

# eco-towns

## sustainability appraisal

Scoping report for the Planning Policy Statement  
on eco-towns







Eco-towns Sustainability Appraisal  
**Scoping report for the Planning Policy Statement  
on eco-towns**

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# Foreword

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) involves assessment of the social, economic and environmental effects of a draft plan. The process involves among other things:

- preparing and publishing a Sustainability Appraisal Report on the likely significant effects of the draft plan
- carrying out consultation on the draft plan and accompanying SA Report
- taking into account the SA Report and results of consultation in decision making and
- providing information on how the results of the appraisal have been taken into account in the final plan.

In developing an eco-towns Planning Policy Statement, Communities and Local Government has decided to undertake Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating the requirements of the SEA Directive<sup>1</sup>, at a level proportionate to the Planning Policy Statement, recognising that for some of the specific locations extensive SA/SEA work has already been completed.

The SA needs to address economic, environmental and social issues building on the SA work done in support of, or as background to, the individual bids received, and in developing the consultation document for the draft eco-towns Planning Policy Statement. It will need to be in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance. In addition to the SA workstream, the need for an assessment under the Habitats Regulations (with Appropriate Assessment) must be kept under review and undertaken where appropriate

This Report concludes the initial Scoping stage of the Sustainability Appraisal, and sets the way forward for the next stages, leading to the publication of the SA Report for public consultation.

Prior to this Scoping work, the Government carried out a review of the eco-towns proposals that came forward, which included assessments of environmental sustainability and impacts.

<sup>1</sup> The SEA Directive (European Directive 2001/42/EC) "on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment", a required assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have a significant effect on the environment. This is defined mainly as those plans which set the framework for development consents for projects which require EIA – Environmental Impact Assessment.

# 1 Introduction

This section explains the background and purpose to this Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and its subject: the Planning Policy Statement on eco-towns.

## 1.1 Background

Communities and Local Government, the government department responsible for planning policy in England, published its *Eco-towns Prospectus*<sup>2</sup> in July 2007. This Prospectus:

- set out the Government's vision for eco-towns that would “achieve high standards of sustainable living while also maximising the potential for affordable housing”
- outlined the support that would be available from Government to take eco-towns forward
- invited proposals from organisations interested in developing eco-towns.

In April 2008, Communities and Local Government published a consultation paper, *Eco-towns: Living a greener future*<sup>3</sup>. This consultation document:

- shortlists 15 locations (from the 57 bids that were received from eco-town scheme promoters) where Government believes there is potential for an eco-town, which will go forward for further assessment
- sets out the process – including the undertaking of a Sustainability Appraisal – and timetable leading to a final list of up to 10 potential eco-town locations, together with a final eco-towns Policy Statement
- outlines how Government will support the bid preparation and assessment tasks, and the delivery of eco-towns
- seeks the public's views on the vision for eco-towns and on the shortlisted locations.

## 1.2 Planning Policy Statement on eco-towns

Communities and Local Government is now preparing a Planning Policy Statement on eco-towns. More information on the eco-towns process, the shortlisted locations and the proposed timetable for preparation of the Planning Policy Statement on eco-towns (eco-towns PPS) is set out in Section 2. Part of this process includes the Sustainability Appraisal as set out in Section 3.

<sup>2</sup> Eco-towns Prospectus. Communities and Local Government July 2007

<sup>3</sup> Eco-towns: Living a greener future – consultation paper. Communities and Local Government April 2008

## 1.3 Sustainability Appraisal of the eco-towns PPS

The purpose of Sustainability Appraisal is summarised in national guidance as follows:

“The purpose of sustainability appraisal (SA) is to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the preparation of [plans]”<sup>4</sup>.

SA generally includes five broad stages, outlined in detail in Section 3, Table 1, including – scoping, assessment of the proposed plan and alternatives, a report to accompany consultation on the prepared plan, considering the report, and consultation in decision-making and monitoring.

### **Who is undertaking the SA**

Communities and Local Government appointed Faber Maunsell to assist with the Scoping phase (Stage A) of the Sustainability Appraisal of the eco-towns PPS. Scott Wilson have been appointed to undertake the ongoing appraisal and to prepare and consult on the SA Report (Stages B to D).

More information on Sustainability Appraisal aims and methodology is set out in Section 3.

## 1.4 Other eco-towns assessments and studies

Significant assessments on transport issues and on economic issues related to potential eco-towns locations are underway. These assessments will have important role in informing the ongoing SA process. However they have not contributed to this scoping phase for practical reasons (differences in timing of the SA process and these other assessments). The process and outcomes of these and other assessments should strengthen the baseline information in the respective areas and links will be actively pursued in the ongoing SA process.

<sup>4</sup> Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents – Guidance for Regional Planning Bodies and Local Planning Authorities. ODPM November 2005

## 2 Planning Policy Statement on eco-towns

This section provides a brief overview of eco-towns, the purpose of an eco-towns PPS and expected timescale for its preparation.

### 2.1 Overview of eco-towns

Eco-towns are intended to be:

*“a combined response to the challenges of climate change, the need for more sustainable living and the need to increase housing supply”<sup>5</sup>*

They are small new towns with sustainability standards significantly above equivalent levels of development in existing towns and cities. At the scale of 5,000–20,000 homes, they are not intended to be entirely self-sufficient and in most areas should be linked to existing major settlements with high quality public transport. However there may be other situations where a small new settlement is viable in itself as in more rural areas responding to climate change and loss over time of existing settlements (eg through managed retreat). The government intends them to be demonstrators, piloting new approaches to sustainable technologies and living.

#### **Key criteria for eco-towns**

The following are set out in the *Eco-towns Prospectus* published in July 2007:

- Eco-towns must be new settlements, separate and distinct from existing towns but well linked to them. They need to be additional to existing plans, with a minimum target of 5,000 homes
- The development as a whole should reach zero carbon standards, and each town should be an exemplar in at least one other area of environmental sustainability
- Eco-town proposals should provide for a good range of facilities within the town – a secondary school, a medium retail centre, good quality business space and leisure facilities
- Affordable housing should make up between 30% and 50% of the total with a particular emphasis on larger family homes
- A management body which will help develop the town, provide support for people moving to the new community, for businesses and manage facilities.

<sup>5</sup> *Living a greener future*

## Broad outcomes

Outcomes are set out in the Prospectus including:

- Intensive application of environmental technologies, resource efficiency and environmental design, using the Code for Sustainable Homes as a guide on sustainability issues other than energy
- High standards of design including a commitment to design competitions and a clear but adaptable masterplan
- Travel plans for each eco-town to show how the scheme would achieve an increased proportion of journeys on foot, by cycle and by public transport. Schemes would need to be based on high quality public transport links, including employment and leisure facilities and reduce the need to travel by co-locating services
- Community empowerment in both the development and operation of the eco-town, encouraging active community participation and creating local trusts to manage community assets
- An economic strategy relating business potential in the settlement to nearby towns, encouraging working from home and providing for local business support
- Promoting a healthy and sustainable environment through 'Active Design' principles and healthy living choices
- Imaginative proposals to create additional green infrastructure and, where appropriate, making good use of brownfield and surplus public sector land.

## 2.2 Purpose of the eco-towns PPS

Creating a new settlement has always been a challenging concept for planning and for policy. The eco-town concept needs to be established in a planning policy context. Setting out what constitutes an eco-town (giving a good sense of what it is – and what would not qualify) is intended to help by both setting out key planning tests to be met and also ensuring that it does not become an easy device for promoting mediocre development in open country with poor transport links and other shortcomings likely to result in unsustainable outcomes

The eco-towns PPS is intended to establish the concept of sustainable, 'linked', new settlements – eco-towns – in the planning system, the determination process, and corresponding guidance for determining when proposals meet eco-towns criteria, which would include:

- Defining the high level standards of sustainability which an eco-town should achieve such as zero-carbon across the development, a high level of transport modal shift (non-car use), resource efficiency (water, waste) good design and the way in which services are provided

- Defining the conditions in which a “linked” settlement would work well:
  - high quality public transport links to neighbouring major centres (to provide higher level services)
  - minimum proportion of employment to be provided within the new settlement (possibly add something on retail role)
- Help identify the types of facilities and provision which an eco-town – as a new settlement – should contain (schools, services, retail etc.)
- Identify useful approaches in planning eg simplified planning within the settlement to encourage innovation
- Interface with other PPS on climate change, flood risk, etc.
- Indicate other circumstances where a new settlement could be useful – eg managed retreat.

