West Devon Borough Council

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of West Devon Our Plan

February 2015
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- Appendix II: SA Development Strategy and Employment Site Options (attached separately)
- Appendix III: SA Tavistock Site Options (attached separately)
- Appendix IV: SA of Settlements for Planned Minimum Requirements (attached separately)
- Appendix V: SA of Policies (attached separately)
- Appendix VI: Scoping Report (attached separately)
Non-Technical Summary

1. Introduction

What is a Sustainability Appraisal?

1. This is the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of Our Plan West Devon. This SA report is published for consultation alongside the Publication Version of Our Plan. SA is a continuous process that must be carried out during the preparation of a Local Plan.

2. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a continuous process used to assess the environmental, economic and social impacts of a proposal or policy within a plan. The SA ensures that plans are sustainable and that any negative effects identified can be appropriately overcome.

3. The purpose of the SA is to ‘test’ reasonable alternatives and potential policies to see whether they would have positive or negative effects when assessed against a set of objectives. These objectives include protecting and conserving the local environment, ensuring good access to local services (such as schools, or healthcare facilities), minimising flood risk, encouraging economic growth and improving the general health and wellbeing of people living in the area. All of the objectives and the type of criteria we consider are set out at Table 2 of the main report.

4. SEA looks at the effects of the emerging plan on the environment. It must predict and evaluate the significant effects of the plan alternatives and suggest measures to help improve sustainability. SA/SEA also includes measures to monitor the sustainability impacts of the plan during its implementation.

5. The SA report follows national guidance, including the 2005 guidance produced by the ODPM, National Planning Practice Guidance and information from the Planning Advisory Service website.

Can I comment on this SA?

6. Comments are invited between 26th February and 13th April 2015 on the content of the SA report.

7. Please send us your comments:
   • By email to strategic.planning@westdevon.gov.uk
What is covered in this Sustainability Appraisal?

8. ‘Our Plan’ sets out corporate priorities and strategies to meet the Council’s needs and aspirations up to 2031. ‘Our Plan’ includes the planning strategy, vision and planning policies for West Devon, excluding the Dartmoor National Park planning area. It identifies the recommended level and distribution of development. It also sets out policies for managing development. The plan is based on a significant amount of local evidence of need put alongside national guidance and policy, work with neighbouring areas and other public authorities and organisations to ensure we are planning effectively for the wider region.

9. ‘Our Plan’ is set out under the following key areas with associated relevant policies:
10. The SA report sets out in section 1 an introduction to sustainability appraisal and Our Plan. Section 2 provides more detail on SA and SEA and the appraisal methods used for assessing draft policies and proposals in Our Plan. The Scoping process is also detailed in section 2. Section 3 provides a description of the characteristics of the Borough, and how the area may fair without Our Plan.

11. Section 4 considers the options and alternatives to the proposed approach in Our Plan. Section 5 sets out the findings of the SA of Our Plan’s policies and proposals.

12. To ensure compliance with the SEA Directive monitoring measures are set out at section 6. A summary of the process and findings of the SA is provided at section 7. Accompanying the report are the following appendices:
   - Appendix I: SA compliance with the requirements of the SEA Directive.
   - Appendix II: SA Development Strategy and Employment Site Options
   - Appendix III: SA Tavistock Site Options
   - Appendix IV: SA of Settlements for Planned Minimum Requirements
   - Appendix V: SA of Policies
   - Appendix VI: Scoping Report

What is the Sustainability Appraisal Process?

13. SA/SEA is an iterative process that has taken place alongside the evolution of Our Plan. There are 5 stages to preparing a sustainability appraisal, the table below illustrates these stages alongside the Our Plan process.

Table 1: Sustainability Appraisal and ‘Our Plan’ Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope (Scoping Report)</th>
<th>Our Plan Stage (May – Dec 2014)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1 – Identify other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1 – Test ‘Our Plan’ objectives against the SA framework</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B2 – Developing ‘Our Plan’ options including reasonable alternatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>B3 – Evaluate the likely effects of ‘Our Plan’ and alternatives</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B4 – Consider ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Stage C: Developing the refining options and assessing effects

C1 – Preparing the SA report

Stage D: Consult on the draft SA report and Local Plan

D1 – Public consultation on ‘Our Plan’ and the SA report
D2 – Appraise significant changes resulting from representations
D3 - Submit ‘Our Plan’ for independent Examination

Stage E: Adoption and Monitoring

E1 – Prepare and publish adoption statement
E2 – Monitor sustainability appraisal indicators
E3 – Respond to adverse effects

14. The scoping report is included at appendix VI. This details how Stage A above was completed. The conclusion of which was to produce an appraisal framework of sustainability objectives (this is shown at table 2 of the SA report) to appraise options and policies in Our Plan. The SA Report details how the other stages have been completed.

15. Each draft policy and objectives of the plan, including potential options for housing and employment allocations were subject to SA. Using the SA Framework and associated questions, baseline information and professional judgement the likely effects and impacts of the draft policy on the area were considered across the range of SA Objectives. Significant effects were considered and opportunities identified to improve the overall sustainability of a policy or proposal. Grading was provided using the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>++</td>
<td>Potential major positive effects to achievement of the SA objective</td>
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<td>--</td>
<td>Potential major negative effect to achievement of the SA objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Impact on the SA objective is uncertain</td>
</tr>
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</table>

‘Our Plan’ (includes regulation 18 consultation)

Our Plan Stage (Feb 2015) Consultation on proposed plan (regulation 19 consultation)
Submit for Examination
What were the findings of the SA?

