



Local Plan

Initial Sustainability Appraisal

Report

Supplementary Report to Accompany

Issues and Options 2

(Part 2)

January 2013

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Chapter 1: Introduction

- 1.1. This report constitutes a supplement to the 'Initial Sustainability Appraisal' for South Cambridgeshire's Local Plan Issues and Option stage, to accompany the Issues and Options 2 (part 2) consultation. Note: A separate report has been prepared to accompany the Joint Part 1 consultation with Cambridge City Council.
- 1.2. Sustainability Appraisal is an integral part of the plan making process, providing information and analysis of issues, helping to identify reasonable alternative approaches, and a comparison of their potential impacts.
- 1.3. An initial Sustainability Appraisal was carried out of the policies and proposals in the Local Plan Issues and Option 1 report, and subject to public consultation in summer 2012. A number of additional development sites and proposals were put forward in response to the consultation. The purpose of this supplementary report is to test these proposals to identify the potential impacts and their relative sustainability. This has helped identify reasonable alternatives for the Local Plan, to be included in the second Issues and Options Report, and provide information on their relative merits to assist those responding to the consultation.
- 1.4. The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report should be read alongside, and considered to include, the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. This provides the context for the appraisal, and identifies issues of particular importance to the District that should be considered. In order to avoid repetition, where further information can be found in the Scoping Report it has been signposted in the Initial Sustainability Report.

Chapter 2: Background

The Purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal

- 2.1. Section 39 (2) of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that development plan documents are subject to Sustainability Appraisal. Sustainability Appraisal is a systematic process undertaken during the preparation of a plan or strategy. Its role is to assess the extent to which the emerging policies and proposals will help to achieve relevant environmental, social and economic objectives. In doing so, it provides an opportunity to consider ways in which the plan or strategy can contribute to improvements in environmental, social and economic conditions, as well as a means of identifying and addressing any adverse effects that draft policies and proposals might have.
- 2.2. The overall aim of the appraisal process is to help ensure that the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan makes an effective contribution to the pursuit of 'sustainable development'. The most widely-used definition of this concept is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"¹. In the National Planning Policy Framework sustainable development is defined by the five principles as set out in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy: living within the planet's environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsible.
- 2.3. Key features of the Sustainability Appraisal process are:
 - Collecting baseline information, including identifying issues of significance to an area
 - Identifying Sustainability Appraisal objectives
 - Identifying various policy options
 - Predicting the effects of the plan
 - Consulting others on the plan policies
 - Monitoring the effects of implementing the plan or policies.
- 2.4. Further details on the process can be found in Chapter 2 of the sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

The Role and Purpose of the Local Plan

- 2.5. The Local plan will form part of the statutory development plan for South Cambridgeshire, and will replace a number of its existing plans.
- 2.6. The Local Plan will set the levels of employment and housing development that should be provided over the period to 2031 to best meet the needs of the area and a clear strategy for meeting development needs in the best way possible that protects the quality of life and existing and future residents. It will set policies to ensure that development is of high quality and will meet the challenges we face with a changing climate. It will ensure that new development comes with the necessary schools, health facilities, shops, leisure facilities and open spaces that residents will need to provide them with a good quality of life.

¹ World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987.

- 2.7. The Plan aims to set a strong framework for new development, and provide a clear statement for local residents, businesses, service providers and the development industry of what they can expect to happen in terms of change in the built and natural environment over the next couple of decades.

Local Plan 'Issues and Options' Consultation

- 2.8. The first stage of producing a Local Plan is to consider the 'Issues and Options'. This stage is not designed to put forward any firm proposals for development but instead sets out what the main issues are that face South Cambridgeshire and what options might exist to tackle those issues.
- 2.9. The first Issues and Options Report was subject to public consultation from Thursday 12 July to Friday 28 September. The document set out options for the level and location of growth, and options that could govern the form of development. It also identifies a range of potential site options for development. Over 20,000 comments were received. These comments included a number of suggested site options.
- 2.10. The key purpose of the second Issues and Options Report has been to test these site suggestions, and to consult on any reasonable alternatives. Consultation on Issues and Options 2 is taking place from 7th January 2013 to 18th February 2013. Similarly to the previous consultation there will be a range of consultation events across the district.

