purpose of this document:

This leaflet summarises the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) report for the Torquay Harbour Area Action Plan DPD (Regulation 25 Consultation Document). The SA report aims to identify the potential social, economic and environmental impacts of the DPD.

This Non-Technical summary and related full report have been compiled for consultation purposes and your comments are welcome (please see details below to comment or to view a full version of the report).

We want your views!

The Strategic Planning Group welcomes feedback on this leaflet and the associated 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 the monitoring of the plan to assist in tracking the likely social, economic and environmental implications of the plan?

If you wish to comment on this report please use the contact details below.

The consultation period extends in parallel to that of the Regulation 25 Draft THAAP which runs from Monday 14 September to Friday 23 October 2009.

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Reference copies of this leaflet, full report and related documents and leaflets are available at the Council's Libraries, Connections Offices and at Roebuck House, Torquay.

This leaflet and the full report can also be accessed via the Internet: <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/ldf> or <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/sustainabilityappraisal>

Key Terms and Abbreviations

Development Plan Document (DPD)

Local Development Framework (LDF)

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Torquay Harbour Area Action Plan (THAAP)

What is the Torquay Harbour Area Action Plan DPD?

The Torquay Harbour Area Action Plan (THAAP) will form one of the key documents in the Torbay Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF has replaced the old development plan system of Structure plans and Local Plans and will constitute a portfolio of documents that, once completed, will set out the key planning strategies, policies and proposals for the whole Torbay area. The purpose of this major reform is to create a more responsive and positive planning system.

During the LDF process planning authorities can choose to prepare an Area Action Plan (AAP) for any areas of significant change or conservation. AAPs have an important role both in the stimulation of new regeneration and in the co-ordination of existing regeneration programmes in a focussed manner.

The THAAP seeks to provide a planning framework to facilitate the regeneration of the area, which comprises Torquay Harbour and its immediate surroundings. This area has already been the subject of numerous strategies prepared by various Council departments and the Torbay Development Agency (TDA). However, as yet, no unified approach to their delivery has existed to draw these strategies together, so regeneration within the Torquay Harbour area has occurred on an incremental basis. The purpose of the THAAP is to provide a co-ordinated approach to regeneration, complementing the regeneration initiatives promoted by the TDA. It will also provide a framework for the detailed conservation area enhancement and public realm work being implemented by the Council's Planning and Development Services Division.

What is a Sustainability Appraisal?

Under the new planning system Local Authorities must produce a Sustainability Appraisal alongside any Development Plan Document within the Torbay Local Development Framework. European and UK legislation require that the LDF is also subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), a process that considers the effects of development planning on the environment. Government guidance advises that these two processes should be carried out together and requires the LDF to be subject to a SA incorporating SEA.

The aim of the SA/ SEA appraisal process is to ensure that full consideration is given to the social, environmental and economic impacts of the plan being proposed. This document summarises the work carried out for the Sustainability Appraisal of the Torquay Harbour Area Action Plan DPD.

Whilst in the past large-scale individual projects have been assessed for their environmental impact it is becoming apparent that incremental development allowed under overarching policies can have a significant cumulative impact. It is for this reason that documents such as those contained within the Local Development Framework need to be appraised for sustainability at a strategic level.

Non-Technical Summary

The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process feeds into various stages in the plan's development, ensuring continual consideration of sustainability issues throughout plan production. This non-technical summary relates to the findings of Stages A - C of the process as outlined below. The consultation on this leaflet and related report will form Stage D of the appraisal process.

Stage A: Setting Context and Scope

Stage B: Developing Options and Assessing Effects

Stage C: Preparing the SA Report

Stage D: Consulting on the Plan and the SA Report

Stage E: Monitoring Implementation of the Plan

SA Scoping and Issues for Sustainability

The ground work for the Sustainability Appraisal was carried out at the early scoping stage and provides the context upon which to build the appraisal. In 2006 a scoping process was carried out to help ensure that the SA covered key sustainability issues relevant to Torbay and to the content of the DPD. Plans and programmes were reviewed and information was collated relating to the current and predicted social, environmental and economic characteristics of the area.