## 2.3 Shortlisted locations for potential eco-towns

The 15 shortlisted eco-town locations along with the relevant Local Planning Authorities (some locations lie across more than one planning area) and regions are shown opposite. Note that no specific locations were identified at the scoping stage for two of the locations – Rushcliffe and Leeds City Region.

Shortlisted eco-town scheme		Local Planning Authority		Region
1	Pennbury (Stoughton)	Harborough District Council Oadby & Wigston Borough Council Leicester City Council Leicestershire County Council	<a href="http://www.harborough.gov.uk/">http://www.harborough.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/">http://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.leicester.gov.uk/">http://www.leicester.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.leics.gov.uk/">http://www.leics.gov.uk/</a>	East Midlands
2	Manby	East Lindsey District Council Lincolnshire County Council	<a href="http://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/">http://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/">http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/</a>	
3	Rushcliffe	Rushcliffe Borough Council	<a href="http://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/">http://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/</a>	
4	Curborough	Lichfield District Council Staffordshire County Council	<a href="http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/">http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/">http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/</a>	West Midlands
5	Middle Quinton	Stratford-upon-Avon District Council Warwickshire County Council	<a href="http://www.stratford.gov.uk/">http://www.stratford.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/">http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/</a>	
6	Bordon-Whitehill	East Hants District Council Hampshire County Council	<a href="http://www.easthants.gov.uk/">http://www.easthants.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.hants.gov.uk/">http://www.hants.gov.uk/</a>	South East
7	Weston Otmoor	Cherwell District Council Oxfordshire County Council Oxford City Council	<a href="http://www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk/">http://www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/">http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.oxford.gov.uk/">http://www.oxford.gov.uk/</a>	
8	Ford	Arun District Council West Sussex County Council	<a href="http://www.arun.gov.uk/">http://www.arun.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/">http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/</a>	
9	St Austell (China Clay Community)	Restormel Borough Council Cornwall County Council	<a href="http://www.restormel.gov.uk/">http://www.restormel.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/">http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/</a>	South West
10	Rossington	Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council	<a href="http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/">http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/</a>	Yorks & Humberside
11	Leeds City Region	Leeds City Council Selby District Council	<a href="http://www.leeds.gov.uk/">http://www.leeds.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.selby.gov.uk/">http://www.selby.gov.uk/</a>	
12	Coltishall	North Norfolk Council Broadland District Council Norfolk County Council	<a href="http://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/">http://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.broadland.gov.uk/">http://www.broadland.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/">http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/</a>	East of England
13	Hanley Grange	South Cambridgeshire District Council Cambridgeshire County Council	<a href="http://www.scamb.gov.uk/">http://www.scamb.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/">http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/</a>	
14	Marston	Bedford Borough Council Mid Bedfordshire District Council Bedfordshire County Council	<a href="http://www.bedford.gov.uk/">http://www.bedford.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.midbeds.gov.uk/">http://www.midbeds.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/">http://www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/</a>	
15	North East Elsenham	Uttlesford District Council Essex County Council	<a href="http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/">http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/</a> <a href="http://www.essex.gov.uk/">http://www.essex.gov.uk/</a>	

# 3 The Sustainability Appraisal process

This chapter presents an overview of the SA process and the relationship of SA with Strategic Environmental Assessment.

## 3.1 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

Sustainability Appraisal of certain regional and local plans is required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The provisions for Sustainability Appraisal in the Act are distinct from the requirements of “Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment”, known as the SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Directive. The SEA Directive is implemented in UK legislation by SEA Regulations (Statutory Instrument 2004, No. 1633).

The considerations in SA normally go wider than for SEA, in covering economic and social implications in addition to the more environmental effects set out in the SEA Directive.

This Sustainability Appraisal is being undertaken with reference to guidance on Sustainability Appraisal published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). This guidance is intended to “assist users to comply with the SEA Directive” while also addressing the wider social and economic issues as required by the UK Act.

## 3.2 SA stages

The five stages in the Sustainability Appraisal process are summarised in Table 1 below with a short description of the activities undertaken at each stage.

**Table 1. Summary of the SA process (stages A to E)**

SA Stage	Summary
SA Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope (Scoping)	The framework for appraisal is developed for consultation through review of relevant plans & programmes, identification of key sustainability issues, collation of baseline information and development of SA objectives. The outputs are typically presented in a SA Scoping Report (this document).
SA Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects	Development and appraisal of alternative plan options. Predicting and evaluating effects. Consideration of ways to mitigate adverse effects and increase beneficial effects.
SA Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report	Preparation of the SA Report for consultation (documents the findings of SA stages A and B).
SA Stage D: Consulting on the preferred options of the plan and the Sustainability Appraisal Report	Consultation on the SA Report (and plan document) and review of and action on responses received.
SA Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Plan.	Finalise the monitoring arrangements to highlight specific performance issues, significant effects and lead to more informed decision making.

### 3.3 SA Scoping and contents of the Scoping Report

Stage A of the SA process consists of five subsidiary stages as set out in Table 2. While each stage should be completed in turn, some tasks are closely linked and need to be undertaken simultaneously.

**Table 2. Stages in the Stage A of the Sustainability Report**

Sub-Stages and Tasks	Description	Scoping Report
<b>Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the Scope</b>		
A1	Identification of relevant plans, policies, programmes and sustainability objectives Identification and review of plans, programmes and SA objectives relevant to the Eco-towns PPS Identification of the eco-towns sustainability objectives	Section 4
A2	Collection of baseline information Identification, collection and review of relevant baseline data and information	Section 5
A3	Identification of sustainability issues and problems Identification of the key sustainability issues relevant within each of the eco-towns areas	Section 6
A4	Development of the SA framework Development of the appraisal framework	Section 7
A5	Consultation on the scope of the SA Informal consultation with the site and neighbouring local authorities and main stakeholders Preparation of the Scoping Report (this document) for formal consultation with SEA consultation bodies – Environment Agency, National England, English Heritage	Section 8

This Scoping Report documents the work done in stages A1 to A4 and the outcomes of consultations to date with key stakeholders. Subsequent sections of this report discuss each of the following in turn:

- The review of relevant plans programmes and objectives and how this has informed the proposed eco-towns SA Objectives
  - Collection of baseline information
  - Consultations to date with key stakeholders
  - The identification of key sustainability issues
  - The proposed eco-towns Sustainability Appraisal Framework
  - Consultation and next steps in the Sustainability Appraisal.
- } Which inform...

### 3.4 Unusual aspects of this SA

As explained in section 2.2, the eco-towns PPS will establish national planning policy on eco-towns.

SEA and Sustainability Appraisal is generally not undertaken at the national level. In developing an eco-towns PPS, Communities and Local Government has decided to undertake Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating the requirements of the SEA Directive, at a level proportionate to the Policy Statement, recognising that for some of the specific locations extensive SA/SEA work has already been completed.

The SA process will consider the eco-towns PPS in the context of national planning policy, and also the sustainability issues in the 15 shortlisted locations. The SA Framework established at this Scoping phase is designed to enable the appraisal of options in the context of national policy, and the appraisal of locations taking account of differing local issues and priorities. This is explained further in section 7.

#### **Implications**

Appraising both the national policy and 15 locations has significant practical implications for the SA process. While most plans subject to SA cover one distinct region or smaller geographic area, this SA considers 15 locations in six UK regions and 21 Local Planning Authority areas. This presents challenges in terms of the potential quantity of information to be collected and processed. The steps taken to keep the SA task manageable (in relation to review of plans and programmes and the collection of baseline information) and to enable the outputs to be understandable and to support the plan-making process are described in later sections.