16. Section 4 of the SA report sets out how reasonable alternatives were considered. It was considered appropriate to consider alternatives for the following:

- Growth options
- Distribution options
- Site options for Tavistock
- Site options for employment land

17. The conclusion of the consideration of alternatives informed the policy approach in the Publication plan. The assessment of reasonable alternatives is set out at appendix II and III. The SA report sets out the conclusions of these assessments.

18. Appendix IV considers the relative sustainability of individual settlements for policy OP5: Minimum planned requirements. This assessment informed the level of development proposed in policy OP5.

19. Section 5 of the report and appendix V set out the SA of the Publication Draft Plan. Firstly, the vision and objectives were appraised, followed by each proposed policy. Overall, the vision, objectives and policies were found to have a positive effect on sustainability. The SA also includes suggestions of how sustainability could be further improved.

20. The SA report then sets out the key findings of the SA. These are as follows:

- The SA of Development Strategy and Employment Site Options (Appendix II) has recommended appropriate scenarios for the development and spatial strategy, namely appropriate levels of growth and where development should be distributed. This appendix also assessed employment options, they came out with strong sustainability credentials and the majority of these have been carried forward in the plan.
- The Tavistock Site Options SA Addendum (Appendix III) recommended which allocations should be proposed for inclusion within the Publication Version of Our Plan
- The Minimum Planned Requirements SA Addendum (Appendix IV) recommended various amendments to the proposed distribution strategy which have been reflected in the Publication Version of Our Plan
- OP1 is the amalgamation of two previous policies which avoids over duplication and proposes a clearer policy which focuses on specific areas which contribute to the well being of its communities. The role of having a job in contributing to a person’s wellbeing has been recognised through the SA
work and criteria included supporting proposals which improve access to existing employment centres, broaden the skill base of the local workforce and increase the average income.

- OP2 has been expanded to include criteria to cover points highlighted by the sustainability appraisal. These changes include general needs housing and expanding the criteria relating to the local economy.
- OP30 - The SA has led to changes being made to the policy by extending the clauses relating to providing housing for an ageing population and making the best use of existing resources by supporting empty homes being brought back into residential use. The key to this policy is providing a range of housing, both open market and affordable in terms of type, size and delivery (e.g. self build) to provide for the whole community and helping to support people living independently, whether through flexible and sustainable construction, and provision near to local job markets.
- OP37 Clearer links with the AONB Management Plan have been included.

Further changes will be considered prior to Submission of Our Plan.
Section 1: Introduction

What is a Sustainability Appraisal Report?

1.1 This is the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of Our Plan West Devon. This SA report is published for consultation alongside the Publication Version of Our Plan. SA is a continuous process that must be carried out during the preparation of a Local Plan under section 19 (5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

1.2 SA incorporating SEA is a continuous process that must be carried out during the preparation of a Local Plan. Its purpose is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which emerging plans will help achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives. SA assesses reasonable alternatives and policy options against sustainability criteria to see what kind of impacts they have on environmental, social and economic conditions. If negative impacts are identified, then measures may be suggested to help balance any adverse effects. This ensures that plan policies are the most appropriate given the reasonable alternatives. It therefore, also helps the Council meet the general requirement under section 39 of the Act to prepare a local plan “with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development”.

1.3 The Government advises that SA should be integrated with Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). These are two distinct assessments but it is possible to satisfy both requirements through a single appraisal process that consider all the likely significant effects on the environment, economic and social factors. The SEA Directive has been transposed into English law through the Environment Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (commonly referred to as the ‘SEA Regulations’). Compliance with the SEA Directive is set out at appendix I.

1.4 SEA looks at the effects of the emerging plan on the environment. It must predict and evaluate the significant effects of the plan alternatives and suggest measures to help improve sustainability.

1.5 The National Planning Practice Guidance sets out that SA should involve the following stages:

- Stage A: Setting Context and Objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding the scope
- Stage B: Developing and Refining Alternatives and Assessing Effects
- Stage C: Preparing the SA Report
• Stage D: Publish and Consult on the SA Report and the Local Plan
• Stage E: Post Adoption Report and Monitoring

1.6 The methodology used to prepare the SA report follows national guidance. This includes the 2005 guidance produced by the ODPM, National Planning Practice Guidance and information from the Planning Advisory Service website.

Integration with other Assessments

1.7 ‘Our Plan’ will be subject to the following other assessments. These are not part of the SA process but may contain sustainability issues:

• Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)
• Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)
• Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

Sustainable Development

1.8 The UK Sustainable Development Strategy ‘Securing the Future’ (2005) sets out five guiding principles of sustainable development:

• Living within environmental limits;
• Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
• Achieving sustainable economy;
• Promoting good governance;
• Using sound science responsibly

1.9 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It identifies three dimensions to this:

• an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy;
• a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and
• an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment

Our Plan

1.10 ‘Our Plan’ sets out corporate priorities and strategies that direct all of the Council’s services to meet the Council’s needs and aspirations up to 2031. ‘Our Plan’ includes the planning strategy, vision and planning policies for West Devon, excluding the Dartmoor National Park planning area. It identifies the recommended level and distribution of development. It also sets out policies for managing development. The plan is based on a significant amount of local evidence of need put alongside national guidance and policy, work with...
neighbouring areas and other public authorities and organisations to ensure we are planning effectively for the wider region.