From these studies, the key sustainability issues and opportunities identified included:

- The need to manage the evening economy in the Harbour Area and reduce anti-social behaviour and crime.
- Provision of an improved environment, quality open space and cultural facilities.
- The need for affordable housing and increased employment opportunities.
- The need to develop tourism further and increase tourism spend.
- Improvements to public transport, access and cycling facilities.
- Protecting the unique Riviera style and heritage of the area.
- Protecting the sensitive marine environment and water quality.
- Reducing flood risk.
- Promoting sustainable construction.

Objectives and Indicators:

An SA Framework was compiled and included 36 sub-objectives to test the sustainability of each LDF document. They are grouped under 6 'High Level Objectives' and are derived from the Regional Spatial Strategy's equivalent appraisal framework:

- 1 Improve health.
- 2 Support communities that meet people's needs.
- 3 Develop the economy in ways that meet people's needs.

- 4 Provide access to meet people's needs with least damage to communities and the environment.
- 5 Maintain and improve environmental quality and assets.
- 6 Minimise consumption of natural resources.

For a full list of further detailed objectives under these broad titles please see the main report.

Sustainability Appraisal of the DPD

In accordance with stage B of the SA process, each option, selected saved Local Plan policy and emerging policy were tested against the 36 sub objectives in the Sustainability Appraisal framework by using the following symbols to indicate levels of impact. Where both positive and negative impacts were predicted, a combination of these symbols was used. Where it was considered that there were opportunities to enhance the sustainability of the proposals, recommendations were made.

| | | | |
|----|-------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| ++ | Clear benefits | -- | Clear negative impacts |
| + | Minor benefits | - | Minor negative impacts |
| ~ | No obvious impact | ? | Impact cannot be determined |

Sustainability Appraisal of Issues and Options

The first elements of the plan to be tested were the issues and options, representing Stage B in the SA process.

The appraisal compared the sustainability implications of four strategic options available to Council in the preparation of the DPD:

Option 1: Manage the current situation in the harbour area (a business as usual approach).

Option 2: Pursue a primarily leisure and tourism orientated role for the harbour area.

Option 3: Pursue a primarily retail role for the harbour area.

Option 4: Seek a mix of Options 2 and 3.

The appraisal found that that Option 4 (seek a mix of Options 2 and 3) was the most sustainable, with social and economic benefits for Torbay. Environmental benefits and enhancement would also be possible provided development occurred in a sensitive manner.

Sustainability Appraisal of Saved Policies

The Torquay Harbour Area Action Plan provides detailed guidance on the implementation of Policies in the Saved Adopted Torbay Local Plan 1995 – 2011. As the saved policies were not previously subjected to full Sustainability Appraisal, it was considered appropriate to undertake a basic appraisal of the most relevant policy relating to the harbourside and waterfront regeneration, Policy TU1. This found that the policy will have long-term positive impacts on the regeneration of the tourism industry, however a stronger focus on sustainable design and construction and public transport would be required in the THAAP.

Appraisal of the Torquay Harbour Area Action Plan DPD Preferred Options 2007

In September 2007, the emerging policies in the Torquay Harbour Area Action Plan (Preferred Options) draft were appraised in detail.

The SA found that, for the most part, the Preferred Options were likely to have significant positive effects for sustainability; however a number of recommendations were made to further improve the sustainability of the DPD policies. Key recommendations were:

- The policies should have a stronger focus on sustainable construction and design; this could be implemented through a new policy on sustainable construction.
- Flooding impacts should be further considered, including the need for new development to reduce surface-runoff; encourage flood resistant development, and consider the implications of new development within areas susceptible to tidal flooding. Climate change impacts, in particular sea level rise, should also be further considered.
- The plan should have a stronger focus on maximising public transport use; walking and cycling and enhanced public access to the coast should be further encouraged.

Appraisal of the Torquay Harbour Area Action Plan DPD Draft Consultation Document (Regulation 25) 2009

As a result of ongoing consultation and the Sustainability Appraisal, changes to the THAAP Vision, Objectives and policies were made during 2008-2009. In May 2009 it was determined that due to the scale of changes to policies, additional Sustainability Appraisal would be required.

The further Sustainability Appraisal concluded that the positive effects identified in the previous appraisal are still applicable to the Draft Consultation Document (Regulation 25).

The findings also concluded that the Draft Consultation Document (Regulation 25) has improved in terms of its contribution to addressing sustainability issues within the Harbour through the incorporation of recommendations made by the Sustainability Appraisal at Preferred Options stage. This includes new and revised strategic policies that address sustainable construction and design, flooding and

coastal management, and transport and access. Other areas of improvement include a stronger focus on community facilities; encouraging mixed-use development; requiring developers to complete Sustainability Checklists; and encouraging green roofs and rainwater harvesting/greywater recycling. The policies now have a stronger approach to public transport, walking and cycling, and include provisions to conserve the natural environment and avoid harmful impacts on TorBay.