## 3.5 The ongoing SA process

There will be three strands to the appraisal:

1. An appraisal of the national policy statement
2. An appraisal of the individual locations and the proposed developments
3. An appraisal of the cumulative impacts of the eco-towns

### **Appraisal of the national policy statement**

An appraisal needs to be made of the eco-towns policy as a whole. The policy is about both housing and planning and needs to be viewed in the context of national housing and planning policies. They are not an alternative to current housing and planning policies but a supplement.

Consequently, and having regard to the SEA Directive's requirement to review reasonable alternatives, we propose to appraise the following national policy alternatives:

1. No eco-towns (business as usual or the base case) – including existing and planned growth such as urban extensions, densification.
2. New settlements (not eco-towns, but of comparative size and spatial impact).
3. Eco-towns.

### **Appraisal of individual locations**

It is intended to appraise each of the 15 identified locations. The appraisal will relate both to the sustainability of the location, which is fixed, and to the sustainability of the proposed development, which is more detailed in some cases than others. The appraisal will look at reasonable alternatives where they have some formal backing from the Government Office, Regional Development Agency, Regional Assembly or local authority. These will be alternative proposals for eco-towns or other freestanding settlements in order to ensure comparability. The appraisal will not examine alternatives in the form of urban extensions or densification.

### **Cumulative assessment**

The cumulative assessment will examine the impacts of developing 10–15 eco-towns.

## 4 Review of other plans, programmes and objectives

This chapter presents an overview of the review of plans programmes and objectives that has been undertaken as part of the scoping study.

### 4.1 Purpose

The SEA Directive states that the environmental report (ie the SA Report for the eco-towns PPS) should provide information on the “relationship with other relevant plans and programmes” and “the environmental protection objectives established at international, European or national 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”.

The aim is to ensure through the SA that the plan addresses relevant policies set out elsewhere in the wider policy context in which it is framed. In particular the review can help to ensure that planners identify and act on the opportunities to contribute towards wider objectives of which they might otherwise remain unaware.

### 4.2 Approach

The review for this Sustainability Appraisal is made particularly challenging by the need to consider plans and programmes relating to 15 different locations as well as the common national and international documents. In response the review has effectively been divided into three levels, with different treatment at each level:

#### **International and national**

A broad review of relevant plans and programmes at these levels of the planning has been undertaken. It records policies, objectives, indicators and objectives related to sustainability issues where these were scoped as potentially significant, and keeping the scale of the task in proportion with the benefits to the SA process.

#### **Regional**

The review focused on the Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks or Integrated Regional Strategies for the six regions containing shortlisted eco-towns locations. It identified the regional sustainability objectives for each region, which were then used as the primary basis for establishing the

objectives to be used as the eco-towns SA Objectives. These in turn are the basis of the proposed SA Framework.

Each of the six regions has also published a Sustainability Appraisal of their respective Regional Spatial Strategies. Information from SA Reports and Scoping Reports has influenced the eco-towns SA Objectives, the SA Framework and the identification of key issues, as discussed in relevant sections below.

### **Local**

The review also considered each Local Planning Authority covering a potential eco-town location. Where possible a published Sustainability Appraisal Report or Scoping Report for the Core Strategy was obtained and the key sustainability issues identified in the SA were recorded.

## 4.3 Summary of the review

The table in Appendix A lists the international, national, regional and local plans and programmes reviewed and includes a brief summary of implications for the plan-making process and the SA.

Given the nature of the eco-towns PPS, an unusually large number and range of other plans and programmes are relevant to it and to the SA. In particular, there are many plans and programmes at regional and local level that have not been reviewed directly. The expectation is that much of the contextual information contained in these has been reflected in the SAs of Regional Spatial Strategies and Core Strategies that have been reviewed here and in their objectives.

### **Identification of eco-towns SA Objectives**

The objectives from the Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks or Integrated Regional Strategies for the six regions were used as the basis for the eco-towns SA objectives. The aim was to produce a robust set of objectives to act as the 'spine' of a flexible eco-towns Sustainability Appraisal Framework, described later.

Table 3 shows the end point of the process used to derive the proposed eco-towns SA Objectives from the objectives in the Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks (RSDFs) or Integrated Regional Strategies (IRFs). Appendix B includes a larger version of this table and lists the regional objectives along with the shortened 'SA issues' used in the table.

**Table 3. End point of derivation of Eco-towns SA Objectives from RSDFs & IRFs.**

Eco-towns SA Objectives Map		East Midlands	West Midlands	South East	South West	Yorks & Humberside	East of England
Issue Type	Eco-towns SA Issue						
1	Climate change mitigation	9 Energy	12 Energy use & efficiency	17 Greenhouse gas emissions	4 Resource efficiency, energy, water, waste, pollution	14 Greenhouse gas emissions, climate change adaptation	1 Natural resources, energy & water
			13 Decentralised, low & zero carbon generation	25 Energy efficiency & renewables	10 Long term approach, climate change mitigation & adaptation	15 Energy, natural resources, waste	2 Greenhouse gas emissions
			14 Greenhouse gas emissions				
2	Consumption & production	8 Natural resources	1 Natural resources	22 Consumption & production	4 Resource efficiency, energy, water, waste, pollution	15 Energy, natural resources, waste	1 Natural resources, energy & water
		10 Lifestyles	8 Renewable resources		7 Consumption & production		6 Resources & waste
3	Waste	16 Waste	6 Waste & materials	23 Waste	4 Resource efficiency, energy, water, waste, pollution	15 Energy, natural resources, waste	11 Life styles
4	Water resources			24 Water resources & quality	4 Resource efficiency, energy, water, waste, pollution		18 Consumption & production
7	Mobility & transport	17 Transport	4 Transport, safety & health	21 Transport	6 Access & travel	9 Transport	6 Resources & waste
6	Climate change adaptation		15 Climate change adaptation	18 Climate change adaptation	10 Long term approach, climate change mitigation & adaptation	14 Greenhouse gas emissions, climate change adaptation	1 Natural resources, energy & water
5	Biodiversity & green infrastructure		18 Biodiversity	19 Biodiversity	8 Local distinctiveness, biodiversity, natural, cultural & heritage assets	12 Biodiversity, natural assets	6 Resources & waste
8	Heritage assets	6 Natural, cultural & heritage assets	17 Natural & heritage assets	20 Natural & heritage assets	8 Local distinctiveness, biodiversity, natural, cultural & heritage assets		18 Consumption & production
9	Flood risk		16 Flood risk	15 Flood risk			6 Resources & waste
10	Environmental quality & pollution	7 Environmental quality	21 Environmental quality & local distinctiveness	16 Air quality	4 Resource efficiency, energy, water, waste, pollution	10 Environmental quality, land use efficiency, brownfield development	1 Natural resources, energy & water
			19 Pollution			13 Pollution	6 Resources & waste
11	Decent, affordable homes	1 Housing	28 Decent & affordable homes	1 Decent & affordable homes	3 Decent & affordable homes, access to services, employment, learning & leisure	11 Quality housing	6 Resources & waste
12	Health & wellbeing	2 Health	27 Health	2 Health	2 Safety, health, environmental quality & community	5 Health	6 Resources & waste
13	Crime & safety	4 Safety & crime	29 Crime & antisocial behaviour	5 Crime		4 Safety & security	6 Resources & waste
14	Work & employment	11 Employment	32 Employment & unpaid work	9 Employment		1 Employment	6 Resources & waste
15	Equalities		23 Environmental justice	3 Poverty & social exclusion			6 Resources & waste
			25 Equalities				6 Resources & waste
			26 Poverty & deprivation				6 Resources & waste
16	Social capital	5 Social capital	22 Local stewardship & community involvement	6 Community & community involvement	9 Participation & citizenship	7 Participation & community	6 Resources & waste
			24 Community engagement				6 Resources & waste
17	Services, culture & leisure	3 Culture & leisure	30 Culture & leisure	8 Culture & tourism	3 Decent & affordable homes, access to services, employment, learning & leisure	6 Culture, leisure & recreation	6 Resources & waste
				7 Access to services, countryside & leisure			6 Resources & waste
18	Learning & skills		33 Learning & skills	13 Skilled workforce		3 Education & training	6 Resources & waste
				4 Education & skills			6 Resources & waste
19	Economic growth			10 Enterprise & smart growth			6 Resources & waste
20	Enterprise & innovation	12 Enterprise & innovation	10 Enterprise & innovation	10 Enterprise & smart growth	5 Innovation, enterprise, environmental technology, local supply chains		6 Resources & waste
				12 Innovation & knowledge economy			6 Resources & waste
21	Regional businesses	13 Economic infrastructure	11 Regional prosperity	11 Economic regeneration		2 Business success, growth, investment	6 Resources & waste
22	Spatial efficiency	14 Spatial efficiency	20 Spatial efficiency	14 Spatial efficiency & renaissanceurban		10 Environmental quality, land use efficiency, brownfield development	6 Resources & waste

