



Scoping Report for South Bucks District

May 2005

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) including a
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
for the South Bucks District
Core Strategy Development Plan Document

Contents

Section	Page
Non Technical Summary	1
1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 The Local Development Framework - Visions and Objectives	7
3.0 Task A1: Identifying other relevant plans Programmes and Sustainability Objectives	9
4.0 Task A2: Producing a Physical Characterisation of the District and Collecting Baseline information	9
5.0 Task A3: Identifying Key Issues and Broad Generic Options	11
6.0 Task A4: Developing the Sustainability Appraisal Framework	28
7.0 Task A5: Testing the LDF Objectives against the SA Framework	34
8.0 What next?	35
9.0 Future Consultations	35
Glossary	37
Abbreviations	39

Appendix 1:	Stages involved in the SA Process
Appendix 2:	Table showing the current plans, programmes and sustainability objectives
Appendix 3:	Table showing Baseline Data for South Bucks District.
Appendix 4:	List of Groups/ Organisations consulted on the SA Framework
Appendix 5:	Additional Text to accompany Table 4: Comparing the SA Objectives for internal compatibility
Appendix 6:	Additional Text to accompany Table 5: Testing the Plan Objectives against the SA objectives

Scoping Report for South Bucks District

Non Technical Summary

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process is a way of ensuring that all plans and programmes, which relate to the development and use of land, are compatible with the aims of sustainable development. The South Bucks Local Development Framework (LDF) is one such plan and therefore the Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents within it are required to undergo a Sustainability Appraisal.

Sustainable development is about ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and in the future. Put simply, sustainability looks at balancing environmental, social and economic aims.

The Scoping Report

This Scoping Report sets out the Framework for how the Sustainability Appraisal will be carried out for the South Bucks Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

The first stage of the Sustainability Appraisal process has been to identify and review other relevant plans and programmes. This included reviewing plans, programmes, strategies and sustainability objectives at international, national, regional and local level that may have an influence or important bearing on the Core Strategy.

In order to gain an understanding of the current environmental, social and economic conditions in South Bucks, a characterisation of the District was prepared. In addition, a considerable amount of baseline data relating to social, environment and economic matters has been collected and analysed. The County Council has played a major role in the collection of this information. All of this information together has helped us to identify the main issues for South Bucks that need to be considered in terms of their sustainability. This baseline information will also help to provide a basis for predicting and monitoring the effects of possible policy options to address the key issues. There are areas where baseline data is unavailable, and the Council will consider how to improve this for use in assessments of future plans.

The identification of sustainability problems facing South Bucks has provided an opportunity to define key issues for the Core Strategy Development Plan document, and to develop sustainable plan objectives and options. These issues have been identified through the context review, the baseline review, earlier experience with issues identified in other plans and programmes, earlier consultation on the emerging Sustainability Appraisal Framework with the four statutory agencies and key stakeholders, as well as earlier public consultation undertaken as part of the early pre-production stage of the Core Strategy.

As a result of this work a number of emerging broad generic options for key issues which have a spatial aspect have been drawn up for the Core Strategy Development Plan Document. These include issues relating to housing, employment, retailing and landscape protection.

The Scoping Report sets out the Sustainability Appraisal Framework, which consists of a set of draft objectives and indicators. This Framework would be used in future stages of the process to assess the sustainability merits of the different options. An initial 'core set' of objectives and indicators was drawn up jointly by the District Councils and County Council in Buckinghamshire, taking into account existing sustainability objectives from various documents. Consultation has already been carried out with key stakeholders on this first draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework. As a result of that consultation, some objectives and indicators have been revised as baseline data has been collected, sustainability issues have been identified and in light of responses received from key stakeholders.

The Core Strategy objectives have been tested for compatibility with the Sustainability Appraisal objectives, and have been adjusted where appropriate to ensure that the Core Strategy objectives are sustainable. We have also looked at whether the Sustainability Appraisal objectives are consistent with each other.

Consultation

We are now at the stage where we wish to obtain the views of key stakeholders and the public on the Scoping Report. Consultation at this stage is important as it will help to ensure that the Sustainability Appraisal will be comprehensive and robust enough to support the Core Strategy Development Plan Document. For this purpose please complete the attached questionnaire and return it to Peter Beckford, Head of Planning Policy, Council Offices, Capswood, Oxford Road, Denham, UB9 4LH by 10 June 2005.

The following stages will include appraising issues and options. This will be an iterative process, whereby the options developed for the Core Strategy are revised to take into account the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal. It may also be necessary to revisit the baseline data as new information and issues emerge. The findings will be presented in the initial Sustainability Appraisal Report to be published when the Council undertakes subsequent consultation on issues and options.

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for South Bucks District

1.0 Introduction

1.1 South Bucks District Council is reviewing its adopted Local Plan (March 1999) and replacing it with what is known under the new planning system as a Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF will guide future development in the District. An LDF will be made up of a series of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

1.2 In this District the first DPD to be produced will be the Core Strategy¹. This will be followed at a later date by the Housing² DPD and a Generic Development Control Policies DPD³.

Sustainability Appraisal

1.3 In preparing LDF documents the new planning system requires local authorities to undertake a 'Sustainability Appraisal' (SA) of emerging DPDs and SPDs. The purpose of SA is to promote sustainable development through better integration of sustainability considerations into the preparation and adoption of LDF documents.

1.4 The most commonly accepted definition of sustainable development, as set out in the Brundtland Report in 1987 is:

".....development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

1.5 The UK Strategy for Sustainable Development 'A Better Quality of Life' (1999) breaks down the definition into four key objectives, to be integrated and delivered simultaneously in achieving sustainable development:

- a) Social progress, which recognises the needs of everyone;
- b) Effective protection of the environment;
- c) Prudent use of natural resources; and
- d) Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth.

1.6 According to the draft guidance⁴ SA should:

- Take a long term view of whether and how the area covered by the plan is expected to develop, taking account of the 'significant' social, environmental, and economic effects of the proposed plan;

¹ This will set out the long-term spatial vision for the District and the strategic policies to deliver that vision.

² This will contain site-specific allocations and policies relating to housing.

³ This will contain a limited number of more detailed policies setting out criteria against which planning applications for the development and use of land and buildings will be considered.

- Provide a mechanism for ensuring that sustainability objectives are translated into sustainable planning policies;
 - Reflect global, national, regional and local concerns;
 - Provide an audit trail of how the plan has been revised to take into account the findings of the SA, and
 - Form an integral part of plan preparation.
- 1.7 SA is an iterative process that identifies and reports on the likely significant effects of DPDs and SPDs and the extent to which their implementation will achieve the four aims of sustainable development (see Para. 1.5 above). The various stages and tasks involved in carrying out an SA are summarised in tabular form in Appendix 1.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- 1.8 In addition to the Government's requirement for a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), recent European Legislation also requires that an assessment of the significant environmental effects of certain plans and policies (including planning documents) be undertaken.
- 1.9 SEA is focused primarily on environmental effects. Whilst the Directive defines the environment broadly, in that it includes factors such as population, human health and cultural heritage, SA goes further by examining all the sustainability related effects of plans, whether they are social, environmental or economic.
- 1.10 The requirement to carry out a SA and a SEA are distinct. However, the draft SA guidance⁴ makes it clear that they can be combined into a single process providing that the requirements of both processes are met.
- 1.11 This scoping report, for assessing the emerging Core Strategy for the South Bucks District Local Development Framework, has consequently combined the SA and SEA processes. Table 1 sets out where in the SA Scoping Report the information required to meet the SEA Directive is provided. For ease of reference, however, this report will refer to both processes as a Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

Purpose of the Scoping Report

- 1.12 This document forms a Scoping Report for a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating the requirements for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), of the South Bucks District Core Strategy Development Plan Document. It is intended to be widely available as a consultation document.
- 1.13 The purpose of this Scoping Report is to determine the scope of the SA for the Core Strategy DPD, set the context and objectives for the South Bucks District

⁴ Consultation Paper on the Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks , ODPM, September 2004

LDF and collect together the background information needed for the assessment.