1.11 ‘Our Plan’ is set out under the following key areas with associated relevant policies:

**HOMES** – The Council is seeking to enable the delivery of a range of housing to meet differing needs. We also want to ensure that our current housing stock is healthy, safe and secure, supporting independent living and reducing fuel poverty. We are responding to Welfare Reform by working with partners to improve financial capability and resilience for those individuals who are vulnerable and most at risk of losing their homes.

**JOBS** – We are working to facilitate a supportive economic environment for employment and productivity growth that is sustainable in the long term. We are also developing a deep understanding of local business needs to inform strategic working and maximise funding opportunities.

**NATURAL ENVIRONMENT** – We want to reconnect people and nature through the effective management and delivery of open space, play, outdoor activities and recreation. We will be reviewing our environmental partnerships...
and funding to produce better outcomes and benefits that protect and improve our natural environment.

**EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICES** – As a local authority the delivery of our day to day services is most important to our customers. We are seeking to deliver high quality services in ways that meet customer needs most effectively and offers the best value for money. We are undertaking a number of strategic reviews of key services such as Leisure, Waste, Car Parking and Street Scene to ensure they are delivering the right service for local people in the most cost effective way, as well as making the most of our Asset Base for the benefit of our communities and ourselves and working with our partners to improve health outcomes for local people.

The plan’s objectives are as follows:

**Our Wellbeing**
- To deliver positive health and wellbeing outcomes for communities
- To reduce health inequalities and social isolation
- To ensure local people have access to housing, employment, services, facilities; and activities that improve health outcomes and promote healthy lifestyles.

**Our Communities**
- To facilitate growth in a sustainable way that meets the needs of local communities
- To support innovative and flexible solutions for all types of development that meet local needs and which enables communities and individuals to develop resilience and adapt to changing life circumstances
- To enable communities have a safe, secure and healthy environment where homes are supported by employment, infrastructure and facilities which contribute to thriving communities
- To empower communities to make their own choices about services and future growth options and the delivery of services
- To plan for the long term development needs of our communities in a way which preserves West Devon as a special place to live, work and visit

**Our Homes**
- To enable the delivery of an appropriate level and range of housing to meet differing needs
- To ensure that the current housing stock is healthy, safe and secure supporting independent living and reducing fuel poverty

**Our Economy**
- To facilitate a supportive economic environment for employment and productivity growth that is sustainable in the long term
- To develop a deep understanding of local business needs to inform strategic working and maximise funding opportunities
- To support and promote the role of town centres by encouraging development
which ensures they remain attractive and vibrant destinations

**Our Infrastructure**
- To provide appropriate infrastructure alongside development so that communities are supported by access to key services and facilities
- To improve access to high speed internet services and mobile communications
- To improve provision and access to transport services
- To improve access and provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities

**Our Environment**
- To protect and enhance the special high quality landscapes of West Devon
- To conserve and enhance internationally, nationally and locally designated areas
- To protect and improve the biodiversity, wildlife and habitats of West Devon
- To place development in areas of low flood risk
- To reduce the risks from pollution by finding ways to address and mitigate against known impacts

**Our Heritage**
- To protect, enhance and promote the heritage assets within West Devon

**Our Resources**
- To make a significant contribution to a low carbon future
- To maximise the best use of energy efficiency and design of new buildings
- To contribute to the national drive to increase renewable energy generation
- To reduce fuel poverty
- To work with communities to help develop community energy projects

**Structure of the SA Report**

1.12 Section 2 provides more detail on SA and SEA and the appraisal methods used for assessing draft policies and proposals in Our Plan. The Scoping process is also detailed in section 2. Section 3 provides a description of the characteristics of the Borough, and how the area may fair without Our Plan.

1.13 Section 4 considers the options and alternatives to the proposed approach in Our Plan. Section 5 sets out the findings of the SA of Our Plan’s policies and proposals.

1.14 Monitoring measures are set out at section 6. A summary of the process and findings of the SA is provided at section 7. A Non Technical Summary is also provided at the beginning of the report. Accompanying the report are the following appendices:
- Appendix I: SA compliance with the requirements of the SEA Directive.
- Appendix II: SA Development Strategy and Employment Site Options
- Appendix III: SA Tavistock Site Options
- Appendix IV: SA of Settlements for Planned Minimum Requirements
- Appendix V: SA of Policies
- Appendix VI: Scoping Report
Section 2: Sustainability Appraisal Method

SA Process

2.1 SA/SEA is an iterative process that has taken place alongside the evolution of Our Plan. There are 5 stages to preparing a sustainability appraisal, the table below illustrates these stages alongside the Our Plan process.

2.2 The methodology used to prepare the SA scoping report and subsequent SA and SEA draws on national guidance. This includes the 2005 guidance produced by the ODPM, National Planning Practice Guidance and information from the Planning Advisory Service website.