**Table 4. Eco-towns Sustainability Appraisal Objectives**

SA issues	Eco-towns SA Objectives
1 Climate change mitigation	Reduce contributions to climate change
2 Consumption & production	Reduce the local, regional & global adverse environmental impacts of resource use for consumption & production
3 Waste	Reduce waste arisings & disposal to landfill; increase the use of sustainable means of waste management
4 Water resources	Improve water quality & efficiency in the use of water resources; reduce pressure on scarce water resources
5 Climate change adaptation	Reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change
6 Biodiversity & green infrastructure	Conserve and enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure
7 Mobility & transport	Improve accessibility to jobs, education, services & leisure activities by sustainable modes of transport; reduce motor traffic & congestion
8 Heritage assets	Preserve and enhance locations, features, areas and settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance
9 Flood risk	Avoid, reduce and manage flood risk
10 Environmental quality & pollution	Improve environmental quality & local satisfaction with it; reduce all forms of pollution
11 Decent, affordable homes	Increase the availability of decent & affordable homes that meet the range of identified needs
12 Health & wellbeing	Improve community health & wellbeing; reduce health inequalities
13 Crime & safety	Improve community safety; reduce crime & the fear of crime
14 Work & employment	Increase levels of employment and the recognition of/rewards for all forms of work
15 Equalities	Avoid all forms of discrimination and environmental injustice; reduce poverty, social exclusion & multiple disadvantages
16 Social capital	Increase social capital, community involvement & cohesion, local stewardship, and improve supporting infrastructure
17 Services, culture & leisure	Increase the availability & accessibility of services and opportunities for all to enjoy culture, leisure, recreation & sport
18 Learning & skills	Improve access to learning & training that achieves high levels of academic attainment & skills to meet the needs of individuals & businesses
19 Economic growth	Achieve/maintain high & stable levels of economic growth; increase investment, productivity, and other indicators of economic success
20 Enterprise & innovation	Improve the conditions for and prospects of entrepreneurial and innovative businesses
21 Regional businesses	Improve the conditions for & prospects of regionally important business sectors
22 Spatial efficiency	Increase the efficiency of land use and the utilisation of existing infrastructure within its capacity

## 4.4 Proposed eco-towns SA Objectives

The proposed eco-town SA Objectives are presented in Table 4. For practical reasons, the objectives will often be referred to in a shortened form as ‘SA issues’ eg when used in tables. The SA issues are intended to signify the corresponding objectives.

### Compatibility of eco-towns SA Objectives

Achieving individual sustainability objectives is a desirable outcome. Many different sustainability objectives – eg reducing resource use and mitigating climate change – are mutually supporting, or compatible. But it is not always possible to achieve all objectives simultaneously because of inherent conflicts between them; they are incompatible. Figure 1 shows an initial analysis of the compatibility of eco-towns SA Objectives with each other. A larger version of the compatibility matrix is included in Appendix B (see [www.communities.gov.uk/ecotowns](http://www.communities.gov.uk/ecotowns)).

Figure 1. Compatibility of Eco-towns SA Objectives with each other.

Eco-towns SA Objective	Climate change mitigation	Consumption & production	Waste	Water resources	Climate change adaptation	Biodiversity & green infrastructure	Mobility & transport	Heritage assets	Flood risk	Environmental quality & pollution	Decent, affordable homes	Health & wellbeing	Crime & safety	Work & employment	Equalities	Social capital	Services, culture & leisure	Learning & skills	Economic growth	Enterprise & innovation	Regional businesses	
Climate change mitigation	pc																					
Consumption & production	pc	pc																				
Waste	pc	pc	pc																			
Water resources	pc	pc	n	pc																		
Climate change adaptation	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc																	
Biodiversity & green infrastructure	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc																
Mobility & transport	o	o	pi	pi	o	pi	pc															
Heritage assets	n	pc	pc	n	n	pc	pc	pc														
Flood risk	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pi	pc	pc													
Environmental quality & pollution	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pi	pc	pc	pc												
Decent, affordable homes	pi	pi	pi	pi	pi	o	o	pi	pi	pi	pc											
Health & wellbeing	n	n	pc	pc	n	pc	pc	n	pc	pc	pc	pc										
Crime & safety	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	pc	pc	pc									
Work & employment	pi	pi	pi	pi	pi	o	pc	o	pi	pi	pc	pc	pc	pc								
Equalities	n	n	pc	pc	n	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc							
Social capital	o	n	n	n	n	pc	pc	pc	n	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc						
Services, culture & leisure	o	o	pi	pi	pi	pc	pc	pc	n	pc	n	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc					
Learning & skills	n	n	n	n	n	n	pc	n	n	n	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc				
Economic growth	pi	pi	pi	pi	pi	pi	pc	pc	pi	pi	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc		
Enterprise & innovation	pi	pi	pi	pi	o	pi	pc	n	pc	o	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc
Regional businesses	pi	pi	pi	pi	pi	pi	pc	n	pc	pi	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc
Spatial efficiency	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	pc	o	pc	pc	o	pc	n	n	n	pi	pi	pi	pi

- pc potentially compatible
- o opportunity for compatibility rather than incompatibility depending on plan
- n neutral
- pi potentially incompatible

# 5 Baseline information

This chapter presents an overview of all the baseline information that has been collated as part of the SA scoping work.

## 5.1 Purpose

An understanding of existing social, economic and environmental characteristics of is important to undertaking a robust SA.

The SEA Directive states that the Environmental Report should provide information on: “Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme” and “the environmental characteristics of the areas likely to be significantly affected” (Annex 1 (b), (c))

As such, the purpose of collecting baseline data is to:

- Help identify problem issues
- Support the prediction and evaluation of impacts
- Set a baseline for future monitoring.

Ideally the baseline will establish:

- The likely evolution without implementation of the plan. How good or bad is the current situation? Do trends show that it is getting better or worse?
- The characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected. Are particularly sensitive or important elements of the receiving environment affected (eg people, resources, species, habitats)?
- How far is the current situation from any established thresholds or targets?
- Are the problems reversible or irreversible, permanent or temporary?
- How difficult would it be to offset or remedy any damage?
- Have there been significant cumulative, synergistic or indirect effects over time? Are there expected to be such effects in the future?
- Gaps in the available data.

A practical approach is required to both the collection of baseline information and the handling of any gaps now and in the future.

## 5.2 Approach

A desk based 'meta-review' of sources has been undertaken to collect baseline information relevant to each SA objective. In other words, the review looked at reports and other available information which already brings together and summarises disparate data sets and data at national, regional and local level. No fieldwork or any surveys or other primary data gathering were undertaken.

It is expected that significant quantities of baseline information and analysis of key sustainability-related issues will emerge from the separate Transport and Economic Assessments of the potential eco-town locations.

As with the review of other plans, programmes and objectives, different approaches and levels of effort were applied to gathering baseline information at national, regional and local level. For the baseline, information was also sought at the location level for issues where location was deemed most critical to the understanding of constraints (flood risk, biodiversity and heritage).

In outline the main data sources used in the baseline at each level are:

### **National**

- UK Sustainable Development Indicators and the trends in Framework Indicators for identification of key issues.

