

South Gloucestershire Council
South Gloucestershire Policies, Sites and Places Plan
Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment Adoption
Statement (November 2017)

1. Introduction

1.1 South Gloucestershire Council adopted the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Policies, Sites and Places Development Plan Document (PSP Plan) on Wednesday 8th November 2017. This Adoption Statement has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which requires that on adoption of a plan or programme, a statement which sets out the following is published:

- How the environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
- How the Environmental Report has been taken into account;
- How opinions expressed during consultation have been taken into account;
- The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

1.2 As required by S.19 (5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Planning Act 2008) the 'significant effects' of implementing the plan have been included in a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) report, which incorporates social and economic effects alongside the environmental effects required by the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) (referred to as the 'Environmental Report' in the Regulations). The SA process also incorporates the requirements of the SEA in accordance with European Union Directive 2001/42/EC and removes the need to carry out a separate SEA.

1.3 As a result, a combined SA / SEA of the PSP Plan has been undertaken which satisfies the relevant regulations and legislation. Where the Council is required by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 to produce a statement on 'environmental effects', it has expanded on this in relation to each of the 'particulars' listed above to include economic and social considerations / effects as well.

2. Background

2.1 The adopted PSP Plan is available to view here:

www.southglos.gov.uk/policiessitesandplacesplan .

2.2 The Council's PSP Plan and SA Report were submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in November 2016. The submission documents were supported by a Habitats Regulation Assessment, which concluded that there would be no likely significant effects.

2.3 The SA process has been undertaken as an iterative process alongside the development of the PSP Plan. Prior to the submission of the PSP Plan, consultation provided the public and statutory bodies (including the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage) with an opportunity to comment on the PSP Plan and associated SA during its relevant preparation stages prior to submission. These consultations were undertaken in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Planning Act 2008), the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

2.4 Louise Phillips, MA, MSc, MRTPI was appointed as the Inspector to conduct an independent examination into the soundness of the submission version of the PSP Plan (June 2016) and its supporting documents. Hearing sessions were conducted over 4 days in February 2017 resulting in a number of 'Main Modifications' for which a SA Report was produced. The Main

Modifications and the related SA were published for consultation 12 June – 24 July 2017.

2.5 The Council received the Inspector's Report and final Main Modifications in September 2017. In addition to the Main Modifications the Council prepared "Additional (minor) Modifications" to the PSP Plan. These minor adjustments are necessary for the purpose of ensuring the PSP Plan reflects and is consistent with the Main Modifications. The Additional Modifications do not materially affect the policies to be adopted or the respective sustainability appraisals which had been undertaken. Therefore no further SA was required following receipt of the Inspector's Report.

3. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the PSP Plan

3.1 The SA has been carried out as an iterative process alongside a number of key stages in the preparation of the PSP Plan. The SA sought to test the impacts of emerging policy decisions and alternatives (individually and when taken together with the other policies) of the emerging PSP Plan against the agreed sustainability framework.

3.2 The SA was undertaken in parallel with development of the plan, so that all reasonable alternatives for achieving the plan's objectives were assessed for their sustainability effects, and to ensure that the wording of policies, as far as possible, sought to minimise any negative sustainability impacts and maximise any opportunities to deliver the sustainability objectives. Stakeholders including all statutory consultees were given opportunities to comment at each stage of plan production. The views expressed at each consultation stage were used to guide and inform the appraisal and plan preparation process. The development of the PSP Plan and the accompanying SA has therefore been an iterative, inclusive, and comprehensive process.

3.3 The SA framework was used to develop emerging policies and help identify the most appropriate policies and sites to be included in the final version of the plan.

4. How the SA/Environmental Report has been taken into account

4.1 The SA process, as set out in the 'SA/Environmental Report', which is made up of a suite of documents, has contributed to the development and refinement of the PSP Plan by providing a separate assessment of the sustainability of the Council's proposed options and policies throughout the plan preparation process. Each SA Report demonstrates how the sustainability of proposed alternative options has been considered in a consistent manner. All reports requiring decisions of Council relating to the PSP Plan have been accompanied by the relevant SA Report

4.2 This process has supported:

- The selection of the most appropriate options at each stage in an open and transparent way;
- The revision of options where necessary, to ensure that consideration is given to reasonable alternatives; and
- The establishment of mitigation measures to address certain potentially negative effects and achieve the most sustainable outcome.

5. How consultation responses have been taken into account

5.1 The minimum requirements for consultation and public participation are set out in the relevant Regulations. For the majority of the PSP Plan preparation process, these were the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012, and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Local Planning

Authorities are also required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in order to set out how and when the community and other interested parties can take part in, and influence, the plan-making process.