- 1.14 Whilst the Scoping Report has been produced primarily for the purpose of carrying out a Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy DPD, since the Core Strategy DPD provides the strategic framework for other local development documents, it will also be useful in appraising those other documents forming part of the South Bucks Local Development Framework. It is recognised, however, that more detailed development plan documents, such as the Housing DPD, may well require additional objectives and indicators to be added to the basic appraisal framework in order to identify their specific effects and also that we may need to update information from appraisals of higher level plans if a significant amount of time has passed since their preparation.
- 1.15 With this proviso, it is intended that the Sustainability Appraisal Framework, as set out in section 6 of this report, will be used to help appraise all of the development plan documents and supplementary planning documents that together make up the South Bucks Local Development Framework.

2.0 The Local Development Framework - Vision and Objectives

- 2.1 Before undertaking an SA of the LDF it is useful to understand the aims and vision of the Framework itself and the context in which it has been produced. This section provides a brief summary of the Community Plan and the Council's vision together with the objectives of the Local Development Framework.

The Community Plan for South Bucks

- 2.2 The South Bucks Local Strategic Partnership⁵ has set out a vision for the District as a basis for the Community Plan for South Bucks. The Community Plan was adopted in September 2003, and its vision is as follows:
"Strong considerate communities, free from high levels of crime, with ready access to jobs, education, homes, services and amenities and set within a pleasant, green environment."

The key objectives in achieving this vision are: -

- Reducing crime and the fear of crime
- Improved health for all
- Increased community spirit and involvement
- A prosperous place to live and work
- A pleasant and healthy environment

South Bucks District Council's Corporate Plan

- 2.3 The vision of the Community Plan involves a number of other organisations and goes beyond that which the District Council can deliver itself. Consequently, South Bucks District Council has produced its own corporate vision for the District, taking account of that set out in the Community Plan. This is as follows: -

- Strong and united communities that respect each other's individuality but also come together, through their Council, to fight unnecessary change.
- A District where people can continue to live with an appropriate mix of housing, but which retains its greenness and open space.
- A joined up and holistic approach to needs with the Council leading as coordinator and voice of the community.

- 2.4 The Council recently agreed (November 2004) revised aims for the District. These aims are to: -

⁵ The Local Strategic Partnership comprises South Bucks District Council; Buckinghamshire County Council; Buckinghamshire Lifelong Learning Partnership; Chiltern and South Bucks Council for Voluntary Service; Chiltern and South Bucks Primary Care Trust; Government Office for the South East; Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Learning and Skills Council; South Bucks Association of Parish Councils; South Bucks Youth Forum; Thames Valley Police; and Wycombe and South Bucks Chamber of Commerce.

- Plan for a thriving and sustainable District, which protects the Green Belt and promotes appropriate development consistent with keeping the character and space for everyone to enjoy.
- Reduce the level and fear of crime and make our community a safer place to live, work and visit.
- Work with partners to improve the provision of high quality services, suitable housing and other amenities.
- Endeavour to make our environment measurably cleaner, healthier and managed in a way to preserve it for future generations.
- Deliver cost-effective services that are driven by customer and community needs.

2.5 The Local Development Framework documents will adopt this Corporate Vision. Accordingly the Core Strategy will provide a means of attaining the vision by setting out the Strategic and Spatial Strategy for the District.

Objectives for the Local Development Framework

2.6 More detailed objectives are needed in order to be able to steer the Local Development Framework. Accordingly, the Council has identified the following objectives for the Local Development Framework: -

- A To improve accessibility for all to essential services and facilities by providing opportunities to obtain good access to high quality health, education, recreation and other community services and facilities.
- B To strive to maximise community involvement and engagement in the planning process, especially by 'hard to reach' groups.
- C To provide everyone living in South Bucks with the opportunity to live in a decent home.
- D To improve the efficiency of land use through the re-use of existing buildings and previously developed land.
- E To protect important open spaces within urban areas.
- F To increase the level of affordable housing and key worker housing in South Bucks District within the overall level of planned housing development for the District.
- G To ensure that housing development is of an appropriate size and type to meet local needs.
- H To preserve the Green Belt.
- I To ensure adequate opportunities exist to enable a sufficient and diverse range of employment uses to exist within the District.
- J To preserve and enhance both the landscape and townscape character of Buckinghamshire and in particular, those areas of designated importance.
- K To reduce anti-social activity through the creation of safer places to live and work.
- L To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new and existing developments.
- M To reduce pollution.
- N To reduce energy consumption and waste and encourage the use of recycled and renewable resources.
- O To encourage the use of sustainable methods of transport to reduce negative effects on the environment.
- P To provide for sustainable levels of water use, supply and management.
- Q To maintain and enhance biodiversity.

3.0 Task A1: Identifying other relevant Plans, Programmes and Sustainability Objectives

- 3.1 A wide range of other plans and programmes (at international, national, regional and local level), have been scoped to establish where there are matters which may have an influence or important bearing on the Local Development Framework.
- 3.2 The policies and plans contained within the LDF will be developed in order to take account of other plans and programmes, since one of the purposes of the new system is that LDFs should “bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function”⁶. Accordingly, the LDF will need to take account of policy and guidance from organisations such as the Government and Buckinghamshire County Council, as well as reflecting local needs and requirements, for example, those that have been identified as a result of preparing the Community Plan, the Key Issues and Options Consultation, undertaken in December 2003 as a first step in the preparation of the Local Development Framework.
- 3.3 Appendix 2 provides a comprehensive outline of the current principal plans and strategies that will influence the policies in the LDF. Clearly, other new (or revised) plans and strategies will come forward from various sources in the future and will need to be taken into account. One important example is the South East Plan, which is not expected to be published by SEERA⁷ in its final form until November 2005. Appendix 2 includes only other plans and programmes *relevant* for South Bucks. Thus, several Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPG’s) have been omitted for the following reasons:
- PPG5: Simplified Planning Zones. None in South Bucks
 - PPG11: Regional Planning. Advises on the preparation of planning guidance rather than actual policies
 - PPG14: Development of Unstable Land. None known of in South Bucks
 - PPG18: Enforcing planning control. Does not contain objectives relevant to plan
 - PPG19: Outdoor Advertisement Control. Insignificant problem in South Bucks
 - PPG20: Coastal planning. No coastline in South Bucks

4.0 Task A2: Producing a Physical Characterisation of the District and Collecting Baseline Information

- 4.1 Before an assessment is undertaken to determine how well each of the various objectives and policy options perform in sustainability terms i.e. its potential social, economic and environmental effects, it is necessary to have an understanding of the state of the District today together with predictions of how this may change in the future.

⁶ PPS12 paragraph 1.8

⁷ South East England Regional Assembly

Baseline Information

- 4.2 The baseline information, collected by Buckinghamshire County Council, for inclusion in the Sustainability Appraisal is set out in Appendix 3. The data has been grouped under the headings - social, environmental and economic. However, it should be borne in mind that data can affect more than one category. For example, traffic congestion could have been put under the economic, social or environmental headings. For simplicity, however, it has been placed under only one heading.