### **Regional**

- Regional Sustainable Development Indicators with regional performance on UK framework indicators contributing to the identification of key regional issues
- Regional Biodiversity Action Plans
- Information on expected climate change impacts from the UK Climate Change Impacts Programme
- Heritage Counts 2007 Regional reports series for heritage statistics and information
- State of the Region reports from Regional Observatories for any other issues not covered by Regional Sustainable Development Indicators (eg data on cultural assets and activity and economic data).

### **Local**

- WWF Ecological Budget UK weblocation and SEI REAP weblocation for local authority ecological footprints in relation to Sustainable Consumption and Production (regional and local levels).

## Location

Much of the baseline information available is generic to regions or local authority areas, rather than specific to the location of any potential eco-town scheme and the surroundings. This is not an exceptional situation and in most cases does not affect the usefulness of the information in relation to the sustainability appraisal indicators and objectives. Contextual information at location level has been sought where this is judged to be most critical and consultees are supporting this level of information gathering.

In addition to location-specific feedback from consultees, the following data sources were used to provide contextual information on constraints:

- Environmental Agency online flood maps
- Nature on the Map and MAGIC for constraints related to designated biodiversity and similar land use.

## 5.3 Summary of baseline information

Baseline information has been collected from a variety of sources, which are listed and reviewed in Appendix C (found at [www.communities.gov.uk/ecotowns](http://www.communities.gov.uk/ecotowns)).

### Data gaps

Gaps in data and high level indicators on cultural and leisure and enterprise and innovation were clear during the gathering of baseline information and have been only incompletely remedied at present. Views from consultees on the level of detail of baseline data and routes to improving the information base – taking account of the approach to the ongoing SA have been sought.

## 5.4 Use of the baseline

The baseline information forms the basis for assessing and later monitoring plan effects, particularly where quantitative information on current status and trends is available and arrangements for future data collection are in place or can be established.

Baseline information has also fed into the identification of the key sustainability issues in each potential eco-town location. The development of objectives and collation of baseline data and identification of key issues are linked and iterative processes. Having established the key issues, additional effort can be put into improving the baseline related to those issues and focusing effort on the prediction of effects and subsequent monitoring on related objectives and indicators.

## 6 Key sustainability issues

This section sets out how key sustainability issues have been identified nationally, regionally and locally and how these are intended to influence the different strands of the ongoing SA.

### 6.1 Purpose

The SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to include information on “any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme.” For SA this requirement is broadened to include wider sustainability issues.

Identifying and highlighting key sustainability issues allows plan makers to focus their efforts to address these issues as far as possible through the plan-making process.

### 6.2 Approach

As in previous steps, the approach to identifying key sustainability issues was undertaken differently at each of national, regional, local, and location levels. Key issues at national and regional level were determined from indicator status and trends. Key local issues are taken as reported in SA Reports or Scoping Reports of Local Planning Authority Core Strategies, where they were available. And key location-specific issues are based primarily on the feedback from consultees.

### 6.3 Summary of key issues and problems

#### **National**

The eco-towns PPS is conceived in itself to address some of the UK’s key sustainability issues, particularly climate change and housing. Chapter 3 of *Living a greener future*, “How will eco-towns be different?” shows that eco-towns are expected to address a wide range of sustainability issues. Chapter 2, which explains the fundamental drivers and key criteria for eco-towns, suggests a smaller number of key issues (numbered and worded to match eco-towns SA Objectives):

1. Climate change mitigation
6. Biodiversity and green infrastructure
7. Mobility and transport
11. Decent, affordable homes
16. Social capital

- 17. Services, culture and leisure
- 21. Regional businesses.

With the addition of: 3. Waste, these issues largely correspond to the key issues that emerge from the national baseline, based on indicator status and trends.

### **Regional**

The indicators table is in Appendix D (at [www.communities.gov.uk/ecotowns](http://www.communities.gov.uk/ecotowns)) with key issues annotated, and problems highlighted in red.

### **Local**

The key issues reported in SA Reports or Scoping Reports of Local Planning Authority Core Strategies are included in the Appendix E (see [www.communities.gov.uk/ecotowns](http://www.communities.gov.uk/ecotowns)).

Figure 2 is intended as a sketch, showing the pattern of regional and local key issues/problems. A presentation along these lines could be used to communicate the differences and similarities between potential eco-towns locations. This could help stakeholders, including eco-towns scheme promoters, to discuss and address key issues and problems. It can help those undertaking the SA to decide how they will tailor the SA framework for locations facing differing challenges, and help to explain to stakeholders how this might work in a relatively fair and predictable way. The national and location specific key issues/problems can be added if this proves useful.

### **Location-specific**

The location-specific key issues identified and submitted to Communities and Local Government by consultees are available on the Communities and Local Government website.

### **Synthesis of key issues**

Vertical syntheses of key issues for the shortlisted locations – summarising the key issues from national to location-specific level – have not been completed as part of this report.

## **6.4 Using the information on key issues**

Figure 2 illustrates that the key issues will be different for different locations and this should be reflected in the ongoing SA. The proposal is that the eco-towns SA Framework set out in the next section could be tailored based on the key issues and problems identified at successively more local levels, down to the location-specific proposal. This is discussed further in section 7.3.

**Figure 2. Key regional and local issues identified from baseline information.**

Region ▶	East Midlands			West Midlands		South East			South West	Yorks & Humberside		East of England										
Local Planning Authority ▶	Harborough District Council	Oadby & Wigston Borough Council	Leicester City Council	East Lindsey District Council	Rushcliffe Borough Council	Lichfield District Council	Stratford-upon-Avon District Council	East Hants District Council	Cherwell District Council	Oxford City Council	Arun District Council	Restormel Borough Council	Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council	Leeds City Council	Selby District Council	North Norfolk Council	Broadland District Council	South Cambridgeshire District Council	Bedford Borough Council	Mid Bedfordshire District Council	Utlesford District Council	
Scheme name ▶	Pennbury (Stoughton)		Manby	Rushcliffe	Curborough	Middle Quinton	Bordon-Whitehill	Weston Otmoor	Ford	St Austell (China Clay Community)	Rossington	Leeds City Region	Coltishall	Hanley Grange	Marston	North-East Elsenham						
Eco-towns SA Objective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15							
Climate change mitigation																						
Consumption & production																						
Waste																						
Water resources																						
Climate change adaptation																						
Biodiversity & green infrastructure																						
Mobility & transport																						
Heritage assets																						
Flood risk																						
Environmental quality & pollution																						
Decent, affordable homes																						
Health & wellbeing																						
Crime & safety																						
Work & employment																						
Equalities																						
Social capital																						
Services, culture & leisure																						
Learning & skills																						
Economic growth																						
Enterprise & innovation																						
Regional businesses																						
Spatial efficiency																						

identified as a key issue in SA of Local Authority Core Strategy  
 identified as a key regional issue from baseline information

# 7 The eco-towns SA Framework

This section presents the proposed Sustainability Appraisal framework for the eco-towns PPS as national policy and for the 15 potential eco-towns locations.

## 7.1 Purpose

An SA framework is a methodological tool that should enable the environmental, social, and economic effects of a plan to be assessed. SA frameworks typically consist of objectives and related indicators – some with associated targets – that encourage a substantive qualitative, and where possible a quantitative approach to the assessment of plan effects.

## 7.2 Approach

The approach to drawing up the eco-towns SA Framework was as follows:

- Use of regional sustainability objectives from RSDFs and IRFs as the basis for identifying eco-towns SA Objectives
- Use of decision-making criteria (questions) from Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies as the basis for criteria to be considered
- Identification of priority objectives in the framework based on eco-towns policies/criteria and trends in UK National Framework Sustainable Development indicators
- Identification of locational priority objectives based on SA of local core strategies
- Identification of location specific pressures based on feedback on locations from consultees, supplemented for context using available internet resources for constraints mapping.