5.2 The Sustainability Appraisals have been subject to the same level of the advertisement and consultation as the PSP Plan. At all stages consultation has included the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage, their representations have helped inform subsequent iterations of the SA (and PSP Plan). No objection was received as to how the SA had been undertaken from these statutory consultees.

5.3 South Gloucestershire Council was also required under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 to submit statements setting out, if representations were made in accordance with the regulations, the number of representations made and a summary of the main issues raised in those representations. These were produced as part of the process for preparing the PSP Plan for submission, in accordance with Regulation 22 (1) (c).

5.4 Responses have helped to ensure that the full range of alternative options have been considered through the development of the PSP Plan and the accompanying SA process. The consultation responses have in particular helped to shape the detail of the policies to ensure the most sustainable outcomes.

5.5 By engaging in the process of considering alternatives, respondents to the consultation have helped to ensure that amendments to the original proposals have been made that should lead to a more sustainable outcome.

5.6 In conclusion the Council has satisfied the regulations in terms of consultation on its PSP Plan and associated Sustainability Appraisals.

6. Reasons for choosing the final version of the PSP Plan (in light of other reasonable alternatives)

6.1 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (12) (2) requires environmental reports (SA / SEA) to consider any reasonable alternatives, taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme.

6.2 As set out previously, the SA and plan making process for the PSP Plan have run effectively in parallel through all stages of the PSP Plan, with the relevant SA report being available when the Council has taken any decisions regarding the future of the Plan. As well as helping to shape policies to ensure they are sustainable. The table below lists the documents produced during the production of the PSP Plan:

Document	Examination Library Ref:
Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report Update (July 2014)	PP8
Draft Sustainability Appraisal (June 2014)	PP9
Sustainability Appraisal (March 2015)	PP10
Sustainability Appraisal including Habitat Regulations Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment (June 2016)	SD4
Sustainability Appraisal of Main Modifications	N/A

6.3 These documents are available on the Council's website at www.southglos.gov.uk/policiessitesandplaces and they demonstrate how the PSP Plan has been informed by SA objectives throughout its production.

6.4 Prior to the commencement of the 2017 hearings for the public examination of the PSP Plan, in accordance with the requirements of Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 s 20(7C) the Council formally requested that the Inspector should make any modifications of the document

that would make it one that – (a) satisfies the requirements of s 20(5)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and (b) is sound and thus capable of being adopted. Main Modifications were prepared and consulted upon from 12 June – 24 July 2017; this document was supported by an SA report prepared by the Council.

6.5 At each stage of producing the PSP Plan, the SA process has sufficiently and comprehensively set out alternative options through all preparatory stages of plan preparation to make it clear how it has identified its preferred option with regard to sites and the policy framework to support the delivery and implementation of the Plan. Moreover, the SA process has, at each stage of the preparation of the PSP Plan, been subject to public consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. Consultation responses have formed part of the iterative process of preparing the SA.

6.6 This has been demonstrated as following the examination the Independent Inspector has concluded that the PSP Plan *“provides an appropriate basis for the planning of South Gloucestershire provided that a number of main modifications are made to it.”* In coming to this conclusion, the Inspector is satisfied that the Council’s SA work has been carried out and is adequate.

6.7 In conclusion, the council considers that the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and the reasonable alternatives assessed at each stage of the PSP Plan’s production including that relating to the Main Modifications, comply with the Requirements of the Regulations and Directive.

7. Measures to monitor the significant environmental effects of the PSP Plan

7.1 The PSP Plan contains an Implementation and Monitoring chapter which indicates the monitoring that will be undertaken to measure the effectiveness of the PSP Plan's policies. The monitoring will indicate whether any changes to the PSP Plan need to be considered if a policy is not working or if the targets are not being met.

7.2 The Council can also use indicators from the Sustainability Appraisal to monitor the potential significant effects of the policies and proposals, as identified through the SA Report. Some policies aim to deliver a qualitative rather than quantitative outcome. In such instances, a measurable target may not be appropriate.

7.3 The Sustainability Appraisal including Habitat Regulations Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment (June 2016) and the Sustainability Appraisal of Main Modifications, contain further detail and understanding of end effects of the plan. Following inspection of the documents it is considered that following examination of the PSP Plan including the main modifications and consideration of end effects of all policies, the PSP Plan is not considered to result in any residual significant negative effects that would require monitoring or reporting.

7.4 Monitoring outcomes will normally be reported on an annual basis for a year beginning 1 April and ending 31 March through the Council's Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR will identify any objectives and targets that are not being met and any action required to be taken to rectify the situation. The AMR will also be a key source of evidence when we prepare Development Plan Documents. The Report will be published on the Council's website. The Council has started work on the new Local Plan which will replace the PSP Plan upon its adoption and will provide an opportunity to review policies.