Secondary, Cumulative and Synergistic Effects

The SEA Directive requires that consideration is given to the secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects of the plan. It is one of the advantages of carrying out a strategic assessment that the combined effects of different measures can be more effectively identified.

A number of cumulative effects were identified throughout the appraisal - both negative and positive. A number of these effects are common to any new development, for example increased greenhouse gas emissions - however the SA has sought to ensure the plan includes measures to assist in mitigating any adverse effects. Key cumulative effects identified for the THAAP are summarised below:

Climate Change: Increased development and movement resulting from the THAAP will lead to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions. Climate Change effects include impacts on water resources, rising sea levels, increased flooding events and effects on biodiversity. The current draft consultation document includes measures to mitigate these effects.

Water Quality: It is difficult to predict the overall effect of the THAAP on water quality, however several SA recommendations include measures to reduce littering and pollution. Increased water-based recreation may also have an impact on the marine environment.

Landscape/ Townscape: The THAAP has the potential to impact significantly on the overall character of the Harbour area, which is a Conservation Area and has a very particular Riviera style, through incremental development of sites across the harbour area. The Draft Consultation Document has incorporated SA recommendations on this issue; however this may need to be monitored.

Flooding: Incremental development can have, and is having, a significant impact on surface water flooding and sewer flooding in Torbay with particular impacts for the harbour. The Draft Consultation Document now includes a stronger approach to managing and minimising flood risk.

Transport: The provision of sustainable transport infrastructure will have a significant impact on the local transport patterns for a significant number of years in the area. Increased construction will also result in additional traffic in the area.

The SA has highlighted the importance of coordinating transport in the Harbour with wider plans and policies, and recommendations have been incorporated.

Economy: The THAAP is likely to have a long-term positive and synergistic effect on the economy of the whole district, through encouraging the economic regeneration of this key area.

Health and wellbeing: The THAAP likely to have a positive overall influence on health and wellbeing, creating safer conditions for pedestrians, increasing the quality of open space, reducing the isolating and dominating influence of the A379 road, and helping to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

How will we know what effect the plan is actually having once adopted?

The impacts of the plan can be assessed through a programme of monitoring. This is an important part of the Sustainability Appraisal and Plan process enabling identification of any predicted or unforeseen impacts of the plan at an early stage providing opportunities for remedial action.

A set of broad overarching monitoring indicators have been identified to test all elements of the LDF for sustainability. A selection of 20 indicators of greatest relevance to the DPD has been selected. Further consideration has been given to issues arising from the sustainability appraisal of the draft consultation document (Regulation 25) and suggested further indicators provided in the main report. These will be further developed for the Sustainability Appraisal submission document.

Summary of Findings

As a result of the SA work it has been determined that implementation of the Torquay Harbour Area Action Plan DPD will bring a number of sustainability benefits to Torquay Harbour and the surrounding areas. Generally, the DPD performs well against the SA objectives and will have positive and long-term effects for sustainability, including cumulative effects. These include positive effects for the economy through encouraging the economic regeneration of this key area, which will help to reduce reliance on seasonal employment. There is also the potential for positive impacts on health and wellbeing through the provision of enhanced walking and cycling routes, and safer roads and public spaces.

