

Urban Design Guide
Supplementary Planning Document

Sustainability Appraisal

Consultation Statement

**Health • Social inclusiveness • Accessibility
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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 Torbay Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The information provided here summarises findings of a Sustainability Appraisal (SA)¹ which has been carried out in parallel to the development of the Torbay Urban Design Guide. 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:

- Outline key impacts identified through the SA process
- 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
- Give information on the ongoing monitoring arrangements relating to this Sustainability Appraisal during implementation of the Guide.

This 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. It will be available to the public at the locations specified at the end of this report.

Key impacts of the SA process:

- Appraisal of the Urban Design Guide objectives highlighted that it would have a number of positive sustainability implications:
 - Encouraging use of open space and routine daily exercise through the creation of more accessible, better designed spaces (which encourage walking rather than use of the car)
 - Providing equal access to good quality living environment *for all*
 - Encouraging high quality design for housing, education and health facilities
 - Strengthening of communities and encouraging people to participate in local cultural activities
 - Creation of good quality and accessible spaces
 - Meeting local needs locally by encouraging people to use local spaces and sustainable transport (such as cycling and walking) to access goods and services rather than the car.
 - Creation of a high quality shopping environment to improve the retail role of Torbay
 - Improvement to the townscape and landscape through better quality and locally distinctive urban design
 - Encouraging maintenance and enhancement of cultural and historic assets

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 helps to ensure that the environmental, social and economic effects of each document are considered during its formulation.

- Possible areas of conflict between Urban Design Guide objectives were identified as:
 - Possible clash between crime prevention design and need to retain local distinctiveness and create private spaces
 - The high design standards to be applied to all developments may raise the price of housing to the extent whereby they are no longer affordable
 - Potential conflict between local distinctiveness and the need for sustainable drainage systems and water conservation design.
 - Use of locally distinctive material to retain local character could increase extraction of minerals locally

- As the Urban Design Guide affects every development across Torbay it is important to consider its cumulative effects. Those effects identified in relation to the Urban Design Guide include fragmentation of habitats, risk of flooding, changes to townscape/ landscape and impacts on the economy. Additional wording relating to these issues is now included in the Urban Design Guide to ensure issues are given greater consideration.

- Areas of uncertainty identified through the appraisal matrix:
 - Impact of coastal environments particularly in relation to sea level rise and management of existing and new infrastructure
 - Impacts upon biodiversity (this largely relates to lack of data available at present to determine past and present trends on habitat coverage and interconnectivity – It is envisaged that this will be addressed through the evolving Biodiversity Action Plan.)

The above potentially negative impacts and areas of uncertainty are discussed further in the mitigation section of the main SA report (section 6) and changes made as a result, outlined below.

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.

- Further detail has been inserted within the Urban Design Guide main report and checklist to make greater reference to sustainability issues such as the need to:
 - Minimise air, land, water, genetic, noise and light pollution
 - Promote soil conservation
 - Promote water conservation
 - Recognise the threat of sea level rise and overtopping
 - Promote sustainable drainage
 - Reduce energy consumption and recognise potential for appropriate renewable energy generation
 - Recognise, protect and enhance biodiversity assets of Torbay
 - Recognise and address threats of flooding (particularly surface water flooding)

- A list of reference documents on sustainable design has been included in the Urban Design Guide to assist developers by providing further support and information on how to deal with key issues raised.

Overall the appraisal work indicates that the document is likely to promote sustainable development. However it is important to recognise that the translation of the wording of this document into actions will determine how sustainable it actually is in practice. This will be dependent on the level of detail required of the Design and Access Statements (as detailed in the Torbay Urban Design Guide) and its application on site. The SA also recognises that a trade off may be required of different elements of sustainability. This trade off will need to be carried out on a site by site basis and in discussion with the Torbay Council Planning Development and Policy Business Unit.

The textual changes highlighted above aim to address any 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 Torbay Urban Design Guide 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.

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 for a five week period from March – April 2006. 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 Appendix C.
- Consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options paper for the Urban Design Guide (Pre-Regulation 17 stage) took place between June and July 2006. The consultation period ran in parallel to the consultation on the Issues and Options paper and extended for a 6 week period. No consultation responses were received on the Sustainability Appraisal.
- Consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal of the Regulation 17 Urban Design Guide took place between October and November 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 number of responses on sustainability issues were received as a result of this consultation concerning, in particular, historic environments, renewable energy, fragmentation of habitats, and recognition of the biodiversity value of some sites comprising previously developed

land. Appendix C considers these responses in further detail and outlines how they have been addressed.

Justification for option choice

When formulating plans within the LDF it is important to explore fully the various options which may be available 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 Urban Design Guide (based around the 'By Design' Principles). 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' options has been carried out. Each of the two options were tested against the sustainability appraisal framework (see Section 5.1 of the main SA report).

The 'Plan' option considers a broad range of sustainability issues relating to urban design and scored well in the appraisal matrix. In particular the guide expands on the current 'By Design' principals to place greater emphasis on sustainability. Progression of the SPD provides a number of potential improvements on the 'business as usual' option making specific reference to sustainability issues identified in the baseline study and not being addressed under current guidance. Such issues include segregation of affordable housing units, fear of crime, shortage of cultural infrastructure, loss of habitats and fragmentation and increased occurrence of flooding. The Urban Design Guide highlights such issues as being of fundamental consideration in building design and site layout. In particular the Urban Design Checklist promoted by the SPD has an important role in providing a quick reference for designers highlighting key issues for consideration.

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.

The SA guidance indicates that this 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) and supported by Appendix D.

Two sets of indicators will be collected:

- Broad overarching sustainability appraisal indicators (to be monitored in the Annual Monitoring Report). Since the Regulation 17 stage two additional indicators have been added to the Appraisal to place a greater emphasis on historic environments. These changes have been noted in Appendix D.

- A number of indicators specific to issues raised during the appraisal of the Urban Design Guide. These indicators will be developed once the system of 'Design and Access Statements' has been properly embedded and it becomes clearer which elements of these Statements can be usefully monitored. It is anticipated that indicators will be based around issues (both positive and negative) that are outlined as potential impacts in Section 5 of the main SA report and summarised under the 'key impacts' section of this report.

The indicators 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 but where data is not yet available. These are listed in Section 4.2.3 (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 and Brixham. The adoption version of the Urban Design Guide 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 Urban Design Guide). Further general information on sustainability appraisals can be viewed at www.torbay.gov.uk/sustainability_appraisal.

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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