Table 1: Sustainability Appraisal and ‘Our Plan’ Process

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<td>• B5 – Propose measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing ‘Our Plan’</td>
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<th>Stage C: Developing the refining options and assessing effects</th>
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<tr>
<td>• C1 – Preparing the SA report</td>
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<th>Stage D: Consult on the draft SA report and Local Plan</th>
<th>Our Plan Stage (Feb 2015) Consultation on proposed plan (regulation 19 consultation) Submit for Examination</th>
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<td>• D1 – Public consultation on ‘Our Plan’ and the SA report</td>
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<td>• D2 – Appraise significant changes resulting from representations</td>
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<td>• D3 - Submit ‘Our Plan’ for independent Examination</td>
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<tr>
<th>Stage E: Adoption and Monitoring</th>
<th>Monitoring</th>
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<tr>
<td>• E1 – Prepare and publish adoption statement</td>
<td>Monitor and report on the implementation of ‘Our Plan’</td>
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<td>• E2 – Monitor sustainability appraisal indicators</td>
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<td>• E3 – Respond to adverse effects</td>
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Scoping Report

2.3 Table 1 above illustrates that the first stage of preparing a SA report is the preparation of the scoping report. The purpose of the scoping report is to review baseline information and identify sustainability issues, challenges and opportunities in the Borough. This information is used to create a sustainability framework that appraises emerging policies and proposals for sustainability over a number of key areas. The scoping report was set out under the following topics:

- Air quality
- Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure
- Climate Change
- Community Wellbeing
- Economy
- Environmental Quality
- Historic Environment
- Housing
- Landscape
- Transport
- Water

To comply with the European Directive to incorporate Strategic Environmental Assessment into the SA process, SEA topics are specifically referenced in each topic of the scoping report.

2.4 For each topic the following information was set out:

- **Key Policies, Plans, Programmes, Strategies and Initiatives (PPPSI):** A list of relevant documents from international, European, national, regional and local level (SA scoping stage A1)
- **Relevant aims and objectives from the PPPSIs:** summary of the main objectives and sustainability issues and implications that are relevant locally (SA scoping stage A1)
- **Baseline:** sets out quantitative and qualitative information for the local area (SA scoping stage A2)
- **Sustainability Issues and Problems:** The main issues arising from the assessment that should be addressed through the plan making process (SA scoping stage A3)
- **Monitoring indicators:** to assess the effects of the plan once it is implemented
2.5 Sustainability Framework is comprised of 16 SA objectives that look to address the key issues for the Borough identified under the review of each topic. To aid the assessment process the SA Framework sets out under each SA objective a number of questions to consider when carrying out the appraisal.

2.6 The draft scoping report including a suggested appraisal framework which was sent to the three statutory environmental consultation bodies (Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England) for five weeks consultation in July and August 2014. Comments were also sought from relevant neighbouring planning authorities.

2.7 Responses were received from:
- Environment Agency
- English Heritage
- Natural England
- Devon County Council
- Torbay Council

2.8 The responses endorsed the approach and confirmed the sustainability appraisal framework as appropriate. The scoping report was revised to take account of the responses made and further detail was added to the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure, Climate Change, Community Wellbeing, Environmental Quality, Historic Environment, Landscape, and Water sections.

2.9 The final SA Framework is set out at Table 2. The final scoping report setting out all the information detailed above is at appendix VI.

SA Method

2.10 Each draft policy and objectives of the plan, including potential options for housing and employment allocations were subject to SA. Using the SA Framework and associated questions, baseline information and professional judgement the likely effects and impacts of the draft policy on the area were considered across the range of the SA Objectives. Significant effects were considered and opportunities identified to overcome challenges that may improve the overall sustainability of a policy or proposal. Grading was provided using the following criteria:

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2.11 Commentary was also provided on each option to conclude on its overall sustainability, highlighting particular areas of either positive or negative effect. In combination effects have also be considered alongside identifying measures that could help improve the overall sustainability.

Table 2: The Proposed Sustainability Appraisal Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEA Topic</th>
<th>Sustainability Objective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our Communities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td><strong>SA1</strong> To promote community vitality, resilience and balance</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Does it:</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>promote a sustainable mix of uses which are compatible to their surroundings?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>promote the retention and development of community services and facilities?</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>facilitate flexible working practices and enable people to live near to where they work?</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>provide opportunities for communities to respond to unforeseen events and circumstances?</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>promote social inclusion?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population and Human Health</td>
<td><strong>SA2</strong> To respect, maintain and strengthen local distinctiveness and sense of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Does it:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>enhance the quality and character of places?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>promote good design including density and site layout appropriate to the character of the location?</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>encourage the use of local materials?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our Homes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Population and Human Health</td>
<td><strong>SA3</strong> To provide access to all types of housing that will help meet needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Does it:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>improve the mix and quality of housing stock, including open market and affordable to meet a range of needs?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>increase needed provision for specific sectors of the community e.g. the elderly, disadvantaged, gypsies and travellers?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Our Economy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Population and Material Assets</td>
<td><strong>SA4</strong> To encourage economic growth and prosperity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Does it:</em></td>
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<td>• <em>provide for the needs of the economy, particularly local businesses (such as choice of premises, services, infrastructure, skilled workforce)?</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>support the growth of existing businesses and business sectors and encourage diversification into key growth sectors?</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>encourage provision of jobs accessible to all?</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>sustain an active and working countryside, including rural</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Our Wellbeing</td>
<td>Population and Human Health</td>
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<td>Our Environment</td>
<td>Population and Human Health</td>
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<td>Our Environment</td>
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<td>Landscape</td>
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<td>Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Water and Climatic Factors | SA10 | To protect and enhance water quality  
Does it:  
- protect and improve freshwater and estuarine quality?  
- provide adequate utilities infrastructure that does not adversely impact on the environment?  