Aim of the Initial Sustainability Report

- 2.11. Initial Sustainability Appraisal is carried out to support the Local Plan Issues and Options consultations. Its purpose is to help identify reasonable alternative options that the plan could implement, and test them to identify the potential impacts and their relative sustainability. The Initial Sustainability Report is being published for consultation alongside the issues and options report to provide the public and statutory bodies with an opportunity to express their opinions on it, and so that views can be considered before the Local Plan is drafted.

Who has Carried out the Assessment?

- 2.12. The assessment has been completed by officers of the Council, drawing in specialists to guide consideration of specific topics or issues. In particular in reviewing site options external views were sought from specialist stakeholders.

The Difference the Process has Made

- 2.13. South Cambridgeshire has tried to make the Sustainability Appraisal process as integral to the plan making process as possible. The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping process has been used to help identify and summarise the issues arising from the evidence base to support the plan making process.
- 2.14. The sustainability appraisal process has helped to identify alternative options, and whether options could be revised to be more sustainable. It also helps to highlight the pros and cons of particular ways of tackling an issue. It has also

been central to identifying whether sites were reasonable options for development, and their relative merits.

The Next Stages of the Plan Making and Sustainability Appraisal Process

- 2.15. Once the issues and options stage of plan making is completed, a draft plan will be prepared. This will be subject to sustainability appraisal, in the form of a Draft Final Sustainability Report. Both will be subject to consultation before the plan is submitted to the Secretary of State for adoption. Should any significant changes be made to the plan as a result of public consultation, additional appraisal work will need to be carried out and the final Sustainability Report amended to reflect the results.
- 2.16. At the draft plan stage the appraisal will assess the draft policies and allocations selected for the final plan, considering the likely significant effects of the plan as a whole, how they can be mitigated or enhanced, and how impacts can be monitored. At this point the appraisal will also identify reasons why other options were eliminated.

How to Comment on this Report

- 2.17. If you would like to comment on any aspect of the report, you can make your comments in the following ways:

Online at www.scambs.gov.uk

By emailing your comments to ldf@scambs.gov.uk

By posting your comments to:

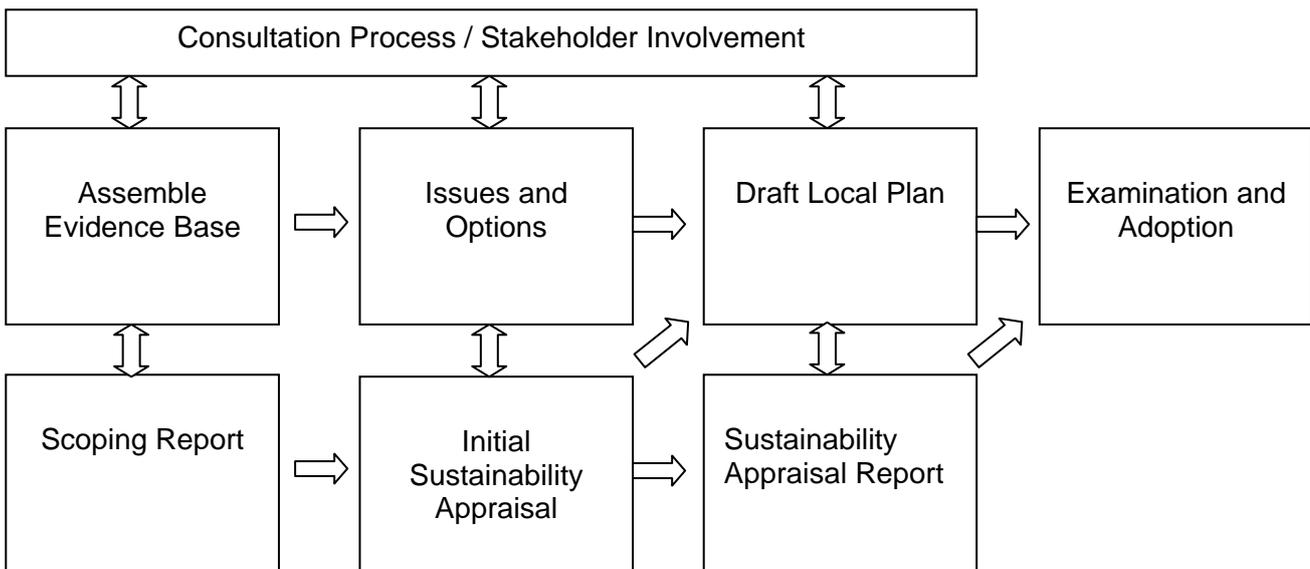
Director for Planning and New Communities
South Cambridgeshire District Council
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge
CB23 6EA