Physical Characterisation of South Bucks District

- 4.3 South Bucks is a relatively small, principally rural District (14,157 hectares) in Buckinghamshire. Some 87% of the land in the District is designated as Green Belt. The District contains a number of settlements but has no central urban focus as such within it. South Bucks District is, however, bordered by a number of larger urban areas and this proximity tends to create strong linkages between the District and its surrounding areas. This is outlined below:
- 4.4 The southern part of the district, including one of the larger settlements (Burnham) lies immediately adjacent to Slough. The proximity means that there are quite strong linkages between the two areas, with Slough providing a major source of employment and also sub regional shopping facilities. However, the southern parts of the District also generally have higher crime levels that may be associated with the proximity to Slough. The east - west links in this area provide good transport linkages into Slough via both the bus and car, but also to areas beyond, particularly by means of the Great Western/ Thames rail line and the M4 motorway. North - south links are less pronounced, although the M25 crosses the eastern side of the District.
- 4.5 Much of the central part of the District is rural, with substantial tracts of high quality landscape throughout, including a number of nature reserves and historic parkland. The main settlements in this part of the District are largely residential in character, with only limited employment and other facilities such as local shopping and relatively poor public transport services. However, they are not too distant from the larger district centres of Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross to the north, or indeed from Slough to the south. The A355 provides the main north - south link through the centre of the District, but there are issues with this route dissecting the settlements of Farnham Common/ Farnham Royal, and the need to ensure that longer distance through traffic is reduced on the A355, and that additional longer distance through traffic is not attracted to this route.
- 4.6 The northern part of the District contains two of the larger centres in the District (Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross). Both centres provide important district centre retail facilities, as well as a number of other services and facilities, together with a number of small to medium scale office and commercial premises. Both are located close to the M40 motorway, and both also have good rail links on the Chiltern line. Whilst house prices in the District as a whole tend to be high, when compared to those for Buckinghamshire and the South East, this problem is particularly acute in the northern part of the District. The high cost of housing makes the recruitment and retention of suitably skilled workers difficult.

- 4.7 The eastern part of the District comprises the Colne Valley Regional Park. It is rural but is interspersed with a number of settlements excluded from the Green Belt. These eastern areas are those that have been most adversely affected by a long history of minerals extraction and other infrastructure development, some of it associated with the metropolis of London, located to its immediate east, and its proximity to the M25. The Colne Valley is the first area of greenness and open space as one emerges from Greater London along the M4, M40, the Great Western/ Thames and the Chiltern rail lines. In addition, there are a number of good bus services in this area. Whilst it has suffered some damage, it fulfils a critical regional and sub regional function in containing the sprawl of Greater London and providing an essential gap between London and Slough. The only large industrial estates in the District are all located in this area, many of them in one small part, thus causing local traffic problems.

5.0 Task A3: Identifying Key Issues and Broad Generic Options

- 5.1 This section sets out the key issues for South Bucks District Local Development Framework and considers broad generic options for addressing some of the key spatial elements of these issues. It is worth stressing that table 2, set out below, only includes key issues, which are considered to be central to the South Bucks Local Development Framework, and is by no means a full set of issues for the Core Strategy LDF. Since, sustainability appraisal is an iterative process, this list of issues will almost certainly continue to evolve as work on the SA and the Core Strategy DPD progresses.
- 5.2 In compiling the key issues, as set out in table 2 below, for the South Bucks District LDF account was taken of:
- Earlier experience with issues identified in other plans and programmes;
 - Analysing possible tensions or inconsistencies with other plans, programmes and sustainability objectives;
 - Analysing possible tensions or inconsistencies with baseline data and trends;
 - Consultation on the SA Framework with the four statutory agencies and other key stakeholders as well as earlier public consultation undertaken as part of the early pre-production stage of the LDF (Key Issues and Options Consultation, December 2003).

Table 2: Identifying the Key Issues for South Bucks District

Social Issues	Baseline Information	Source
<p>Making sufficient provision to meet housing requirements for the District as identified in the South East Plan; and locating that development in areas which either have local services, or which have better access to services by public transport than other areas.</p>	<p>The housing target set out in the Deposit Draft of the Structure Plan 2003 is to provide 1,500 net additional dwellings (100 dwellings per year) between 2001 and 2016. Some 87% of land in the district is within the Green Belt and brownfield land for development is limited. There may be potential for between about 940 and 1,700 dwellings in the towns and settlements excluded from the Green Belt in the period up to 2021. However, housing requirements from the South East Plan could be higher than those in the Structure Plan and in addition the South East Plan runs until 2026 (10 years longer than the Structure Plan). In the future, there is likely to be increased pressure for Green Belt to be released for housing development, particularly in the period beyond 2021 or if the South East Plan increases the housing target figures.</p> <p>South Bucks has been exceeding both national (60%) and South Bucks District's own target (85%) of new homes built on previously developed land as most new dwellings are built by intensification of land use within the non Green Belt settlements. However, there is only a finite amount of brownfield land available in the District and so this cannot continue indefinitely.</p> <p>Some settlements have a better range of services and facilities than others.</p> <p>In the Key Issues and Options consultation 61% of respondents supported the idea that higher density near town and village centres and public transport routes might be more acceptable if areas further away were given more protection. 28% disagreed.</p>	<p>Buckinghamshire County Structure Plan, South East Plan, consultation draft</p> <p>SB Housing monitoring report</p> <p>Infrastructure study -in preparation.</p> <p>Key Issues and Options consultation, summary report March 2004</p>

<p>Matching the supply of new housing with residents needs for housing. In particular to increase the supply of affordable housing and to increase the supply of 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings.</p>	<p>The overall average price for a dwelling in South Bucks is £389,775, compared with an overall average for the South East region of £205,109. Lower quartile house prices (the most relevant measure for assessing housing affordability for people on modest incomes) were also substantially higher in South Bucks than in Buckinghamshire and the South East region. The lower quartile (provisional) price in South Bucks in the 4th quarter of 2003 was £210,000. This is 35.2% higher than the County figure of £155,375 and 59.1% higher than the regional figure of £132,000.</p> <p>The South Bucks Housing Need Survey identified the need for an additional 1,770 dwellings up to 2007 i.e. 354 dwellings per annum. This is significantly above (more than three times) the current total Structure Plan housing allocation. The greatest need is for one (primarily) and two (bedroom) homes to provide starter homes for younger adults (20-29) and also to house the growing number of elderly residents in the District.</p> <p>Results from the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004 for South Bucks District relating to barriers to housing and services show that 14 out of the 40 areas are ranked in the bottom 50% nationally, including 7 areas which are in the worst 20%, the reasons for this aren't clear.</p> <p>The percentage of households on the housing register has increased by 10% from 1998 to 2004.</p> <p>The number of homeless households in priority need in temporary accommodation has increased from 19 in 1997/98 to 40 in 2004/04.</p> <p>Younger adults (20-29) are a smaller percentage of the current district population than in the South East as a whole, though they are projected to increase to 2016. The steady rise in twenties group (household formers) has implications for starter housing needs.</p>	<p>Land Registry</p> <p>South Bucks and Chiltern Housing Need Survey, 2002 and Census 2001</p> <p>Indices of Deprivation 2004</p> <p>Bucks County Council, Housing Strategy</p>
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<p>Minimising crime and the fear of crime.</p>	<p>South Bucks has the highest number of domestic burglaries and vehicle crimes in Buckinghamshire. However, the situation has improved over the 2000/01 period to 2003/04. The number of violent offences has however increased over this period. The issue is worst in the south and the east of the District.</p> <p>Results for the Indices of Deprivation 2004 for South Bucks District relating to crime show that 26 out of the 40 areas are ranked in the bottom 50% nationally, including seven areas in the worst 20%. Whilst the areas worst affected include certain areas of relatively lower average income, they also include particular areas of higher income, which are geographically closest to external urban areas.</p>	<p>BCC Best Value Performance Indicators</p> <p>Indices of Deprivation 2004</p>
<p>Meeting the needs of an ageing population; including the need for a range of housing for the elderly to remain in their local communities, and the need for health services.</p>	<p>South Bucks has a high proportion (44.85%) of the older age groups i.e. 45 years and above, when compared to the South East (40.63%) and this is projected to increase further by 2016, particularly in the over 60 age group.</p>	
<p>Meeting the needs of young people for youth facilities.</p>	<p>Some Parish Appraisals identified the need for better youth and children's facilities, clubs, meeting points and after school activities (particularly in Beaconsfield, Denham, Farnham Royal, Iver, Stoke Poges, Taplow).</p>	<p>Community Plan for South Bucks, 2003</p>
<p>Encouraging the provision of accessible services to meet local needs.</p>	<p>Gerrards Cross (one of the largest settlements) is currently without a doctors surgery and the Taplow Surgery is looking to expand its premises but is finding it difficult to find new premises within the developed area outside of the Green Belt.</p> <p>The school age population (5 to 16 years) is marginally higher in South Bucks (14.32%) than in the South East (14.02%) but this group is projected to fall steadily through to 2016. This will have implications for school places in the District.</p> <p>Clubs and organisations either own their own facilities or have to hire the local facilities available. Most of the clubs fall into the latter</p>	<p>Cultural Strategy for</p>