| Our Resources | SA11 | To mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change  
Does it:  
- help to protect the community from changing weather patterns and environmental conditions and adapt to climate change?  
- increase the ability of the community to be more self-sufficient?  
- reduce the need for energy use and/or reduce fuel poverty?  
- support decentralised low carbon and renewable energy generation?  
- facilitate the generation and use of renewable energy?  
- support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions?  

| Water and Climatic Factors | SA12 | To minimise the risk from flooding  
Does it:  
- reduce the risk of flooding to the development and surrounding areas?  
- help to reduce the rate of run-off?  
- promote sustainable flood risk management?  
- encourage sustainable drainage?  

| Soil and Water | SA13 | To maintain and improve land quality  
Does it:  
- make efficient use of land including previously developed land where appropriate?  
- help remediate contaminated sites?  
- minimise the loss of good quality agricultural land?  

| Material Assets, Water, Soil, Human Health and Population | SA14 | To minimise the production of waste and encourage the sustainable use of resources  
Does it:  
- reduce the use of primary resources and promote the use of recycled materials?  
- encourage the use of local products and services?  

| Air, Climatic Factors and Human Health | SA15 | To protect and improve air quality  
Does it:  
- help improve air quality?  
- support specific actions in designated AQMAs?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Heritage</th>
<th>Cultural Heritage</th>
<th>SA16</th>
<th>To protect and enhance the cultural and historic environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Does it:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• continue to protect and enhance historical, archaeological and cultural assets and their settings?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• make a positive contribution to existing landscape, townscape and villages and their settings?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• promote uses suitable to the historic fabric of the site and surrounding area?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Limitations

2.12 The appraisal process has been informed by the most up to date information and data available and professional judgement. However, deficiencies in information do exist and it is not always possible to have sufficient information available when predicting effects at the development plan stage. For example, the precise impacts of an allocated housing site on environmental assets or traffic levels will not be known until appropriate survey work has been carried out usually at the planning application stage.

2.13 Furthermore, climate change impacts are difficult to predict as they are most likely to result from cumulative impacts at a local, regional and national level. Therefore, best practice has been used as a benchmark to determine the most appropriate approach. In carrying out the appraisal professional judgement has been used alongside the most up to date information available.

Consultation on the SA

2.14 The SEA Directive requires consultation on the draft plan and accompanying environmental report before adoption. Alongside the publication of the draft plan at regulation 19 stage, the SA/SEA report is published on the Council’s website and statutory and other consultees will be notified.

2.15 The December 2014 Sustainability Appraisal of Tavistock Site Options was published for consultation for 4 weeks. Comments from this consultation informed the Publication version of Our Plan to be published in February 2015 and the SA has been updated to reflect responses made during the consultation.

2.16 After the close of consultation any responses received on the SA report will be considered and changes made to the report where appropriate to accompany Our Plan at Submission.
Section 3: Sustainability Characteristics of the Borough

Summary of the sustainability issues of the Borough

3.1 The Scoping Report set out baseline information for the Borough. This assessment included information on the present and future state of the Borough. This is the basis for determining how the content of the emerging plan will help achieve sustainable development.

3.2 West Devon covers an area of 1160 km2, 45% of which is in Dartmoor National Park. Approximately 8% of the West Devon planning area is also in the Tamar Valley AONB. West Devon is one of the most sparsely populated areas in the country with 0.45 people per hectare. The Borough has two principal towns, Okehampton and Tavistock. They are the main centres and serve wide rural hinterlands that support their role as shopping and service centres.

3.3 The total population in 2011 was approximately 53,000 (including the area within the Dartmoor National Park). The population has increased by 9.6% since 2001. The Borough has seen a rise in the number of people aged 65 or over, up 28% whilst those aged 30-44 has declined by 9%. The number of households with dependent children is down 4.6% when comparing the 2001 and 2011 census. The population is forecast to grow to approximately 28,000 by 2013 according various demographic trend based projections.

3.4 Across the planning area the average house price is £190,000, which equates to the national average at Q3 2012. However, historically, house prices have been higher than the national average. When the ratio with average wages is considered, the lack of affordability is demonstrated. In 2011 in West Devon, a lower quartile house cost approximately 8.75 times the income of a household earning the lower quartile salary, which significantly exceeds the national benchmark, with a ratio of 6.5.

3.5 The Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment (SHMNA) identified a need ranging from 199 to 337 dwellings per year between 2011 and 2031 depending on preferred strategies for managing demographic change and economic growth. Particular needs were identified for specialist housing for an increasing older population; increased affordable housing provision; and more properties with 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms to balance the existing housing stock.

3.6 The number of households on the Local Authority Housing Register is up by 132% to 1,660, of which 635 households are bands A-D.

3.7 The West Devon economy is largely made up of small and medium size enterprises (2,975 firms). The main sectors are: wholesale and retail,
accommodation and food services, health and social work and education. The West Devon GVA was £642 million, this equates to a per capita figure of £12,100 compared to a county and national average of £14,800 and £18,200 (Cambridge Econometrics 2010). £29,760 of value added was generated per employee in 2012. Those self employed were 16.6% of economically active compared to 9.8% in England (2011 ONS). Number of people employed has increased by 6.2% from 2001 to 2011.