## 7.3 The SA Framework

The proposed eco-towns SA Framework is based on the objectives proposed in section 4.4 and Table 4. The objectives have been recast as a series of decision-making criteria or questions. In each case the first question captures the main thrust and purpose of the objective. Subsequent questions are suggested addressing specific aspects of the objective. Each question can be linked to indicators and in some cases targets that could be used to direct plan making and implementation. This 'spine' of the Framework is similar to an SA framework for a Regional Spatial Strategy as an example.

The proposed eco-towns SA Framework is shown in an agreed set of principles to be applied at the end of this section.

**Table 5. Eco-towns SA Framework**

	SA Issue	Will the plan...
1.1 1.2 1.3 1.4 1.5 1.6 1.7	Climate change mitigation	reduce net greenhouse gas emissions reduce energy use and underlying demand improve energy efficiency increase the installed capacity of medium & large-scale LZCs and local energy supply networks increase the installed capacity of LZC microgeneration reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport reduce emissions through land use and land use changes that 'sink' greenhouse gases
2.1 2.2 2.3 2.4 2.5 2.6 2.7 2.8	Consumption & production	reduce the adverse effects of resource use for consumption & production reduce the overall demand for raw materials increase the adoption of sustainable design and construction practices for new buildings improve the resource efficiency of buildings and reduce their adverse impacts over their lifetimes increase the number of people living more sustainable lifestyles increase the proportion of goods and services sourced locally to meet local needs increase the proportion of goods and services obtained from sustainable sources reduce the use of primary aggregates and other mineral resources
3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4 3.5	Waste	increase the application of sustainable waste management practices reduce the quantity of waste sent to landfill reduce waste arisings increase the proportion of waste diverted from landfill in accordance with the waste hierarchy increase the application of the proximity and self-sufficiency principles of waste management
4.1 4.2 4.3 4.4 4.5	Water resources	increase application of sustainable water resources management principles reduce per capita water demand improve the balance between water supply and demand improve water efficiency increase the application of Sustainable (Urban) Drainage Systems principles
5.1 5.2 5.3	Climate change adaptation	increase preparedness and capacity to adapt to unavoidable, predictable climate change impacts reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts increase capacity to harness any opportunities arising from a changing climate
6.1 6.2 6.3 6.4	Biodiversity & green infrastructure	conserve and enhance biodiversity protect and enhance designated locations protect and enhance priority habitats and species increase and enhance green infrastructure, biodiversity habitats and their connectivity

**Table 5. Eco-towns SA Framework**

	SA Issue	Will the plan...
7.1 7.2 7.3 7.4 7.5 7.6 7.7 7.8 7.9 7.10	Mobility & transport	reduce the detrimental impacts of an effective transport system reduce the number and length of trips reduce the number and length of journeys made by car increase the proportion of trips by sustainable modes of transport reduce road freight movements and transfer freight from road to other modes (rail, water) reduce air travel reduce travel congestion and improve travel conditions improve and make efficient use of transport infrastructure increase support to the public and businesses for sustainable transport behaviours increase mobility, allowing people to access what they need and want more quickly and easily
8.1 8.3 8.4 8.5	Heritage assets	protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings protect and enhance designated heritage locations protect archaeological assets from loss or damage protect and enhance landscape, townscape and local distinctiveness
9.1 9.2 9.3 9.4 9.5	Flood risk	reduce vulnerability to flooding avoid development in areas of high flood risk avoid inappropriate development in areas of flood risk increase the flood resilience of new and existing developments avoid increases in flood risks due to the location and design of new development
10.1 10.2 10.3 10.4 10.5 10.6 10.7 10.8 10.9	Environmental quality & pollution	improve environmental quality improve satisfaction with local environmental quality reduce pollution improve soil quality and reduce the quantity of contaminated land reduce air pollution improve the quality of watercourses & groundwater reduce noise pollution reduce light pollution improve the quality of estuary & coastal waters
11.1 11.2 11.4 11.6	Decent, affordable homes	increase the supply of decent, affordable homes to meet the range of identified needs increase the supply of housing to meet specific, locally identified housing needs increase the supply of housing for those most in need reduce the proportion of unfit/non-decent homes and improve the quality of the housing stock
12.1 12.2 12.3 12.6	Health & wellbeing	improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities improve healthcare infrastructure in response to current and project needs reduce health inequalities and improve the accessibility of healthcare services increase the number of people leading healthy lifestyles
13.1 13.2 13.3 13.4	Crime & safety	reduce crime and fear of crime reduce crime rates & incidence of antisocial behaviour and improve community safety reduce fear of crime & antisocial behaviour and improve people's sense of safety in their communities increase the application of design principles that reduce crime
14.1 14.2 14.3 14.4	Work & employment	increase employment and the rewards from all forms of work increase the number and diversity of skilled and high quality job opportunities increase average incomes reduce inequalities in employment

**Table 5. Eco-towns SA Framework**

	SA Issue	Will the plan...
15.1	Equalities	avoid discrimination & environmental injustice and reduce poverty & multiple disadvantages
15.2		avoid discrimination
15.3		reduce poverty and multiple disadvantage and contribute to a good standard of living for all
15.4		reduce inequalities in income
15.5		reduce inequalities in education & training
15.6		reduce employment inequalities
15.7		reduce inequalities in access to services, culture and leisure
15.8		contribute to the regeneration of deprived areas
15.9		avoid environmental injustices
16.1	Social capital	increase social capital, community involvement & cohesion and local stewardship
16.2		increase social capital
16.3		increase social cohesion
16.4		increase the capacity of voluntary organisations and social enterprises
16.5		increase involvement of communities in decisions that affect them
16.6		establish, enhance or support mechanisms for local stewardship
16.7		improve the infrastructure for community activities
17.1	Services, culture & leisure	increase the availability & accessibility of services and opportunities to enjoy culture, leisure, recreation & sport
17.2		increase the local availability and accessibility of services
17.3		increase infrastructure and opportunities to participate in sport
17.4		increase infrastructure and opportunities to enjoy cultural and leisure activities
17.5		public opens space, green space and recreational space
18.1	Learning & skills	increase access to learning & training and improve attainment and skills
18.2		increase the provision of training opportunities and improve skills
18.3		reduce any identified skills gaps or shortages
18.4		increase the accessibility of education, training & lifelong learning opportunities
18.5		reduce inequalities in education
18.6		increase knowledge and skills related to sustainability issues
19.1	Economic growth	improve economic performance in terms of growth, investment, and other indicators
19.2		increase growth towards that of the best performing areas and/or maintain these higher levels
19.3		increase investment in infrastructure and capital that underpins economic success
19.4		increase the diversity of the economy
20.1	Enterprise & innovation	improve the conditions for & prospects of entrepreneurial and innovative businesses
20.2		improve the prospects for businesses based on innovative and environmental technologies
20.3		increase new business start-ups and improve their prospects
21.1	Regional businesses	improve the conditions for & prospects of regional businesses
21.2		improve the conditions for locally and regionally important economic sectors
21.3		increase the proportion of goods and services sourced locally to meet local needs

**Table 5. Eco-towns SA Framework**

	SA Issue	Will the plan...
22.1	Spatial efficiency	increase the efficiency of land use and the utilisation of existing infrastructure within its capacity
22.2		increase proportion of development on previously developed land
22.3		increase the intensity of land use in settlements and utilisation of existing infrastructure within its capacity
22.4		increase the re-use of existing buildings and number of unused buildings brought back into use
22.5		reduce the loss of and damage to the most versatile agricultural land
22.6		improve the links between dependent land uses (eg housing-employment) and increase mixed use development

### Using the SA Framework

Normally an SA framework would be extended to show applicable indicators (and sometimes linked to baseline status, trends and targets). At present, the different indicators appropriate at national level and locally, and targets are presented separately in Appendix D (at [www.communities.gov.uk/ecotowns](http://www.communities.gov.uk/ecotowns)).

An SA framework would typically also form a relatively strict basis for the assessment of effects at later stages of the SA. In this case the Framework may need to be applied more flexibly to reflect differing key issues for the 15 shortlisted locations, and different indicators and level of detail applicable for appraisal of locations and of national eco-towns policy. At the same time as allowing for flexibility, the Framework must be applied fairly and predictably to the appraisal of locations as this may affect the decisions of plan makers.