	<p>category. There is increased demand for indoor and outdoor space for hire. Many of the multi-purpose indoor spaces such as village halls cannot meet our clubs' needs. There is increasing pressure on these types of providers to improve their usage and income to cover increasing expenditure.</p> <p>Many of the settlements within the Green Belt lack some of the key basic services and facilities required by a person, e.g. food, access to education, employment and public transport and this therefore encourages dependency and use of the car. A background study, which is currently being prepared, is looking at this issue.</p>	<p>South Bucks District</p> <p>Infrastructure study -in preparation.</p>
Environmental Issues	Baseline Information	Source
<p>Maintaining and enhancing the Green Belt, including the restoration of damaged and contaminated land.</p>	<p>A fundamental Council Aim is to maintain and further strengthen the Green Belt.</p> <p>In the Key Issues and Options consultation 64% disagreed with the option of releasing land from the Green Belt to meet housing needs if sufficient land could not be identified from other sources, whilst 24% supported this option.</p> <p>In addition, 72% of respondents agreed that restoration of damaged land would strengthen the Green Belt.</p> <p>The protection of soil is crucial for future sustainability, since it plays a vital role in food and timber production, in the maintenance of our biodiversity, as a reservoir for water and as a buffer and filter for pollutants. In recent decades agricultural intensification, afforestation and increased pollution from industrial sources has resulted in some loss of soil function and structure in localised areas.</p>	<p>Corporate Plan, 2004</p> <p>Key Issues & Options, summary report March 2004</p> <p>Key Issues & Options, summary report March 2004</p> <p>State of the Environment Report for Buckinghamshire, 1997</p>

<p>Protecting and enhancing the quality of the District's high quality rural landscape</p>	<p>Large parts of the District's countryside are very attractive and include extensive woodlands (including Burnham Beeches), heath land, agricultural land, private parks and estates. In 2003, a national report, quoted in the 'Sunday Times', identified South Bucks as the district with the 4th highest quality of life in the country.</p> <p>In the Key Issues and Options consultation, trees and landscape were considered to be the most important features that make up the character of the District.</p> <p>Changes to the Common Agricultural Policy will result in farmers being paid for not farming their land and there is a risk that agricultural buildings will become redundant and that there will be pressure to convert them to other uses or that agricultural land will become under pressure for other uses/ development.</p>	<p>Performance Plan 2004, South Bucks</p> <p>Key Issues & Options, summary report, March 2004</p>
<p>Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity</p>	<p>There is one national nature reserve (Burnham Beeches) and four local nature reserves in the District. The District has nine designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). South Bucks has the highest percentage (79%) of SSSIs in favourable condition within Buckinghamshire, but more action is needed to achieve the national target of bringing 95% of SSSIs to a favourable condition by 2010.</p>	<p>English Nature Web Site</p>
<p>Making provision for development whilst protecting and enhancing the character and townscape of settlements</p>	<p>The number of listed buildings (Grade I and II*) on the register of historical buildings at risk of decay has increased slightly from 3 to 5 over the past four years.</p> <p>South Bucks has been exceeding both national (60%) and its own target (85%) of new homes built on previously developed land. However, there is some concern that increasing densities and infill development can lead to a loss of character.</p>	<p>English Heritage Web Site</p> <p>Corporate Plan, 2004</p>
<p>Safeguarding water and energy and protection from flooding.</p>	<p>Although there is no data available at District level on water use, statistics show that there is a problem at regional level. The South East is one of the driest parts of the country and experiences high levels of water demand. The water companies forecast that water demand will fall until 2004/05. mainly due to reductions in leakage. but will</p>	<p>South East Plan, Consultation draft</p> <p>Environment Agency</p>

	<p>increase again beyond this date due to increased consumption.</p> <p>The effects of climate change are uncertain, but are likely to be significant in the South East. Predicted effects include that annual rainfall could well increase by between zero and ten per cent by 2050 and that this would result in a relative sea level rise of six millimetres per year.</p> <p>The rivers in the District most at risk from flooding are the Thames and the Colne, although part of the Misbourne have also flooded in the past. In recent years the Environment Agency has undertaken some flood alleviation works on the River Colne and also constructed the Maidenhead Windsor and Eton Flood Alleviation Channel (now known as the Jubilee River), which passes through the District.</p> <p>Gas consumption in South Bucks has slightly decreased from 2001 to 2003. However, energy consumption per domestic consumer in South Bucks is the 2nd highest in Buckinghamshire and is also high in comparison with the South East.</p> <p>Electricity use in South Bucks is also the highest in Buckinghamshire and high when compared to the South East.</p>	<p>State of the Environment 2001, Environment Agency</p> <p>Adopted South Bucks District Local Plan, 1999</p> <p>Transco Department of Trade and Industry energy</p>
Minimising waste and then reusing or recovering it through recycling, composting or energy recovery.	The percentage tonnage of household waste recycled and composted has increased from 19% (2000/01) to 22.2% (2003/04), but the Council is not likely to meet the national target (25% by 2005)	Best Value Performance Indicator 82
Minimising pollution	Air pollution in the District is centred around the motorways. Thus the council has declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) adjacent to the M4, M25 and M40 and is in the process of producing an Air Quality Strategy, which will be limiting housing development along these corridors (light industry may not be affected).	

<p>Minimising the impact of traffic on the environment and local communities.</p>	<p>South Bucks has a highly mobile population with the highest proportion of households in England (4%) owning four or more cars. There are 160 cars per 100 households in the District, compared to the national average of 110 (88.8% of households in South Bucks own one or more cars compared to 73.2% in England).</p> <p>The number of people (including children) killed and seriously injured has been increasing over the past years from 69 in 2000 to 86 in 2003⁸.</p> <p>Dorney Lake has been selected by the London 2012 Olympic Bid Committee to be the venue for rowing and sprint canoeing events. The choice of Dorney Lake as the rowing venue will have major traffic implications in the immediate vicinity of the lake should the London bid be successful.</p> <p>There are four main industrial sites in Iver (Ridgeway Trading Estate, Bison Industrial Estate, Court Lane Industrial Area and the Bardon site) that generate heavy good vehicles (HGVs). This is causing traffic problems within the Iver area, particularly in Iver High Street.</p> <p>The annual average daily traffic flow is increasing.</p> <p>The A355 provides the main north south link through the centre of the District but there are issues with this route dissecting the settlements of Farnham Common/ Royal, and the need to ensure that longer distance through traffic is reduced on the A355.</p>	<p>2001 Census</p> <p>Buckinghamshire County Council</p> <p>Iver Industrial Areas Road Study and Local Transport Plan.</p> <p>Baseline data</p> <p>A355 Route Strategy, study commissioned by BCC and carried out by Colin Buchanan and Partners.</p>
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⁸ Around a quarter of the casualties are as a result of collisions on motorways that occur within the District.