3.8 Tavistock is a popular shopping destination. The Okehampton shopping environment has improved in recent years with the opening of Waitrose. Both towns face increasing competition from larger centres outside of the Borough. But have performed well during the recession and remain vibrant shopping destinations.

3.9 There are good road connections in the Borough along the A30 to Cornwall and Exeter and beyond. A rail link is to be reopened at Tavistock to link back to Plymouth. Branch lines railway stations are at Bere Alston and Bere Ferrers (from Plymouth) and Okehampton (limited service in the summer from Exeter).

3.10 The Borough also contains a large number of environmental designations, many of International and national importance. Areas of historic or environmental importance in the Borough include:

Heritage
- 25 Conservation Areas
- Over 2,200 listed buildings
- Over 700 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- West Devon and Cornwall Mining Landscape World Heritage Site

Environment
- 4 Special Areas of Conservation
- 1 Special Protection Area
- 36 Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- 2 National Nature Reserves
- 4 Local Nature Reserves
- 203 County Wildlife Sites
- Areas of the Borough are also part of the North Devon Biosphere and Northern Devon Nature Improvement Area

3.11 Key green infrastructure assets include:
- National Cycle Network routes (NCN27, NCN3).
- Regional Walking Trails, Public Rights of Way and Permissive Paths.
- Large areas of accessible land within Dartmoor National Park and Tamar Trails.
- Existing network of greenspace, parks, gardens and allotments.
- Existing sports and play facilities.

3.12 Air Quality is regularly reviewed and assessed in the Borough. Air quality is generally good, however there are areas in Okehampton and Tavistock that are closely monitored to ensure they do not exceed air quality objectives.

3.13 The CO2 emissions per capita for West Devon were 9.2 tonnes in 2011, compared to a Devon figure of 7.1 tonnes and 6.9 tonnes nationally (Ricardo-AEA). This probably reflects the rural nature of the borough, where private car use is greater and not all properties are on mains power.

3.14 Renewable energy generation totals 9.3MW of which the most notable contributions are 5.44MW from solar PV and 3.71MW from hydropower. Generation from wind is limited but is increasing (source: REgenSW annual survey).

3.15 22% of households in West Devon are in fuel poverty that is if a household needs to spend 10% of its income on fuel (10% measure) (DECC sub national fuel poverty data, 2011).

Key Sustainability Issues, Problems and Opportunities

3.16 The SA scoping report and Our Plan evidence base has identified the key sustainability issues, problems and opportunities as:
- Meeting identified housing needs for all sectors of the community
- Support economic growth and increased productivity
- Promote the role of town centres
- Improve health and wellbeing and community resilience
- Provide needed infrastructure and access to homes, jobs, services and facilities
- Conserve and enhance special qualities and features of the landscape, biodiversity and historic environment
- Mitigate and adapt to climate change

What will the situation be without Our Plan?

3.17 Without a new plan in place existing trends are expected to continue. Our Plan is necessary to ensure development takes place in a balanced manner across the Borough, in the most sustainable locations with the least adverse impact on sensitive environments.
3.18 Having an up to date plan which is in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework is essential in order to make sure the Council is in a position to respond appropriately to proposals for new development and to ensure that a robust planned approach to future development is taken. In particular, the new Local Plan will provide sufficient flexibility to support a ‘can do’ attitude to business development to promote a strong and competitive economy. It also identifies the objectively assessed housing need of the Borough, ensures there is a rolling supply of appropriate housing sites in the most sustainable and least environmentally sensitive locations.
Section 4: Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives

4.1 In preparing Our Plan, alternatives have been identified and appraised as part of the iterative process. The principal areas where alternatives have been considered are for the level and distribution of growth as well as potential housing sites in Tavistock and for employment across the district. In assessing the various options the likely effects have been considered and are set out in the commentary for each option. The findings of which, are presented at appendices II and III.

4.2 The EU SEA Directive requires assessment of the likely significant effects of implementing the plan and ‘reasonable alternatives’ taking into account ‘the objectives and geographical scope’ of the plan and the reasons for selecting alternatives should be outlined in the Report. UK SA/SEA guidance defines ‘reasonable alternative’ as deliverable and within the timescale of the plan.

4.3 A significant proportion of allocations have been carried forward from the Core Strategy. For these locations there were no realistic alternatives as the locations had previously been appraised as part of the SA on the Core Strategy and the principle of development in these locations has been established. Alternatives have not been considered in assessing the range of policies in Our Plan, largely because policy requirements of the plan are set out in the NPPF, and there are no reasonable alternatives.

4.4 The appraisal of the draft plan has considered a number of realistic alternatives to inform the emerging development strategy. This has principally been growth and distribution options.

