

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Non-technical summary

The planning system has the key priority of promoting sustainable development. The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations. Sustainable development is generally considered to have four aims which need to be considered simultaneously:

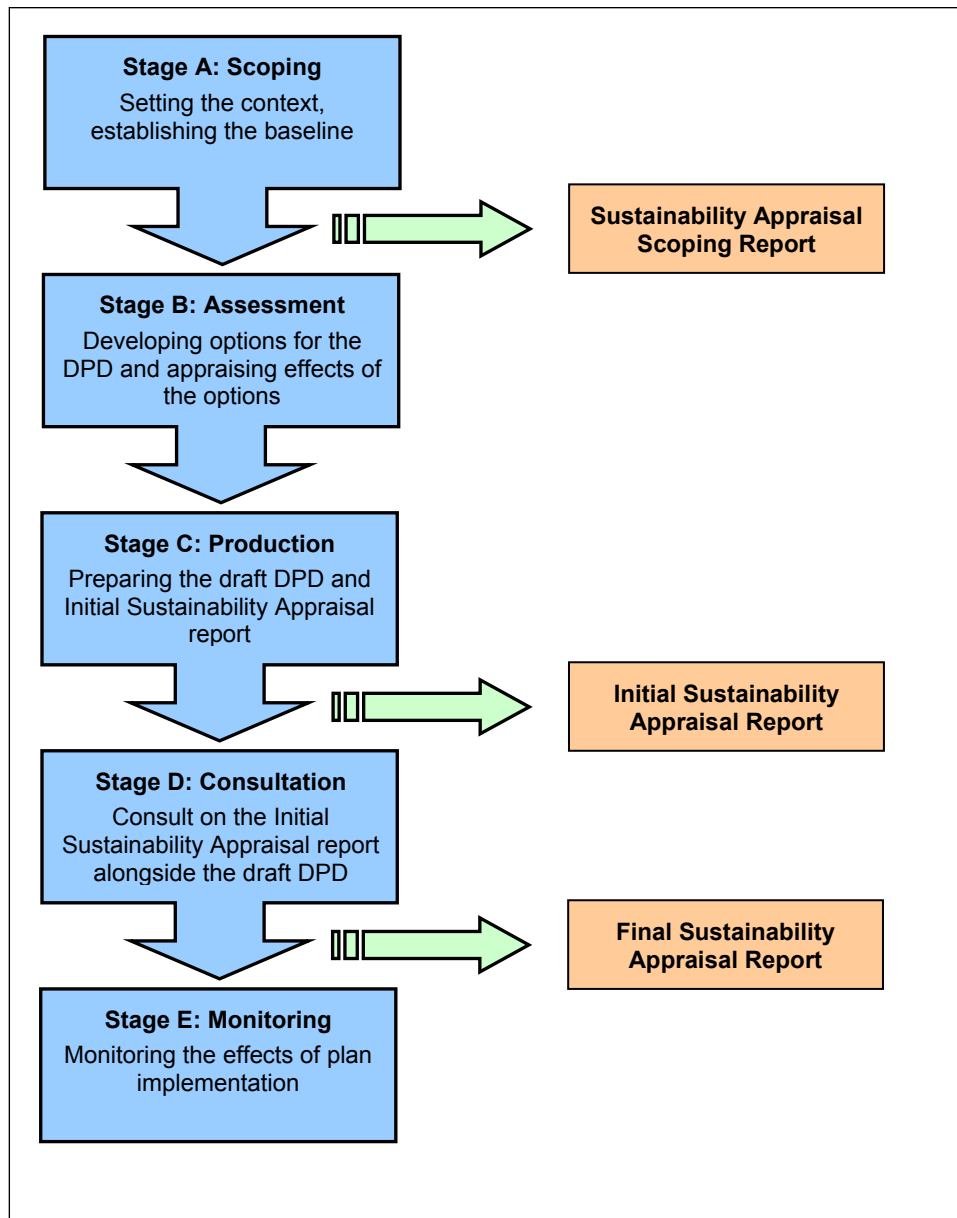
- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
- effective protection of the environment
- prudent use of natural resources
- maintenance of sustainable levels of economic growth and employment

To ensure that planning documents help to move towards sustainable development, Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been devised. SA is an assessment of the possible environmental, social and economic effects of implementing planning policy. The SA process involves several stages and effectively acts as a checklist for planning policies, ensuring that environmental, social and economic effects are considered. Three reports are produced as part of the process, one setting the context, one reporting on the initial findings of the assessment and one reporting on the final assessment results (Figure 1).

The first stage of the assessment is to establish the issues that exist within an area and to identify how these can be tackled to enable progress towards a more sustainable pattern of development. The results of this stage are reported in the SA Scoping Report.

The issues are established through a review of plans and strategies produced by other organisations (such as Central Government) and by looking at statistics and information available about the area.