Economic Issues	Baseline Information	Source
<p>Securing a closer match between the supply of labour and the demand for labour.</p>	<p><u>Commuting balance</u> : The District has 30,064 residents in work and 29,733 jobs. This is a near perfect balance; a net outflow of just 331 people. But only 10,688 (around 35%) both live and work in the District, which is a lower percentage than is found in districts with a major urban centre. Behind the net balance is a stronger outflow to nearby London boroughs, Slough, and along the rail lines to London; and net inflows from the most of the districts and boroughs in the surrounding ring of shire counties.</p> <p><u>Floorspace</u>: The District has more office floorspace than industrial floorspace, unlike England and Wales, Chiltern and, probably, Slough. Like these adjoining areas, the amount of recently built office floorspace (since 1981) greatly exceeds that of industrial floorspace - and vice versa for 1940-80. There is a similar comparison locally with warehousing floorspace.</p> <p><u>Skills</u>: Over 28% of the population aged 16-74 is educated to degree level or higher, (England and Wales comparison is just under 20%). The figure rises to over 40% in Gerrards Cross and Beaconsfield North. Nearly 26% of the District's employed residents are in managerial or senior positions (compared to 15% in England and Wales). Other professional, technical and administrative groups exceed the national average whilst numbers in trade, sales and services, operatives and elementary occupations are all below the national average. Similarly only 20.5% of the population aged 16-74 has no qualifications (ranges from 10% in Gerrards Cross to 30% in Denham North) compared to 29% nationally. In the Indices of Deprivation 2004, all sub-areas of the District are ranked in the national top half in the employment domain. In the education and skills domain, the picture is similar in that no sub-areas of the District fall into the worst 20% nationally, although four sub-areas fall within the bottom 50%.</p>	<p>Census 2001. SEERA Economy paper.</p> <p>ODPM website; Commercial and Industrial floorspace data</p> <p>Census 2001.</p> <p>Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004</p>

	<p><u>Commuting Distance:</u> The average distance commuted to work by District residents is 14.18km - ranging from 11.2% in Iver Heath to around 19% in Gerrards Cross (North and South). But percentages in Gerrards Cross and to a slightly lesser extent in Beaconsfield may be weighted by higher percentages using the train to central London. The above figures compare with 8.9km even in Inner London, 11.3km in Outer London, 10.0km in Slough, but 14.4km in Wycombe and over 17km in Aylesbury Vale.</p> <p><u>Commuting Distance by type of job:</u> By examination of commuting distance data in output areas containing major employment centres it is possible to construct the proposition that the greater the skill or specialism levels required the greater the typical commuting distance, and vice versa.</p> <p><u>Projection of labour force:</u> Set against Structure Plan housing provisions, and the projected ageing population, the population aged 15-64 is projected to rise slightly from 39,800 (2005) to 40,450 (2007), then to fall progressively to 37,850 by 2016.</p> <p>In summary, whilst the Buckinghamshire Economic Prospect Study suggests the greater need will be for industrial floorspace, the supply of labour would seem increasingly more likely to be that suited to office uses.</p>	<p>Census 2001</p> <p>Census 2001</p> <p>Buckinghamshire County Council projection, 2003</p> <p>Bucks Economic Prospect Study, Roger Tym & Partners, 2003.</p>
<p>The need to make further provision for employment growth (including high quality premises) needs to be balanced against the fact that some sites are unsuitable for continued employment use.</p>	<p>Assuming constrained levels of housing development, together with a policy objective of meeting expected demand from business for floorspace, then an additional 28,000m² of industrial floorspace would be needed in the period to 2016, whilst at the same time it would be possible to lose some 7,000m² of office floorspace.</p> <p>In the Kev Issues and Options consultation 54% of the respondents</p>	<p>Bucks Economic Prospect Study, Roger Tym & Partners, 2003.</p> <p>Kev Issues and Options</p>

	<p>considered that we should not plan to meet a possible increased need for industrial floorspace, whilst 30% considered that we should. Commercial companies are located mainly in business parks and campus sites within the centre of the District, and in town centre accommodation particularly in Gerrards Cross. Industrial companies concentrate in the eastern parishes of Iver and Denham.</p> <p>Some existing employment sites within settlements are bad neighbours adversely affecting traffic generation, noise and pollution; whilst others are no longer attractive or competitive for employment use, and when they are vacated they cannot be viably redeveloped for employment use because of insufficient occupier demand and property values. For these reasons it is not possible, or desirable, to safeguard every single site currently in employment use.</p> <p>In a Key Issues and Options consultation (Dec. 2003) 81% of the respondents supported the option to redevelop unsuitable employment sites for housing, whilst 10% disagreed. The two most frequently suggested sites for redevelopment were Court Lane industrial area in Iver and the Station Garage site in Taplow.</p> <p>The Bucks Economic Prospect Study identified a gap in the market for large-scale distribution space in and around Wycombe close to M40. There is also a lack of land available for purchase on which companies could erect their own buildings and there is little long term vacant floorspace available, reflecting a relative buoyant market.</p>	<p>consultation, summary report</p> <p>Bucks Economic Prospect Study, Roger Tym & Partners, 2003</p> <p>Key Issues and Options consultation, summary report</p> <p>Bucks Economic Prospect Study, Roger Tym & Partners, 2003</p>
<p>There is a lack of incubator units for new small businesses to start up and develop.</p>	<p>The ratio of VAT registered businesses per 10,000 people in South Bucks is the highest of all authorities in Buckinghamshire/ Oxfordshire, which may suggest a particularly high number of small businesses including businesses operating from home.</p> <p>The Bucks Economic Prospect Study identified a lack and a strong case</p>	<p>Bucks Economic Prospects Study, Roger Tym and Partners</p>

Scoping Report for South Bucks District - May 2005

	<p>for the provision of incubator units to encourage the birth and growth of new small businesses in the District. In the Key Issues and Options consultation 58% of the respondents considered that we should be more proactive to provide starter units for new businesses.</p>	<p>Key Issues and Options consultation, summary report</p>
<p>Providing for appropriate retail opportunities to meet local needs; to assist in safeguarding the Districts centres; and to reduce unnecessary trips to other centres.</p>	<p>Expenditure on all types of retailing is forecast to grow. If this expenditure is to be spent locally then it will be important for the main centres to retain their current role, and to enhance it where appropriate. However, the opportunities for significant additional retail provision in the centres is somewhat limited.</p> <p>In Parish Appraisals the public told us they want to sustain village shops.</p> <p>Results from the Key Issues and Options consultation (December 2003) show that the provision of sufficient parking in town centres was considered to be important if centres were still to remain attractive to shoppers.</p>	<p>Nathaniel Lichfield, Retail study, 2003</p> <p>Community Plan for South Bucks, 2003</p> <p>Key Issues & Options, summary report March 2004</p>

Broad Generic Options

- 5.3 As a result of the work undertaken to date, a number of broad generic options are emerging for the Core Strategy DPD for South Bucks District. However, if there are other options which we have not included, but which you consider that we should include, then we would be grateful if you would set out what you consider those other options should be. As a result of the consultation on this Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report we will consider whether other options should also be included for appraising during Stage B of the SA process (see Appendix 1).
- 5.4 Ultimately the Council will need to decide what its preferred option is. But before that can be done the Council needs to set out all of the main possible options, and then to appraise those options - this appraisal process will assist the Council in determining what its preferred option is. However, at this current point in time the Council is only seeking to establish whether there are any other options that should be considered. At this stage the Council has made no decisions as to what its preferred option might be.
- 5.5 In considering these options it is worth stressing that the options aren't always mutually exclusive. For example, it could be that in some instances a package of measures from these options could be selected as the 'preferred option'. For example, it could be that overall housing numbers are met by a combination of two of the options below, say by dispersing the growth across all settlements whilst at the same time allowing limited Greenfield expansion. For simplicity, however, the various possibilities are set out as separate options.
- 5.6 The emerging broad generic options for South Bucks District are summarised below: -

Housing

Meeting the overall housing numbers

- 5.7 The Council will be required to make provision for a certain number of new dwellings in the period to 2021. The deposited Structure Plan⁹ requires some 100 dwellings per annum to be built in the District up to 2016. New requirements will be set out in the South East Plan later this year, with those requirements covering the period to 2026. Possible options for meeting these requirements are: -

- Option 1 Disperse the housing growth across all settlements excluded from the Green Belt¹⁰.

⁹ In September 2003 the County Council published a draft Replacement Structure Plan. Whilst work on this Plan has now been abandoned due to the implications of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the District Council will still have regard to the draft Plan and the technical work that underpins it as it provides a more up to date assessment and proposals than the Adopted Structure Plan.