A ‘no growth’ option was not considered a realistic alternative as:

- it would conflict with requirements in the NPPF, such as to ‘significantly boost the supply of housing’
- it would not meet communities housing needs.
- It would severely limit economic growth and regeneration in the borough
- Current sites already have planning permission

Development Strategy Options

4.5 The West Devon Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment was published in 2013. This presented 3 scenarios for growth:

- Scenario 1: Demographic trend-based projections (Indicative requirement - 199-285dpa)
- Scenario 2: Moderate employment-led projection (Indicative requirement – 250dpa)
- Scenario 3: High employment-led projection (Indicative requirement – 337dpa)
The assessment of which is set out at appendix II. In summary the findings were:

**Overall, the three scenarios have a positive effect on a number of SA objectives (SA1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). The assessment has demonstrated that the greater the level of growth the more positive the impact will be on the Our Homes and Our Economy SA objectives. However, this is at the detriment of Our Nature (and Resources and Heritage) SA objectives. In other words scenarios 1 and 2 have a more balanced impact across all SA objectives, which on the whole produces a positive sustainable outcome. To address the negative impact on the environmental objectives policies should look to conserve and enhance wherever possible. This should include the delivery of green infrastructure or biodiversity offsetting for example. If scenarios 1 or 2 are preferred it is recommended that there is a strong positive economic strategy in the plan that maximises benefits for the local economy.**

4.6 The Council then considered how development could be distributed across the Borough. The following 3 scenarios were appraised:

- Scenario 1: Town-focused development (main towns of Okehampton and Tavistock)
- Scenario 2: Proportional town and village development (across main town, local centres and main villages)
- Scenario 3: Rural-focused development (local centres and villages)

The assessment of which is set out at appendix II. In summary the findings were:

**In determining which scenario is more appropriate it also has to be borne in mind levels and areas of development that are already predetermined in the development strategy. Namely, the existing allocations in Okehampton and Tavistock and outstanding commitments in Hatherleigh, North Tawton and Bere Alston. The majority of this (90%) is in the main towns of Okehampton and Tavistock. Taking this into account it would seem scenario 2 is more appropriate when the availability of sites, topography, environmental designations and current road and infrastructure capacity are considered. This appraisal should be considered alongside the site specific assessment of development locations.**

4.7 Various options for the distribution of development were also consulted on during the December 2014 consultation and these have been assessed through the SA process (see Appendix III). The recommendations included in the report have been reflected in the Publication version of Our Plan.
4.8 The fourth stage in the appraisal of the development strategy was to consider site options for those locations where there were realistic alternatives. In most locations there were no specific allocations proposed due to a key element of the strategy being to identify their own options for where and how development could take place through neighbourhood plans which have been introduced under the Localism Act (2011). As such, SA/SEA will need to be carried out for site specific proposals as part of any future neighbourhood planning or other allocations process. Appendix IV: SA of Settlements for Planned Minimum Requirements will help inform this process.

4.9 SA/SEA has, however, been carried out in Tavistock where site specific proposals are being made for residential and employment development and in Okehampton, Bere Alston, Hatherleigh, Lifton, North Tawton and Buckland Monachorum where employment allocations are being made.

**Tavistock**

4.10 The following site options were appraised for Tavistock:

- Option 1: New Launceston Road
- Option 2: Mount Kelly
- Option 3: Green Lane
- Option 4: St Andrews Rd
- Option 5: Anderton Lane
- Option 6: Brook Farm
- Option 7: Callington Road South
- Option 8: Cattle Market

4.11 The sites were considered as options for allocating additional land for development in Tavistock to be included in Our Plan. The site options were to meet a need for around an additional 200 homes to be accommodated over the period 2011-2031. The 200 homes is in addition to the 750 homes which have been allocated in the adopted Core Strategy. The site options had derived from sites submitted during the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

The assessment of which is set out at appendix III. In summary the findings were:

*This assessment has demonstrated that Options 1, 2 and 6 can collectively deliver at least 155 homes in Tavistock. The remaining 45 homes required to meet the shortfall will not be required until later in the plan period (11+ years) and there is scope for this to be addressed through a future Allocations Development Plan Document or Neighbourhood Development Plan. These*
future processes should explore further potential at the Cattle Market site (Option 8) and Callington Road South site (Option 7) in particular.

Employment Land

4.12 The following employment options across the Borough were appraised:

- Option 1: ED2 – Opportunity Okehampton
- Option 2: SP22B – Okehampton
- Option 3: SP23B – Plymouth Road, Tavistock
- Option 4: Lifton Farm Shop North
- Option 5: Batheway Fields, North Tawton
- Option 6: Yelverton Business Park, Crapstone
- Option 7: Hatchmoor Industrial Estate Hatherleigh

4.13 These site options were derived from the SHLAA and existing employment allocations in the West Devon Core Strategy.

The assessment of which is set out at appendix III. In summary the findings were:

All of these employment sites have been assessed as demonstrating positive effects relating to Our Communities, Our Economy and Our Wellbeing. In some cases potential minor negative effects have been flagged-up relating to Our Nature (landscape and biodiversity) and Our Heritage, but these are inevitable to a degree and mitigatory measures should make their impact acceptable. The assessments of impacts under Our Resources are mainly positive, will have no effect or are not known at this stage.
Section 5: SA of the Publication Draft Our Plan

5.1 This section sets out the key findings of the SA of the Publication Plan. Appendix V sets out the full SA assessment of each policy and the objectives. In the assessment the cumulative effects have also been considered. In accordance with the SEA Directive any likely significant effect is identified along with mitigation measures to address them.