As previously mentioned, the proposal is that the eco-towns SA Framework should be tailored based on the key issues and problems identified at successively more local levels, down to the location-specific. It is unlikely to be practical or appropriate to apply all 100+ decision-making criteria every time an assessment of effects is to be undertaken. More of the criteria should be used for objectives corresponding to key issues and problems. A 'core' set of criteria would apply to all assessments using the framework – the main question for each objective and selected additional questions, eg addressing the key eco-towns criteria (which match national sustainability issues/problems).

The mechanics of any such tailoring of the eco-towns SA framework will be discussed with consultees. Consultation has allowed tailoring to be tested, and issues arising to be discussed with a view to settling on an agreed set of principles to be applied.

## 8 Consultation and next steps

This section outlines the next steps in the SA process and the envisaged structure of the SA Report. It also provides an update on the process that has been undertaken in respect of the SA Scope, how the consultation with Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency was carried out, and how the responses to the consultation are accounted for at this scoping stage.

### 8.1 Consultation

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 sets out the principles that the Government believes should underpin community involvement in the planning process. Time is built into the SA process for consultation at each stage. At the first stage (relating to the scope of the SA, or Stage A, as covered in this report) the requirement is to consult the statutory SEA consultation bodies. At the time the Report is published (Stage C), the public are also consulted.

#### **Requirements**

The SEA Directive gives rise to specific requirements for consultation with the public and stakeholders. It requires authorities to consult “the public affected or likely to be affected by, or having an interest in” a plan.

It also gives rise to the requirement that authorities which, because of their social, environmental and economic responsibilities, are likely to be concerned by the effects of implementing the plan must be consulted on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the SA Report.

In the SEA Regulations the Government has designated statutory consultation bodies:

- English Heritage
- the Environment Agency
- Natural England

as “authorities with environmental responsibility” (or “consultation bodies”), in relation to the SEA Directive.

The public and the statutory authorities must be consulted on the plan issues and options – and the sustainability appraisal of these issues and options – at the appropriate time.

As explained in section 1.6 “Sustainability Appraisal and the SEA Directive”, this sustainability appraisal is intended to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive through the wider process of Sustainability Appraisal.

## Consultation to date

The statutory consultees have been involved to varying degrees in the eco-towns process to date. Each submitted views on the long list of eco-towns locations put forward by scheme promoters. English Heritage submitted brief summaries of constraints based on information held in their central GIS system. The Environment Agency and Natural England had the opportunity to submit a little more information on issues and constraints. This is taken into account in the summary of key issues.

The statutory consultees also sit on an SA Steering Group, along with Communities and Local Government, DEFRA, and both teams of consultants involved in the SA; and have taken part in a Scoping Workshop during the consultation period, which lasted for 5 weeks from 2 June to 8 July 2008. This allowed for some early discussion of the Scope and in particular helped to identify gaps, look at the question of alternatives, and assess the suitability of the indicators and the SA framework.

## Questions for consultees on the SA Scoping Report

Consultees were particularly invited to respond based on the following questions:

- What changes, if any, would you like to see in the eco-towns Sustainability Appraisal Objectives?
- What gaps in the Baseline information do you feel could limit the ongoing Sustainability Appraisal (assessments, reporting and monitoring)?
- Which sources of information or sets of data do you feel could be added to the Baseline to improve its usefulness, given the intended use in the SA process?
- What changes, if any, would you like to see to the eco-towns Sustainability Appraisal Framework and proposals for its use to assess options?
- What changes, if any, would you like to see to the ongoing SA process and/or to the scope, structure and level of detail of the SA Report?

## Update

All comments received from consultees have been considered and addressed as far as is possible and appropriate. Table 6 below sets out a brief summary of responses received, and how these will be taken forward in the SA process.

<b>Table 6: Eco-Towns Stage A Consultation Responses</b>		
<b>Consultation Question</b>	<b>Summary of Consultees' Views</b>	<b>How will this be taken into account?</b>
<p>1. What changes, if any, would you like to see in the Eco-towns Sustainability Appraisal Objectives? (relates to section 4 of this Scoping Report)</p>	<p><b>Environment Agency</b></p> <p>1. Prioritise focus on key sustainability issues. Duplicate criteria should be removed from the SA Framework.</p> <p>2. Amend Objectives to take account of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• surface water drainage</li> <li>• waste treatment and disposal capacity</li> <li>• cross-referenced water related effects to provide an evaluation of the effect on the water environment as a whole</li> <li>• sustainability standards in eco-towns higher than other new developments</li> <li>• interaction effects between the Eco-towns Policy Statement and regional and local spatial planning policies</li> <li>• water resources</li> <li>• climate change adaptation (particularly in the South East and East of England)</li> <li>• environmental quality and pollution</li> <li>• effect on existing development and on surface water drainage issues</li> <li>• capacity of waste infrastructure to integrate with proposed eco-town locations</li> </ul> <p><b>English Heritage</b></p> <p>1. Include references to the retention of landscape character and local distinctiveness</p> <p><b>Natural England</b></p> <p>1. Include landscape as an environmental factor.</p>	<p>Agreed – objectives and framework revised</p> <p>Deal with in Stage B – Developing and refining options and assessing effects</p> <p>Agreed – objectives and framework revised</p> <p>Agreed – objectives and framework revised</p>
<p>2. What gaps in the Baseline information do you feel could limit the ongoing Sustainability Appraisal (assessments, reporting and monitoring)? (sections 5 and 6 of this Report)</p>	<p><b>Environment Agency (also covers question 3)</b></p> <p>1. The following should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water resources (especially South East and East)</li> <li>• Review of Cross-Govt assessment to ensure all of the important issues are included.</li> <li>• Land contamination issues and issues related to surface water run-off.</li> <li>• The Summary of Significant Water Management Issues documents produced in relation to the WFD river basin planning process.</li> <li>• Review of Planning Policy Statement 25 (Development and Flood Risk) and the Pitt Review report (Learning lessons from the 2007 floods).</li> <li>• Recreation strategies (including the Environment Agency's 'A better place to play') particularly access to water based recreation.</li> <li>• Pollution Prevention Guidance (PPG) notes</li> </ul>	<p>Deal with in Stage B – Developing and refining options and assessing effects</p>

<b>Table 6: Eco-Towns Stage A Consultation Responses</b>		
<b>Consultation Question</b>	<b>Summary of Consultees' Views</b>	<b>How will this be taken into account?</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) associated with the eco-towns concept.</li> <li>• Air quality</li> <li>• How climate change will influence the predicted future trends in the sustainability baseline.</li> </ul> <p><b>English Heritage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maps showing designated heritage assets</li> <li>• Historic landscape characterisation</li> <li>• Historic Environment Records where missing .</li> <li>• European Landscape Convention.</li> <li>• Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.</li> </ul>	Deal with in Stage B – Developing and refining options and assessing effects
3. Which sources of information or sets of data do you feel could be added to the Baseline to improve its usefulness, given the intended use in the SA process? (sections 5 and 6)	<p><b>Environment Agency (see 2 above)</b></p> <p><b>English Heritage</b> (see 2), also:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All designated historic assets should be considered together with potential impacts on non-designated features of local historic or architectural interest and value since these can make an important contribution to creating a sense of place and local identity.</li> <li>2. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage Counts</li> <li>• National Monuments Record Centre, Swindon</li> <li>• Heritage Gateway</li> <li>• Magic website</li> <li>• Listed Buildings online</li> <li>• English Heritage annual Buildings at Risk register (Grade I and II* listed buildings only) and structural Scheduled Monuments)</li> <li>• Countryside Quality Counts</li> <li>• HELM</li> <li>• Archaeological Data Service (ADS)</li> <li>• Aerial photographs: National Mapping Programme Aerial Photographs: National and Regional skills report</li> <li>• Quality of Life Assessment</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p><b>Natural England</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information held in NE regional offices on the range of management plans, strategies etc that relate to each Eco-town location.</li> </ol>	Deal with in Stage B – Developing and refining options and assessing effects
		Deal with in Stage B – Evaluating the effects of the plan