¹⁰ Settlements excluded from the Green Belt are Beaconsfield, Burnham, Denham Green, Farnham Common, Farnham Royal, Gerrards Cross, Iver, Iver Heath, New Denham and Willowbank, Richings Park and Stoke Poges.

- Option 2 Prioritise the larger settlements excluded from the Green Belt, as they are likely to be the most 'sustainable' locations for housing growth.
- Option 3 Disperse the housing growth across all settlements, including those excluded from the Green Belt, and some settlements which are in the Green Belt¹¹.
- Option 4 Allow limited release of the Green Belt adjacent to the settlements excluded from the Green Belt where there is sufficient public transport accessibility.
- Option 5 Allow development on a limited number of brownfield or damaged land sites in the Green Belt where there is sufficient public transport accessibility and some limited level of local facilities. Such sites would not be adjacent to the settlements excluded from the Green Belt.
- Option 6 Allow development on other types of Green Belt sites which do not fall within any of the above options but which have been or are likely to be suggested by developers or landowners¹².

Making Efficient Use of Land

5.8 Government policy is that local authorities should ensure that land is used efficiently in order to minimise the need for development on greenfield sites. Policy guidance is that developments which make inefficient use of land (below 30 dwellings per hectare) should be avoided; development which makes more efficient use of land (between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare) should be encouraged; and greater intensity of development should be encouraged at places with good public transport accessibility such as town district and local centres or around locations along good quality public transport routes. Some possible options for making efficient use of land in South Bucks are: -

- Option 1 Allow higher density and/or higher storey development in areas close to the District or Local centres¹³ and/ or with good public transport.

¹¹ The settlements which are in the Green Belt include Denham (south of Denham old village), Dorney Reach, George Green, Hedgerley Hill, Higher Denham, Taplow Riverside, Tatling end, Wexham (Church Lane/Wexham Park Lane area), Wexham Street, and Wood Lane Close area in Iver

¹² These would include land fragmented by a motorway; land which might be fragmented by a possible future road proposal; land adjoining railway stations; farmland, farm buildings or nurseries; woodland; land in the Green belt attached to specific residential properties; poor or outworn industrial sites in the Green Belt; campus grounds of businesses in the Green Belt; public utility sites in the Green Belt.

¹³ District Centres are currently defined as Beaconsfield (New Town) and Gerrards Cross, whilst Local Centres are currently Beaconsfield Old Town, Burnham, Farnham Common and Iver.

- Option 2 Promote mixed use development within the town centres. For example, allowing housing with office, retail or other such uses.
- Option 3 Allow higher density and/or higher storey development in those settlements which have the most services and facilities.

Building more smaller dwellings i.e. one and two bedroom accommodation

5.9 The 2002 Housing Needs Survey¹⁴ for South Bucks District identified the main need for housing as being for dwellings with one and two bedrooms. Possible options for increasing the number of small (one and two bedroom) dwellings in South Bucks are: -

- Option 1 Set explicit requirements for new one and two bedroom properties, possibly for all sites, or for all sites in certain types of locations.
- Option 2 Relax planning policies on conversions and thus allow more subdivision of houses to maisonettes or apartments.

Achieving an increased provision of affordable housing

5.10 The 2002 Housing Needs Survey¹⁵ for South Bucks District identified a need for an additional circa 350 affordable dwellings to be built per year for each year in the 2002 - 2007 period. The Council has accepted that it is not able to meet a substantial amount of this total affordable housing needs, since the magnitude of affordable housing need is greater than the total housing allocation (100 dwellings per year) for the District.

5.11 The adopted South Bucks District Local Plan, March 1999, includes an affordable housing policy, which requires that where fifteen or more dwellings are being built on a site that, providing that the site is suitable, we will require that at least 20% of the accommodation is affordable. This has provided some affordable housing, but if more is to be provided then new policy options are needed. Options include: -

- Option 1 Lowering the threshold from 15 to say 10 dwellings, so that affordable housing would need to be provided on a greater number of sites than at present.
- Option 2 Also having a low threshold for small sites (perhaps as small as 0.3 hectare) so that sites larger than this would also need to provide affordable housing even if they were suitable for less than 10 dwellings.

¹⁴ Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils 2002 Housing Need Survey, Fordham Research, March 2003

¹⁵ Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils 2002 Housing Need Survey, Fordham Research, March 2003

- Option 3 In small settlements with a population less than 3,000, setting the threshold even lower, perhaps as low as 2 dwellings, so that almost all new sites would need to provide some affordable housing.
- Option 4 Seeking more than 20% of the accommodation to be affordable, possibly as high as 40 - 50% to be affordable.
- Option 5 Requiring higher housing densities so that a greater number of sites fall within the dwelling thresholds set out above.
- Option 6 Allowing the redevelopment of some employment sites or sites in community use wholly or mostly for affordable housing.
- Option 7 Allowing the development of some green space areas within the towns and villages for wholly or mostly affordable housing.
- Option 8 Adopt a Rural Exception Policy¹⁶ to meet local needs for affordable housing as an exception to existing policy. Such a policy might lead to the identification of specific sites for affordable housing, but might also allow other sites subsequently identified to be developed as well
- Option 9 In exceptional circumstances accept commuted payment from the developer which the Council could ensure was thus used to provide affordable housing on another more suitable site.

Employment

5.12 We need to ensure that we have a dynamic local economy that provides for needs and is balanced with the number of workers available to fill jobs. It also needs to be recognised that some employment land is not best suited to continued employment use because it is poorly located or its use has a serious adverse impact on local residents. If new replacement or additional employment sites were required this would almost certainly involve Green Belt land. It is currently expected that in the period to 2016 provision would need to be made for an additional 28,000 square metres of industrial floorspace¹⁷, although this could be partly offset by losing some 8,000 square metres of office floorspace. Broad policy options for employment have been identified as: -

- Option 1 Continue to resist the establishment of new sites for employment development in the Green Belt.
- Option 2 Continue to protect all existing employment sites from other types of development.

¹⁶ This policy allows affordable housing to be built in areas where normally you wouldn't allow other housing development to take place because of policy restrictions.

¹⁷ Bucks Economic Prospects Study, Roger Tym and Partners.

- Option 3 Allow some limited loss of existing employment premises where the site is no longer suitable for employment use, either because of its impact in creating problems for nearby housing or because the site is not in a location attractive to employment uses.
- Option 4 Relax existing Green Belt policy so as to allow some new employment land to be developed for industrial and warehousing units and also for starter units for small businesses or to meet the needs of existing businesses.

Retailing

5.13 Expenditure on all types of retailing is expected to grow, and if this is to be spent locally then it will be important for the main centres to retain their current role and to enhance them where appropriate¹⁸. However, the opportunities for significant additional retail provision in the centres is somewhat limited. Broad options for retailing policy include: -

- Option 1 Support the existing retail hierarchy and allow some limited development in centres, but acknowledging that a significant amount of the retail spending therefore leaves the District to larger centres including Wycombe, Slough and Uxbridge.
- Option 2 Revise current policy in order to seek to retain as much trade as possible within South Bucks by allowing increases in retail provision within the District. This would be likely to involve new retailing being provided either on land outside of but adjacent to existing centres, or on the edge of settlements or elsewhere in the Green Belt.

Landscape Protection

- 5.14 Large areas of the District have a landscape, which is of a very high quality, and it will be essential to ensure continued protection of that, in the light of pressures on and changes affecting the countryside. There are other areas where it is also important to bring about some enhancement in the landscape.
- 5.15 Existing policies relate to protecting a hierarchy of local landscape designations. For example, the South Bucks District Local Plan currently protects the Chilterns Area of Natural Beauty, County designated Areas of Attractive Landscape and also District designated, Local Landscape Areas for their landscape quality. Guidance available from the Government suggests replacing these designations by policies aimed at protecting the landscape character as a whole and not just the designated areas but allows local designations to be retained if based on formal and robust assessments of their qualities.

- Option 1 Replace all landscape designations by a character assessment policy.