Vision & Objectives

5.2 The vision and objectives of the plan have been assessed against the SA framework to ensure consistency and that all key sustainability areas identified in the scoping report have been followed through in the plan. This assessment found that the majority of the Our Plan objectives would produce positive effects or would be neutral against SA objectives.

5.3 The vision is also considered compatible with the SA objectives, the SA concluded:

- The vision seeks to enhance the quality of life for individuals and communities, therefore, produces a positive effect across a range of SA objectives.
- Sustainability could be improved even further if Our Environment and Our Resources SA objectives were more explicit, such as conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

5.4 A summary of the SA of the objectives set out that:

- Overall, the objectives provide a strong framework to support and encourage sustainable development in West Devon. However, recommendations are included which would further improve the sustainability of the plan’s objectives.
- The appraisal has highlighted that one SA objective (SA13) is not addressed through the objectives of the plan. It suggested that this is included within the Our Resources objectives.

Key findings of the SA

5.5 Set out below are the key changes that have resulted from the SA of the draft plan. This illustrates how the SA process has influenced the plan to improve its overall sustainability:
The SA of Development Strategy and Employment Site Options (Appendix II) has recommended appropriate scenarios for the development and spatial strategy, namely appropriate levels of growth and where development should be distributed. This appendix also assessed employment options, they came out with strong sustainability credentials and the majority of these have been carried forward in the plan.

The Tavistock Site Options SA Addendum (Appendix III) recommended which allocations should be proposed for inclusion within the Publication Version of Our Plan.

The Minimum Planned Requirements SA Addendum (Appendix IV) recommended various amendments to the proposed distribution strategy which have been reflected in the Publication Version of Our Plan.

OP1 is the amalgamation of two previous policies which avoids over duplication and proposes a clearer policy which focuses on specific areas which contribute to the well being of its communities. The role of having a job in contributing to a person’s wellbeing has been recognised through the SA work and criteria included supporting proposals which improve access to existing employment centres, broaden the skill base of the local workforce and increase the average income.

OP2 has been expanded to include criteria to cover points highlighted by the sustainability appraisal. These changes include general needs housing and expanding the criteria relating to the local economy.

OP30 - The SA has led to changes being made to the policy by extending the clauses relating to providing housing for an ageing population and making the best use of existing resources by supporting empty homes being brought back into residential use. The key to this policy is providing a range of housing, both open market and affordable in terms of type, size and delivery (e.g. self build) to provide for the whole community and helping to support people living independently, whether through flexible and sustainable construction, and provision near to local job markets.

OP37 Clearer links with the AONB Management Plan have been included.

Further changes will be considered prior to Submission of Our Plan.
Section 6: Monitoring Requirements

6.1 To ensure Our Plan delivers its vision and objectives the implementation of its policies will be monitored. This also serves the purpose of measuring how sustainable development is being achieved in the Borough. This will be reported each year in the monitoring report.

6.2 The Council will work with many partners to deliver sustainable development through Our Plan. These partners are in the private, public and voluntary sectors. The framework provided by Our Plan will be useful for all partners to target service delivery to help meet our priorities.

6.3 The Our Plan monitoring framework will be prepared alongside the Annual Delivery Plan. This Framework will include indicators and targets to enable the Council to determine how successful Our Plan is and will also help inform Council priorities for delivery. These priorities and the way in which we measure them could change over time and the monitoring framework will be amended as appropriate.
Section 7: Conclusion

7.1 The SA report, through the sustainability framework (set out in the scoping report) has assessed reasonable alternatives and policies for their relative sustainability. It has therefore considered the likely effects of the implementation of Our Plan. Overall, the draft plan will have a positive effect on sustainability in the Borough, particularly, through the provision of new homes, employment land and community uses. Our Plan includes a range of development management policies which will ensure what is special about the Borough is maintained and enhanced, such as its special landscapes and historic environment.

7.2 The SA process has included recommendations where sustainability can be improved even further. Some recommendations have been taken on board at this stage. Other recommendations will be considered alongside comments received on Our Plan and its SA report at the publication stage consultation. If necessary an updated SA report will be published alongside the Our Plan Submission Document.

7.3 Comments are invited on this SA report alongside the Publication Stage Our Plan between 26th February and 13th April 2015.

Please send us your comments:
- By email to strategic.planning@westdevon.gov.uk
- By using the Response Form available at www.westdevon.gov.uk/consultation
- By writing to The Strategic Planning Team, West Devon Borough Council, Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, PL19 0BZ

Please note that all comments received will be made publicly available. We will not publish any personal information.
Appendix 1: Compliance with the SEA Directive

Set out below is a table to show how the SA report meets the SEA Directive requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directive Requirements (set out in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations)</th>
<th>Our Plan SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. An outline of the contents main objectives of the plan, and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.</td>
<td>Section 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.</td>
<td>Section 3, Scoping Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.</td>
<td>Section 3, Scoping Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds and the Habitats Directive.</td>
<td>Section 3, Scoping Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation</td>
<td>Section 3, Scoping Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity; population; human health; fauna; flora; soil; water; air; climatic factors; material assets; cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage; landscape; and the inter-relationship between the above factors. These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects</td>
<td>Section 3, Scoping Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.</td>
<td>Section 4, 5, Appendix II, III, IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.</td>
<td>Section 2, 4, Appendix II, III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with reg 17.</td>
<td>Section 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 9.</td>
<td>Non-technical summary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>