Figure 1: Stages of the Sustainability Appraisal process



For the scoping report, the review and evidence gathering stages have been completed by focusing on topics grouped under the four aims of sustainable development therefore giving a broad coverage of sustainability issues (Figure 2). The topics covered under each sustainability aim were:

Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone

- Housing
- Population and Health
- Crime
- Access, Equality and Deprivation

Effective protection of the environment

- Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna
- Climate Change and Flooding
- Cultural heritage, Landscape and Archaeology
- Pollution

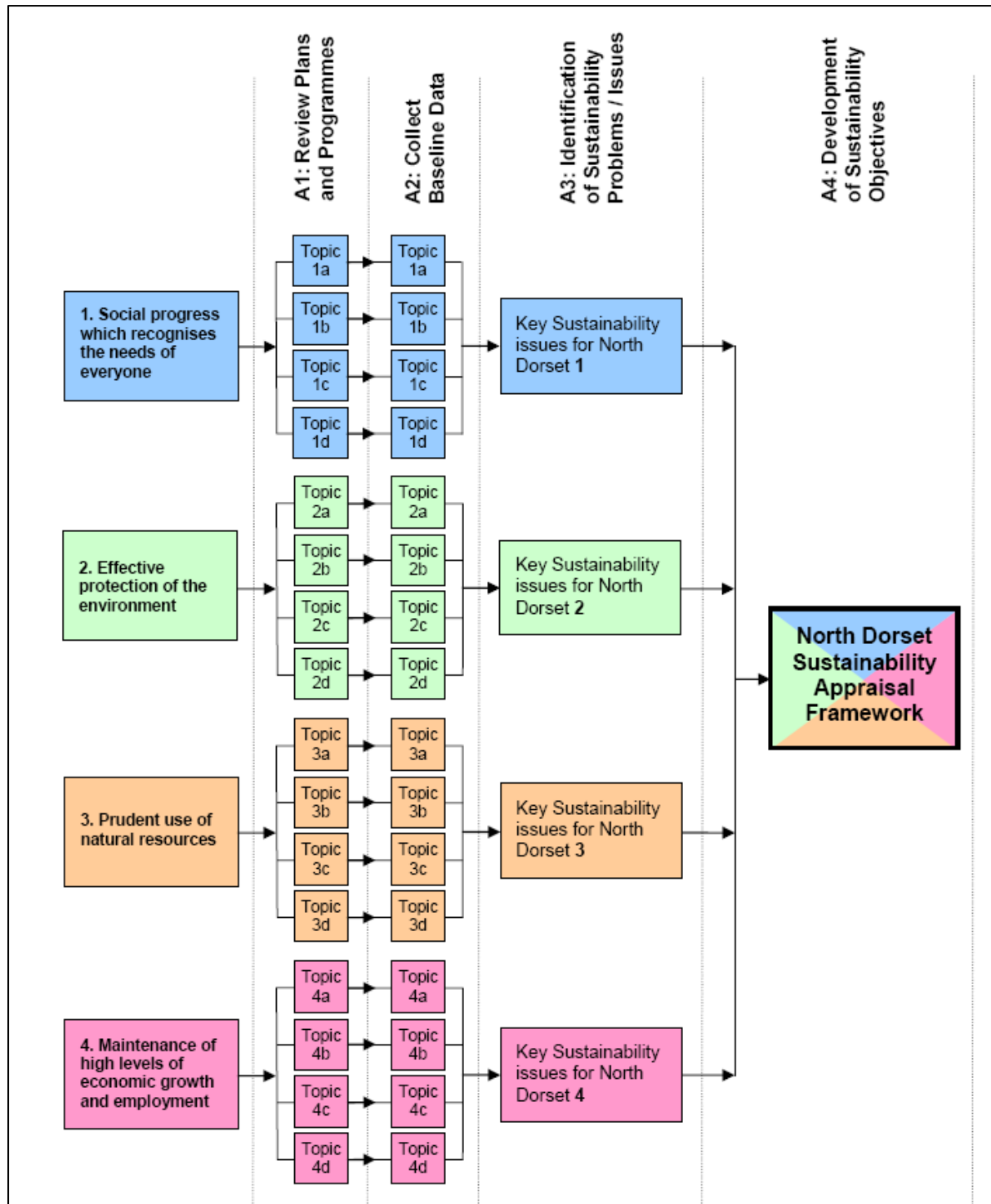
Prudent use of natural resources

- Waste
- Natural Resources, Water and Soil
- Energy Consumption and Energy Efficiency

Maintenance of sustainable levels of economic growth and employment

- The Economy
- Transport
- Education, Training and Skills

Figure 2: Topic-based Scoping of the Sustainability Appraisal



The results of this review and the evidence gathered gave information about the current situation in North Dorset under each topic. It also enabled the aims of other organisations related to sustainability and the plan being prepared, to be understood so that the impact of these can be taken into account. Ultimately the review and evidence were used to identify the main issues related to each topic.