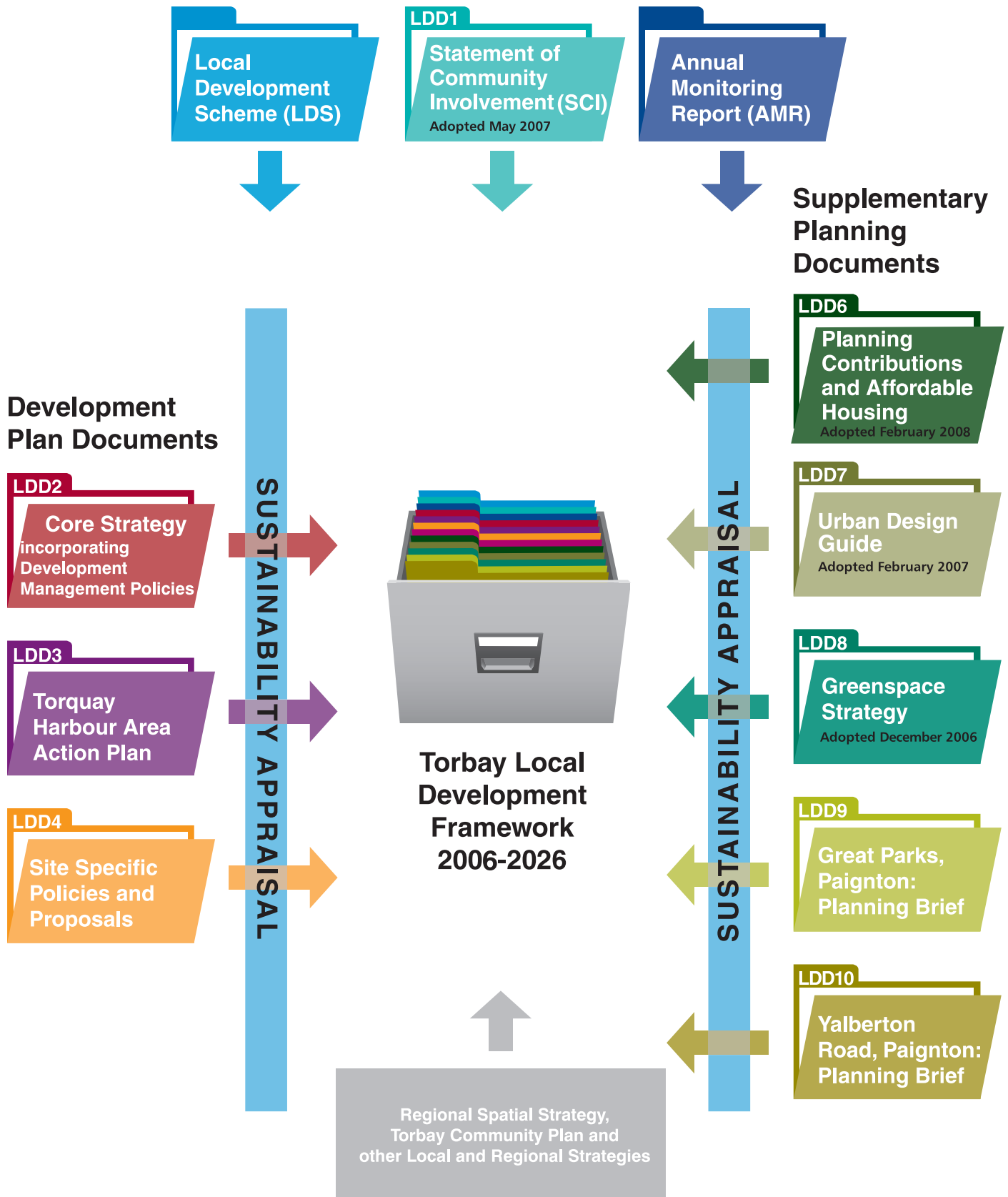
A number of negative effects were identified - the majority of these are cumulative and are common to new development in coastal areas. These negative effects include increased greenhouse gas emissions, potential adverse effects on water quality, incremental effects on the areas heritage, increased flooding risk, and noise and air pollution from increased construction and movement. There is also the potential for adverse effects on biodiversity, particularly in the marine environment.

As the DPD has progressed through the planning process a number of changes have been made to the DPD as a result of the SA process and ongoing consultation. In particular, the current Draft Consultation Document (Regulation 25) includes measures to mitigate the negative sustainability effects identified. These measures include strengthening the approach to sustainable design and

construction; public transport, walking and cycling and flood minimisation and management. Other changes made to the DPD improve the approach to waste minimisation, heritage and protecting marine biodiversity.

The Sustainability Appraisal process has therefore assisted in improving the sustainability of the emerging DPD ensuring the social and economic benefits of the regeneration of TorquayHarbour are considered alongside its unique environmental characteristics and wider sustainability concerns.

The structure of the Local Development Framework



Note: The status of certain Local Development Documents identified in earlier versions of the Torbay Local Development Scheme has changed as follows: LDD5 Generic Development Control Policies - now included in LDD2 Core Strategy. LDD10 Yalberton Road Paignton: Planning Brief - now deferred pending progression of LDD2.