¹⁸ Nathaniel Lichfield, Retail Study 2003

- Option 2 Retain some or all designated areas based on the adopted structure or local plan descriptions and assessments or reassessments.

6.0 Task A4: Developing the SA Framework

- 6.1 The Sustainability Framework consists of a set of draft sustainability objectives and indicators. Its purpose is to assess how the Local Development Framework objectives and the various policy options, considered in drawing up the Core Strategy DPD, perform in sustainability terms.
- 6.2 The key issues for South Bucks District, identified in the previous section, were used as a basis for drawing up the Sustainability Appraisal objectives and indicators. Account was also taken of existing sustainability objectives from various documents and, in particular those contained in the Draft Strategic Environmental Appraisal Guide¹⁹, the Draft Sustainability Appraisal Guide²⁰ and also the Sustainability Appraisal of the Integrated Regional Development Framework 2004 (IRF)²¹.
- 6.3 Officers from the district council's in Buckinghamshire and the County Council had a number of meetings to try and come up with a 'core set' of objectives and indicators for Buckinghamshire. In carrying out this work it was recognised that some districts within the County might wish to include other objectives and indicators to address their particular local circumstances or indeed to exclude certain objectives and indicators from their SA frameworks. However, it was considered that because of the overlap between issues facing the districts that there was value to be had in working together jointly.
- 6.4 It is clear from the SA Guidance that sustainability objectives and indicators should be developed with input from key stakeholders. Consequently once a first draft of the SA Framework was available it was sent out in December 2004 for consultation with key stakeholders (see Appendix 4) for a period of just over six weeks.
- 6.5 Table 3 shows the SA objectives and indicators for South Bucks District grouped around social, environmental and economic headings. A large number of indicators are currently included in table 3. Data is still, in some cases, being collected and consequently the indicators may be altered to reflect the availability of data.
- 6.6 It is not anticipated that the final version of the Sustainability Appraisal Report will contain as many indicators as are currently contained within Table 3. This number of indicators would not be manageable in terms of monitoring and consequently it would be useful if respondents could give an

¹⁹ A Draft Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, ODPM, 2004

²⁰ Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks: Consultation Paper, ODPM, September 2004.

²¹ Sustainability Appraisal of the South East Plan: Draft Scoping Report, ERM, October 2004.

indication as to which of the indicators are considered to be the most useful for each of the objectives.

Table3: Shows the Sustainability Appraisal objectives and indicators for South Bucks District

Social Objectives and Indicators	
1. To provide residents of South Bucks with the opportunity to live in a decent home	1. Social housing failing decent home standard or private homes judged unfit. (N.B. Indicator for unfit private homes will change).
	2. Housing completions, allocations and permissions.
	3. Number of empty properties per annum.
	4. House price/earnings affordability ratio.
	5. New homes built which are affordable housing.
	6. Number of households on the housing register.
	7. Amount of key worker housing provided per annum as a percentage of the total number of key workers identified within the District.
	8. Number of homeless households.
2. To reduce anti-social activity, including crime and the fear of crime, through the creation of safer places to live and work.	1. Recorded crimes per 1,000 population for domestic burglaries, violent offences and vehicle crimes.
	2. Police survey results on the Fear of Crime.
	3. Number of fatal and serious road accident occurring in a particular year.
3. To improve accessibility to essential services and facilities to provide opportunities to obtain good access to high quality health, education, and recreation and other community facilities and services.	Percentage of new residential properties built which are within a distance of 500 metres of key local services including: Post Office, food shop, GP and a primary school.

Environmental Objectives and Indicators	
4. To encourage the use of sustainable and integrated methods of transport to reduce negative effects on the environment	1. Means of transport to work (Annual survey)
	2. Percentage of children travelling to (a) primary school (b) secondary school by different modes of transport
	3. Annual average flow (per 1,000 km) of traffic on the principal roads.
5. To provide for sustainable levels of water use, supply and management.	1. Water leakage rate from mains and customer pipes
	2. Amount of water used and availability of future supplies.
	3. The design of water efficiency measures in the design and construction of new build property.
	4. The ability of the Statutory Sewerage Indicator to implement new sewerage infrastructure and treat increased waste water flows from new development in the context of the resulting impact on the environment.
6. To maintain and enhance biodiversity	1. Achievements of Buckinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan targets
	2. Condition and area (hectares) of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).
	3 Area of the District (hectares) covered by Ancient Woodland.
7. To conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape character of South Bucks and in particular, those areas of designated importance.	1. Percentage of the district covered by a landscape character assessment.
	2. Area of the District (hectares) falling within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
	3. Area of the District (hectares) covered by Local Landscape Areas and Areas of Attractive Landscape designations.
	4. Area under agreement (hectares) under the Environmentally Sensitive Area and Countryside Stewardship agri-environment schemes
	5. Hectares of designated green space or recreational open space developed per annum.
8. To conserve and enhance the historic environment.	1. Numbers of buildings of Grade I and II* at risk of decay.
	2. Loss or damage to scheduled ancient monuments (number) & historic parks and gardens (hectares)
	3. Number of Conservation Area reviews completed and number of new areas added per annum.

	4. Percentage of planning applications with an archaeological dimension. (This indicator is likely to change as it is currently under discussion).
9. To reduce contributions to climate change through: a) Sustainable building practices b) Maximising the potential for renewable energy and energy conservation.	1. Take up of grants for energy saving improvements.
	2. Number of new buildings achieving either the SAP or BREEAM rating for energy efficiency.
	3. Energy use per household (gas and electricity)
	4. Electricity installed from renewable resources and Combined Heat and Power.
	5. Area of land being actively managed for short rotation coppice for use as a bio-fuel.
10. Minimise waste and then re-use or recover it through recycling, composting or energy recovery.	1. Percentage of the tonnage of household waste arising which have been a) recycled b) composted c) used to recover heat, power and other energy sources d) land filled in a particular year.
	2. Percentage of construction and demolition waste going to landfill
	3. Amount of hazardous waste produced per annum.
	4. Amount of secondary/ recycled aggregates used compared with virgin aggregates
11. To conserve soil resources & quality	1. Loss of best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1,2 and 3a) to development.
12. To improve the efficiency of land use through the re-use of existing buildings and developing on previously developed land (PDL).	1. Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land (PDL).
	2. Density of 1. dwellings completed 2. New dwelling permissions granted in a particular monitoring year. ²²
	3. Vacant private homes returned to occupation or demolished.
13. To minimise the risk of flooding in relation to both new and existing development including existing infrastructure.	1. Number of properties affected by fluvial ²³ flood events
	2. Frequency of fluvial flood events
	3. Amount of new development in the floodplain. (Number of dwellings and amount of new non-residential floorspace granted permission which is contrary to Environment Agency advice).
	4. New development with sustainable drainage installed

²² The monitoring year runs from 1st April to 31st March.

²³ A fluvial flood is one which occurs as a result of a river overflowing its banks.

	5. Number of incidences of blocked or overflowing drains.
14. To reduce pollution of the air, water and soil and also combat sources of noise and light pollution.	1. Passive diffusion tube data suggesting an exceedence of the UK Annual Mean Objective for nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂).
	2. Area covered by Air Quality Management Areas (hectares).
	3. Percentage of the length of the rivers of Good or Fair chemical and biological water quality
	4. Number of incidents of major and significant water pollution occurring in a particular year.
	5. Quality and quantity of groundwater
	6. Area (hectares) of contaminated land which is decontaminated.
	7. Public concern over noise (Number of noise complaints received by category).
Economic Objectives and Indicators	
15. To encourage economic growth and competitiveness, whilst achieving a broad balance in the distribution and growth of housing, population & employment.	1. Net change in the total of VAT registered businesses in the District.
	2. Out commuting levels from the District compared to in commuting levels.
	3. Amount of new employment floorspace granted permission/ completed.
16. To encourage a diverse economy which is focused on higher value added, lower impact activities	1. Number and proportion of employees in knowledge based sectors.
	2. Diversity of economic sectors.
17. To develop and maintain a skilled workforce to support long-term competitiveness of the District	1. Percentage of 15 year old pupils in schools maintained by the local education authority achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* - C or equivalent.
	2. Percentage of population qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 or equivalent.
	3. Percentage of adults with no qualifications.
	4. Proportion of people of working age who are unemployed.
	5. Proportion of people of working age out of work for more than a year.