The main issues identified were as follows:

Social Progress that recognises the needs of everyone

Housing: High house prices, low wages, low affordability

- Need to provide adequate housing and affordable housing to meet needs

Population: Population growth due to in migration, ageing population, relatively small working aged population

- Need to provide for the ageing population

Health: Relatively healthy population, relatively high levels of diseases associated with age and poor lifestyles

- Promote active lifestyles, offer opportunities to participate in exercise

Crime: Low crime rate, more concern about crime than actual crime

- Design environments in which people feel safe, encourage community spirit

Access and Deprivation: Poor accessibility to services due to rurality, pockets of rural deprivation and areas of deprivation within towns

- Provide essential services in tandem with housing development, address deficiencies

Equality: Predominantly White British, Christian population, low proportion of disabled people, balanced gender distribution, ageing population

- Provide for the diverse needs of the population

Effective Protection of the Environment

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna: Protect and enhance habitats and species, recognition of the wider importance of Biodiversity

- Protect designated sites and restore habitats when opportunities arise

Climate Change and Flooding: Avoid flood risk from all sources in new developments, adaptation to the unavoidable effects of climate change

- Reduce risk to property by avoiding areas that are most likely to be affected by climate change, exploit opportunities that arise within environmental limits

Cultural Heritage, Landscape and Archaeology: Distinctive landscape areas within North Dorset, highly valued historic and rural heritage, highly valued settlement characters

- Preserve and promote the rich heritage of North Dorset

Pollution: Prevent pollution of rivers, air and land, seek to improve underperforming areas

- Protect high quality environment

Prudent use of natural resources

Waste: Minimise waste and increase levels of recycling

- Promote recycling and reuse of resources and land

Natural Resources, Water and Soil: Reduce pressure on undeveloped land through efficient use of land, protect important resources from development

- Promote development on previously developed land, reduce consumption of natural resources

Energy Consumption and Energy Efficiency: Reduction in energy usage, promotion of non fossil fuel based energy resources, reduction in CO₂ emissions

- Promote energy efficient construction, promote renewable energy resources

Maintenance of sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment

The Economy: Low paid workforce, prevalence of small firms, manufacturing, retail, defence and education are important sectors

- Enhance competitiveness of firms so they can grow, increase earnings

Transport: Poor public transport network results in high car ownership and poor accessibility

- Improve accessibility locally and to the national transport network

Education, Training and Skills: High levels of educational achievement, significant level of people with poor literacy

- Improve educational attainment of the most disadvantaged and improve access to high quality educational establishments

Many of these issues can be improved upon through policies in the planning document that is being prepared. There is a clear direction for each issue to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development. This therefore allows objectives to be established covering the significant issues. These objectives create a framework which is effectively a checklist for the plan ensuring that sustainable development is considered throughout the document.

The framework produced contains 16 objectives grouped under the four aims of sustainable development.

Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone

1. Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	<u>Assessment principles:</u> Quantity and quality of housing, size and type of housing, tenure split
2. Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	<u>Assessment principles:</u> Coordinated provision of housing, employment and facilities and encourage deficits to be made up. Shops, GPs, Green Infrastructure, schools, etc
3. Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	<u>Assessment principles:</u> Recreation, cycling and walking, healthy diets, fuel poverty, income inequality, access to Green Infrastructure, cultural participation

4. Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	<u>Assessment principles:</u> Age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, disability, community cohesion, cultural (material/activity and value based), population change
5. Improve quality of life through well designed developments	<u>Assessment principles:</u> Crime, road safety, urban heat, noise, open space

Effective protection of the environment

6. Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	<u>Assessment principles:</u> Flooding (from all sources), heat, drought, extreme weather events. opportunities for new crops, biofuels, green technologies, renewable energy, SuDS
7. Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	<u>Assessment principles:</u> Species and habitats of international and local importance; protection, management, enhancement and connectivity of green infrastructure. River network
8. Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes	<u>Assessment principles:</u> Design, archaeology, listed buildings, settlement character, heritage led regeneration and tourism, local building materials
9. Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	<u>Assessment principles:</u> Quality of life, tourism, recreation and access to Green infrastructure, education, farming practices, setting of towns, conserving and enhancing landscapes, woodlands, hedgerows, historic environment

Prudent use of natural resources

10. Reduce impacts on the environment	<u>Assessment principles:</u> Climate Change mitigation, greenhouse gas emissions, air, water, soil pollution, diffuse pollution
11. Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	<u>Assessment principles:</u> Reuse of previously developed land and buildings, primary won aggregates, recycling, soil conservation
12. Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	<u>Assessment principles:</u> Renewable energy, micro and community energy, energy efficiency, reduction in consumption, water efficiency, sustainable construction, fuel poverty

Maintenance of sustainable levels of economic growth and employment

13. Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	<u>Assessment principles:</u> Public transport provision, access to strategic transport network, home working, ICT
14. Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	<u>Assessment principles:</u> Reducing need to travel, provision of accessible services, cycling, walking, public transport, vibrant town centres
15. Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	<u>Assessment principles:</u> Small scale business units, business sector clusters, farm diversification, traditional building skills, green technologies
16. Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	<u>Assessment principles:</u> Jobs, skills, public transport, up-skilling the workforce, economic competitiveness, valued and productive workforce, access to further and higher education

This framework will be used to assess the potential impacts of the plan and how it will contribute to more sustainable forms of development in North Dorset.