- 2.18. Please ensure that we receive your comments by 18th February 2013.
- 2.19. If you have any questions on this Supplementary Initial SA Report, or the SA process in general, please telephone the Planning Policy team on 03450 450 500, or email ldf@scambs.gov.uk

Chapter 3: The Scope of the Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.1. *The following section provides a non-technical summary of the Sustainability Appraisal process. A more detailed explanation can be found in the main Initial Sustainability Appraisal (July 2012), and the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.*²
- 3.2. Sustainability Appraisal is a process which takes place alongside plan making, to assess the extent to which the emerging policies and proposals will help to achieve 'sustainable development', and by understanding potential adverse effects it provides opportunities for plans to be improved. The overall aim of the appraisal process is to help ensure that the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan makes an effective contribution to the pursuit of 'sustainable development'. The most widely-used definition of this concept is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".
- 3.3. The process incorporates requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment, a requirement to assess the significant environmental impact of plans which applies across Europe.

The Sustainability Appraisal Process and Plan Making



The Scoping Stages

- 3.4. The first stage of the Sustainability Appraisal process has been to produce a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. It provides the context for the appraisal, and identifies issues of particular importance to the District that should be considered.
- 3.5. Evidence in the Scoping Report was gathered around ten themes, which taken together address the full range of sustainability issues.

² Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report 2012 and Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2012) : <http://www.scams.gov.uk/Environment/Planning/DistrictPlanning/LocalDevelopmentFramework/SCLP.htm>

Sustainability themes

Environmental	Social	Economic
Land	Health	Economic Activity
Pollution	Housing	Transport
Biodiversity	Inclusive Communities	
Landscape And Townscape		
Climate Change		

3.6. For each theme, issues are explored through the Scoping process outlined below:

The Scoping Process

What is the policy context?

Identifies the objectives and requirements of other plans policies and strategies ranging from national to local level that will influence development of the plan.

What is the situation now?

Existing characteristics of the district.

What will the situation be without the plan?

Considers what the district would be like if the Local Plan wasn't prepared.

What are the Key Sustainability Issues and Problems?

Identifies key sustainability issues for the district to be considered through plan making and the sustainability appraisal.

What are the Sustainability Objectives?

Using the sustainability issues identified above, establishes a framework for testing policies and proposals against.

What indicators will be used to monitor significant effects?

Considers what issues should be monitored in future to establish the actual impacts of the new plan.

Sustainability Objectives

3.7. The outcome of the 'Scoping' stage of the SA process is a set of Sustainability Objectives created to address the sustainability problems. They reflect desired environmental, social or economic outcomes, rather than measures that would assist in achieving those outcomes (they focus on the ends rather than the means).