**Table 6: Eco-Towns Stage A Consultation Responses**

Consultation Question	Summary of Consultees' Views	How will this be taken into account?
<p>4. What changes, if any, would you like to see to the Eco-towns Sustainability Appraisal Framework and proposals for its use to assess options? (section 7)</p>	<p><b>Environment Agency</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The SA Framework should be rationalised to remove duplicate criteria that cover similar environmental issues</li> <li>2. Prioritise the SA approach in general, but not the appraisal of different eco-town locations as this could result in inconsistent SAs.</li> <li>3. Include changes to the SA framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change Mitigation – include GHG emissions from waste treatment related to eco-towns</li> <li>• Climate Change Adaptation – consider future cooling needs of eco-town communities</li> <li>• Flood Risk – criteria related to surface water drainage</li> <li>• Environmental Quality &amp; Pollution – add criterion in air quality</li> <li>• cross-reference each eco-town's effect on these criteria to provide an overall appraisal of the effect of all eco-towns on the water environment as a whole.</li> <li>• hydro-morphology</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p><b>English Heritage</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Landscape and heritage asset criteria should not be excluded from any tailored framework.</li> </ol>	<p>Agreed – objectives and framework revised</p> <p>Agreed – objectives and framework revised</p> <p>Deal with in Stage B – Developing and refining options and assessing effects</p> <p>Agreed – objectives and framework revised</p>
<p>5. What changes, if any, would you like to see to the ongoing SA process and/or to the scope, structure and level of detail of the SA Report?</p>	<p><b>Environment Agency</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider the possibility of urban extensions/densification utilising the eco-standards being developed.</li> <li>2. Appraise the proposed eco-towns criteria, that will be presented in the draft Policy Statement, against the SA framework.</li> <li>3. How the eco-towns criteria, set out in the draft Policy Statement, compare with sustainability policies being developed at the regional and local authority level</li> <li>4. Cumulative effects at the Regional scale</li> <li>5. Include indicators in the SA Report to be used for SA monitoring.</li> <li>6. Identify, describe and evaluate positive as well as negative effects</li> </ol> <p><b>English Heritage</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess the 'no eco-town' alternative is properly appraised as part of the examination of potential alternatives.</li> <li>2. Assess the option of urban extensions</li> </ol> <p><b>Natural England</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Alternatives assessed should include different sizes of eco-towns, urban extensions and increased housing densities.</li> </ol>	<p>Not part of this SA, although consider in drafting PPS</p> <p>Accepted in principle</p> <p>As above</p> <p>Agreed – Deal with in Stage B – Evaluating the effects of the plan</p> <p>Agreed – already in scope</p> <p>Not part of this SA, although consider in drafting PPS</p> <p>Not agreed – SA to be carried out at a level proportionate to the policy statement.</p>

## Main changes as a result of consultation on scope

As a result of the Scoping consultation process, a revised set of indicators and a revised scoping framework have been adopted and will be taken forward into the next stages of the SA process. These are set out in Tables 7 and 8.

**Table 7: Revised set of SA objectives**

1.	Climate Change
2.	Waste and sustainable consumption and production
3.	Water resources
4.	Climate change adaptation
5.	Biodiversity, landscape and green infrastructure
6.	Transport and accessibility
7.	Heritage assets
8.	Flood risk
9.	Pollution
10.	Decent and affordable homes
11.	Community wellbeing
12.	Work, employment and economy
13.	Community infrastructure
14.	Spatial efficiency

**Table 8: Revised SA Framework**

SA Issue	Site Specific Issues, will the development of this site:
Biodiversity, landscape and green infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve and enhance biodiversity</li> <li>Protect and enhance the landscape</li> <li>Protect and enhance priority habitats and species</li> <li>Increase and enhance green infrastructure</li> </ul>
Transport and accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide easy access to a higher order centre</li> <li>Provide easy access to a railway station/bus service</li> </ul>
Heritage assets	Protect and enhance archaeological/heritage assets and their settings
Flood risk	Avoid development in areas of high flood risk
Pollution	Reduce the quantity of contaminated land
Spatial efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise existing infrastructure within its capacity</li> <li>Use brownfield land wherever possible</li> <li>Reduce the loss of and damage to the most versatile agricultural land</li> <li>Avoid conflict with other planning policies/objectives</li> </ul>

**Table 8: Revised SA Framework**

SA Issue	Site Development Issues, how will the development:
Climate change mitigation	Reduce <i>per capita</i> greenhouse gas emissions <i>compared to national norms</i> Reduce <i>per capita</i> energy use <i>compared to national norms</i>
Waste, sustainable consumption and production	Adopt sustainable design and construction practices for <i>all</i> new buildings <i>Minimise</i> the use of primary aggregates and other mineral resources Apply sustainable waste management policies <i>Reduce per capita</i> waste arisings <i>compared to national norms</i>
Water resources	Reduce per capita demand for water <i>compared to national norms</i> Apply Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
Climate change adaptation	Increase preparedness and capacity to adapt to unavoidable, predictable, climate change impacts
Biodiversity, landscape and green infrastructure	Conserve and enhance biodiversity Protect and enhance the landscape Protect and enhance priority habitats and species Increase and enhance green infrastructure
Transport and accessibility	Reduce the need to travel Encourage walking and cycling Reduce the number and length of trips made by car Increase the proportion of trips made by sustainable transport Make efficient use of existing transport infrastructure
Heritage assets	Protect and enhance archaeological/heritage assets and their settings
Flood risk	Avoid development in areas of high flood risk Increase flood resilience
Pollution	Reduce the quantity of contaminated land <i>Conserve and enhance</i> the quality of watercourses and groundwater
Decent, affordable homes	Increase the supply of decent, affordable homes to meet the range of identified needs
Community wellbeing	Apply design principles that reduce crime Contribute to regeneration of deprived areas Increase social capital, community involvement, social cohesion and local stewardship
Work, employment and economy	Maximise opportunities for employment within the ecotown Increase the diversity of the <i>local</i> economy
Community infrastructure	Provide appropriate community infrastructure including cultural, sporting and recreational facilities.
Spatial efficiency	Utilise existing infrastructure within its capacity Use brownfield land wherever possible Reduce the loss of and damage to the most versatile agricultural land Avoid conflict with other planning policies/objectives

## 8.2 Next steps

Following the completions of consultation on the Scoping of the SA, and the publication of this report, the Sustainability Appraisal will develop in step with and inform the preparation of the 'Planning Policy Statement on Eco-towns'. The ongoing SA process is illustrated in Table 6.

<b>Table 9. Next steps in the SA process</b>	
<b>Tasks</b>	
Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects	
B1	Testing the objectives against the SA framework
B2	Developing options
B3	Predicting the effects of the plan
B4	Evaluating the effects of the plan
B5	Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects
B6	Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects
Stage C: Preparing the sustainability Appraisal Report	
C1	Preparing the SA report
Stage D: Consulting on the Draft LDF Document and the SA Report	
D1	Public participation on the preferred option of the DPD and the SA report
D2(i)	Appraising significant changes
D2(ii)	Appraising significant changes resulting from representations
D3	Making decisions and providing information
Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the LDD	
E1	Finalising aims and methods of monitoring
E2	Responding to adverse effects

The ongoing SA process will develop the elements proposed in this Scoping Report – SA objectives, key issues and the SA framework – in response to consultation and improving information. The main SA tasks following consultation on the Scoping Report will be the prediction and assessment of effects of plan options and the preparation of the SA Report. The approach to options assessment – for the national policy, potential eco-towns locations, and considering cumulative effects – was outlined in section 3.5.

## 8.3 The Sustainability Appraisal Report

It is envisaged that a chapter for each eco-town will have the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. The policy context

3. Sustainability indicators
4. Current situation (the locations and their surroundings)
5. Future situation without an eco-town
6. Alternatives
7. Future situation with an eco-town/alternative proposal (the development and its impacts assessed against the sustainability indicators)
8. Opportunities for mitigation
9. Conclusions and recommendations



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