Sustainability Objectives

THEME	SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE
LAND	Minimise the irreversible loss of undeveloped land, economic mineral reserves, and productive agricultural holdings, and the degradation / loss of soils
	Minimise waste production and support the reuse and recycling of waste products
POLLUTION	Improve air quality and minimise or mitigate against sources of environmental pollution
BIODIVERSITY	Avoid damage to designated sites and protected species
	Maintain and enhance the range and viability of characteristic habitats and species
	Improve opportunities for people to access and appreciate wildlife and green spaces
LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE	Maintain and enhance the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscape and townscape character
	Avoid damage to areas and sites designated for their historic interest, and protect their settings.
	Create places, spaces and buildings that work well, wear well and look good
CLIMATE CHANGE	Minimise impacts on climate change (including greenhouse gas emissions)
	Reduce vulnerability to future climate change effects
HEALTH	Maintain and enhance human health
	Reduce and prevent crime and reduce fear of crime
	Improve the quantity and quality of publically accessible open space.
HOUSING	Ensure everyone has access to decent, appropriate and affordable housing
INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES	Redress inequalities related to age, disability, gender, race, faith, location and income
	Improve the quality, range and accessibility of services and facilities (e.g. health, transport, education, training, leisure opportunities)
	Encourage and enable the active involvement of local people in community activities
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY	Improve the efficiency, competitiveness, vitality and adaptability of the local economy.
	Help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to their skills, potential and place of residence
	Support appropriate investment in people, places, communications and other infrastructure
TRANSPORT	Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable transport choices.
	Secure appropriate investment and development in transport infrastructure, and ensure the safety of the transport network.

- 3.8. In addition, a set of 'appraisal questions' have been formulated to highlight specific issues for consideration when assessing draft policies/proposals against the objectives. Together these provide a Sustainability Appraisal Framework, for considering, appraising and documenting the effects of plan

policies and options. The full sustainability framework is included in Appendix 1.

- 3.9. The Scoping Report was subject to consultation in February 2012 with the Environment Agency, English Nature, and English Heritage who have a key role in ensuring it addresses environmental issues appropriately. Their comments have been taken into account to get the scoping report to this stage. It was also subject to consultation alongside the Issues and Options 2012.

Chapter 4: The Sustainability Appraisal of Options

- 4.1. The further site options tested for Issues and Options 2 for potential allocation in the Local Plan were identified as a result of representations to the first Issues and Options Consultation in summer 2012.
- 4.2. The Initial Sustainability Appraisal has considered how the options identified perform against the Sustainability Objectives, whether there is likely to be positive or negative impacts, and the significance of the impact. To assist in making this assessment quantifiable, measurable and transparent, and for direct comparison between sites to be made, the Site Assessment Matrix in Appendix 2 indicates how the impact of individual sites against each objective has been determined, in the same way as for the 2012 Issues and Options. The results of the sustainability appraisal of the housing sites can be found in Appendix 3 of this report. The results of the sustainability appraisal of employment sites can be found in Appendix 6.
- 4.3. The Council also prepared a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, first published in July 2012. The purpose of this document is to identify whether sites were 'available, suitable, and deliverable'. The additional housing sites submitted in representation to the Issues and options Report have been tested, and a Supplement to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment has been published to support this consultation (Note: sites on the edge of Cambridge were tested separately, as part of a joint review with Cambridge City Council). A similar process has been undertaken for proposals for commercial development, in order to assess their availability, suitability, and deliverability (this can be found in Appendix 5 of this document).
- 4.4. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal Assessments of potential sites identify key constraints and considerations relating to potential development sites including suitability, availability and achievability. In order to draw information together in an accessible form, and reach an overall conclusion on the merits of the sites assessed, key elements from both assessments have been combined in a summary table to illustrate the positive and negative issues relating to each site. The summary tables for housing sites can be found in Appendix 4, and the summary assessment table for employment sites can be found in Appendix 7.
- 4.5. The least sustainable sites, identified as having no significant development potential due to constraints or adverse impacts, have been rejected at this stage, as they are not considered reasonable options.
- 4.6. Housing sites at 'Group Villages' and 'Infill Villages' have not been taken forward as reasonable options for the Issues and Options Report. These are not amongst the more sustainable villages in the district. It was considered in the 2012 Issues and Options that additional housing in Group and Infill villages would lead to dispersed rural development which had previously been found to be unsustainable and sites are available at higher order more sustainable settlements that would provide sufficient flexibility in housing numbers to enable a choice to be taken following consultation to meet any of the housing target options. This is addressed in Issue 9 'Development Strategy' in the Issues and Options Report 2012 and Initial Sustainability Report. The additional site options in this consultation are at the larger and

better served villages and can be considered alongside the options from the 2012 consultation to identify the most appropriate package of sites for inclusion in the draft Local Plan.

Chapter 5: Results

Housing Sites

- 5.1. As a result of the SHLAA assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal, a total of 10 sites have been identified as site options for consultation. A range of pros and cons have been identified with the individual options.

Employment Sites

- 5.2. Of the five new employment sites proposed in representations, only one was considered a reasonable option for development. In particular other sites were rejected due to significant landscape and townscape impacts, or impact on sites designated for their biodiversity value. Evidence also suggests a lack of need for new large scale employment sites located away from Cambridge.
- 5.3. Two sites were proposed in representations for convenience retail to the south of Sawston. These were not considered reasonable options for consultation, due to the scale of the proposal compared with identified need, and the distance from Sawston village centre.

Established Employment Areas in the Countryside

- 5.4. The current development plan identifies 12 areas as Established Employment Areas in the Countryside. The plan allows employment development within these areas, subject to requirements of other policies in the plan. The policy option was assessed in the Initial Sustainability Report, which highlighted the potential benefits towards the reuse of existing land, and support for economic objectives, but with potential negative impacts on sustainable travel objectives due to the rural location of some of the sites.
- 5.5. Changes have been sought to the boundary of the Granta Park Great Abington site in particular to reflect phase 2 of the development which now has planning permission. An option is included in the consultation to reflect this change in circumstances. This has been assessed against the principles of the policy, and does not change to sustainability appraisal outcomes. A further comment proposed an additional area south of Pampisford Road be included, for secondary development or landscaping. However, given the underdeveloped nature of the land, and the separation from the employment site, it is not recommended for inclusion.

Mixed Use Development

- 5.6. Histon and Impington Parish Council is seeking to proactively design a special area in the Histon and Impington settlement to regenerate the area around the former station, which is now a stop on the Guided Busway. The sustainability appraisal identifies the sustainability of the location in terms of access to public transport, and the opportunities provided by the previously developed sites within the identified area. Particular issues to consider would include the relationship with the existing village centre.
- 5.7. Cottenham Parish Council have proposed a significant scale of development on the east side of the village, in order to deliver a by-pass for the village High Street. The proposal is at an early stage of development, and they are using

the consultation to gather views on its potential. An initial assessment has been carried out on the proposal. There are significant benefits of providing a bypass to the village, and potential benefits to social and economic objectives through additional services, facilities and employment, but the necessary enabling development would have a number of negative environmental impacts on the local environment.

- 5.8. The detailed sustainability appraisal tables related to these two options can be found in Appendix 8. It should be noted that the Cottenham Parish proposal includes three parcels of land subject to sustainability appraisal in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal 2012 (sites 128, 241 and 269)³.

Village Frameworks

- 5.9. The principle of the development framework policy was appraised in the main Initial Sustainability Report 2012, and subject to consultation in the first issues and options report, along with alternative options to relax the framework policy.
- 5.10. The appraisal identified that development frameworks restrict growth on the outer edges of settlements, they therefore perform a role in minimising loss of agricultural land. They protect the character of settlements by preventing gradual expansion of villages, and loss of historic character. They also play a role in restricting the scale of development taking place at villages, particularly smaller ones, which has a positive impact on the sustainable transport objective by focusing development into more accessible locations. Retaining frameworks but allowing small scale development if certain criteria are met could have a cumulative impact on scale of development in less sustainable villages. Impact of individual developments would to a great extent depend on the criteria, but if not applied appropriately there could be negative impact on landscape and townscape objectives.
- 5.11. Through the consultation a number of changes were suggested to existing development frameworks. Individual development framework changes have not been subject to appraisal. Instead the Council has reviewed whether the change would conform to the definition of development frameworks, and they will be subject to public consultation before the decision is made as to whether they should be included in the plan. Including land within a framework does not automatically mean that development is appropriate, as it would depend on a range of other policies. This assessment can be found in Appendix 9, and is also summarised in the Issues and Options 2 consultation document.

Community Facilities and Infrastructure

- 5.12. Provision of residential moorings on the River Cam would support the objective of delivering a range of housing, providing opportunities to accommodate house boats. The site would negatively impact on the landscape of the area, which currently comprises small enclosed paddocks along the river.

³ Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report 2012 Annex 1 and Annex 2 <http://scambs.jdi-consult.net/ldf/readdoc.php?docid=217>

- 5.13. Hospice provision would contribute to a range of the sustainability objectives, including the maintain and enhance human health objective, and access to services and facilities. There would be similar benefits associated with appropriate provision of new burial grounds. As no specific sites have been identified at this stage, the impact on other objectives would be uncertain.
- 5.14. The detailed sustainability appraisal tables related to these options can be found in Appendix 10.

Recreation and Open Space

- 5.15. The appraisal of the four open space sites suggested by Parish Councils reveal no issues that would prevent their potential use for this purpose, although there are a number of issues that would need to be addressed, and that could influence the nature of the use. They would all contribute to provision in settlements where there is an existing shortfall in provision.
- 5.16. The detailed sustainability appraisal tables related to these options can be found in Appendix 11.

Protecting Village Character.

- 5.17. The first Issues and Options consultation sought views on whether there were any additional areas that should be included in the plan as Protected Village Amenity Areas (PVAA) or Important Countryside Frontages (ICF). In addition, views were sought on whether any spaces should be identified as Local Green Space (LGS). The principles of these policies was subject to Sustainability Appraisal in the main Initial Sustainability Report. This highlighted the potential positive impact on achieving the objective to maintain and enhance the diversity and distinctiveness of landscape and townscape character, as well as the protection and enhancement of the historic environment.
- 5.18. The Council has assessed the proposals to identify how they conform to the definition and whether they could meet the criteria for both PVAA and LGS. Currently the key difference is that PVAA are within a village framework. The Council has not yet made a decision whether to have two designations or combine them into one. Sites that meet the tests for PVAA and/or LGS are included for consultation. Parish council suggestions that do not meet the tests are also included for consultation although they would need a new designation. This assessment can be found in Appendix 12, and is also summarised in the Issues and Options 2 consultation document.

Links to Other Types of Assessment

- 5.19. There are a number of other assessments the Council is required to carry out of its plans, and others that are carried out as good practice. They include Strategic Environmental Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment, and Rural Proofing. The issues raised by these requirements have been identified through the Sustainability Scoping process, and integrated into the sustainability objectives that will be used to test the plan. Further information on these other assessments is included in Section 3 of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

- 5.20. Equalities issues have been addressed in the sustainability objectives, and are therefore considered in individual assessments. However, for completeness a summary Equalities Impact Assessment was included in Appendix 7 of the main Initial Sustainability Report. It is considered that these conclusions remain sound for issues considered in Issues and Options 2.
- 5.21. The Habitats Directive Assessment examines whether plans would have any significant effects on European designated habitats. The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report includes a section dedicated specifically to Habitats Regulations Assessment, which further explains the process, and provides information on the Natura 2000 sites in the District and surrounding area, their characteristics and current condition. The main Initial Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix 8) includes a screening exercise, to identify any potential significant effects of options. It is considered that none of the options identified in the Issues and Options 2 document would alter these conclusions.

Conclusions

- 5.22. A range of additional options have been explored through this second issues and options and initial sustainability appraisal process. They will need to be considered alongside the issues and options explored through the first consultation. Public consultation will enable people to express their views, before decisions are made.

The Next stages of the Plan Making and Sustainability Appraisal Process

- 5.23. Once the issues and options stage of plan making is completed, a draft plan will be prepared. This will be subject to sustainability appraisal, in the form of a Draft Final Sustainability Report. Both will be subject to consultation before the plan is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination and adoption. Should any significant changes be made to the plan as a result of public consultation, additional appraisal work will need to be carried out and the final Sustainability Report amended to reflect the results.
- 5.24. At the draft plan stage the appraisal will assess the draft policies and allocations selected for the final plan, considering the likely significant effects of the plan as a whole, how they can be mitigated or enhanced, and how impacts can be monitored. At this point the appraisal will identify reasons why an option was eliminated.