- 6.7 Table 3 (above) sets out the seventeen SA objectives currently being proposed for inclusion in the South Bucks SA Framework. The draft SA guidance suggests that it may be useful to test the internal compatibility of the SA objectives so as to identify any tensions that exist between objectives that cannot be resolved. The compatibility assessment will enable decision makers to become aware of these tensions prior to reaching their conclusions and to consequently consider possible means of mitigation.
- 6.8 Table 4 below sets out a compatibility assessment for the seventeen South Bucks District Sustainability Appraisal Objectives.

Table 4: Comparing SA Objectives for Internal Compatibility

1																	
2																	
3																	
4																	
5	1																
6	2																
7	3																
8	4																
9								14	16								
10																	
11	5																
12			8	10			3	17									
13	6		9														
14													10				
15	7			11	13	2	15					5			13		
16				12			15										
17																	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17

	Compatible
	Possibly incompatible

- 6.9 Table 4 shows where the SA objectives might not be entirely compatible, but that is not to say that they are definitely incompatible. The decision as to whether or not the two are incompatible will depend on the nature and extent of the solution. For example, providing everyone living in South Bucks with the opportunity to live in a decent home (SA Objective 1) may only be incompatible with minimising the risk of flooding in relation to both new and existing development including existing infrastructure (SA objective 13) if it required development in areas liable to flood. Appendix 5 to this report sets out the possible reasons for the SA objectives being potentially incompatible. However, it is clear from the reasons given in Appendix 5 that the SA objectives will not always necessarily be incompatible.

7.0 Task A5: Testing the LDF Objectives against the SA Framework

7.1 The objectives of the Local Development Framework (LDF) will set out what the plan is aiming to achieve in spatial planning terms. It is important that the objectives of the LDF are in accordance with sustainability principles. In order to ensure that this is the case, the LDF objectives were tested for compatibility with the SA objectives (see Table 5 below).

Table 5: Testing the Plan Objectives against the SA Framework

		<i>Sustainability Appraisal Objectives</i>																
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Local Development Framework Objectives	A		√	√	√					√			X	X	√	√		
	B			√														
	C	√	√			X	X	X	X			X	X	X				√
	D			X	X	√		X	X			√	√	√				
	E	X	√	X			√	√	√			√	√	√		X		
	F	√	√				X	X				X	√			X		√
	G	√	√										√	√			√	√
	H	X				√	√	√				√	√	√	√	X	X	
	I	X		√	√							√	√		X	√	√	√
	J	X				√	√	√	√	X	√	√	X		√	X	X	
	K	√	√	√									√					√
	L	X		X	√					√		√	√	√	√	√		
	M			√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	√	X	√	
	N				√					√	√	√	√		√	X	√	
	O			√	√		√		√	√			X		√	X	X	
	P	X				√				√			√		√	X		
	Q	X			√	√	√	√		√	√	√	X		√	X		

Key

√	Positive Compatible
X	Possible Conflict
	Neutral

7.2 Table 5 tests the compatibility of the Local Development Framework objectives (see para. 7.1 above) with the SA objectives. As with Table 4 above, the fact that a possible conflict exists between the two objectives does not necessarily mean that they are incompatible. As was explained above, it will depend on the nature and extent of the solution as to whether or not the two are compatible. The possible reasons for the conflict between the two sets of objectives are set out in Appendix 6 to this report.

8.0 What next?

8.1 Accompanying this report is a questionnaire, which seeks your views on the contents of this report. Please complete the questionnaire and return it to Peter Beckford, Head of Planning Policy, South Bucks District Council, Council Offices, Capswood, Oxford Road, Denham, UB9 4LH by **Friday 10th June 2005**.

9.0 Future Consultations

Date	SA/SEA Output
December - January 2004/05	SA Framework Consultation - statutory bodies and key stakeholders (see Appendix 4).
May 2005	Scoping Report - consult with relevant authorities, the public and other key stakeholders.
January/ February 2006	Initial SA Report - issues and options Consult public on emerging options.
October/ November 2006	Final Sustainability Report Full public participation
May 2008	Test of soundness of the Final SA Report - Examination
November 2008	Publish Sustainability Report

Glossary and Abbreviations

Glossary

AALs: Areas of Attractive Landscape. Areas picked out by the County Council as being of countywide importance.

AONB: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 of their outstanding scenic beauty. Their primary purpose is to conserve and enhance their natural beauty including flora and fauna.

AQMA : Air Quality Management Area. If a certain area fails to meet government specified standards for air quality then a local authority can set up an Air Quality Management Area. The idea of these is to try and improve the air quality standards within these areas by various means.

Biodiversity: The number of different plant and animal species, including variants within each species, in an ecosystem. The variety of biological life.

BREEAM: Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method is a voluntary rating system for environmentally friendly design developed by the Government's Building Research Establishment. This includes within it an assessment of the CO₂ emissions from the building once in use.

CA: Conservation Areas designated by Local Authorities. Areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Core strategy: set out the long-term spatial vision for the local planning authority area, the spatial objectives and strategic policies to deliver that vision. The Core Strategy will have the status of a Development Plan Document.

DPD: Development plan documents. Spatial planning documents that are subject to independent examination, and together with the relevant Regional Spatial Strategy, will form the development plan for a local authority area.

HECA: Home Energy Conservation Act. The Council provides information, advice and grants or discounts for a range of improvements to make your home more energy efficient.

LLAs: Local Landscape Areas. Areas picked out by District Council's as having landscapes of importance locally.

LDD: Local Development Document is the collective term for Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and the Statement of Community Involvement.

LDF: Local Development Framework is the name for the portfolio of Local Development Documents. It consists of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents, a Statement of Community Involvement, the Local Development Scheme and Annual Monitoring Reports. Together these documents will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy

for a local authority area and may also include local development orders and simplified planning zones.

LDS: Local development scheme sets out the programme for preparing Local Developments. All authorities must submit a Scheme to the Secretary of State for approval within six months of commencement of the Act.

PDL: Previously-developed land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition covers the curtilage of the development. Please note that the definition excludes agricultural or forestry buildings and land in built up areas which has not been developed previously such as parks, recreation grounds and allotments. For a full definition of PDL see Annex C of Planning Policy Guidance note 3: Housing (2000).

PPG: Planning Policy Guidance notes set out the Government's policies on different aspects of planning.

PPS: Planning Policy Statement. Set out the Government's national policies for different aspects of land use planning in England.

RAMSAR Sites: Internationally important wetland sites adopted from the Convention of Wetlands of International Importance especially as water flow habitats (1971) and ratified by the UK government in 1976.

SA: Sustainability appraisal is a tool for appraising policies to ensure they reflect sustainable development objectives (i.e. social, environmental and economic factors).

SAM: Scheduled Ancient Monument. Nationally important sites and monuments are given legal protection by being placed on a list, or 'schedule'.

SEA: Sustainable Environmental Assessment. Came into force in 2004 as a result of a European Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

SPD: Supplementary plan documents provide supplementary information in respect of the policies in Development Plan Documents.

UCS: Urban Capacity Study. Local Authorities have to undertake urban housing capacity studies, which evaluate the capacity of their area and underpin the process of planning for housing.

Abbreviations

BCC	Buckinghamshire County Council
CHP	Combined Heat and Power
dph	Dwellings per hectare
E&W	England and Wales
GB	Green Belt
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
IMD	Indices of Multiple Deprivation
IRF	Integrated Regional Framework
LTP	Local Transport Plan
LPA	Local Planning Authority
RPG	Regional Planning Guidance
MPG	Mineral Planning Guidance
N&S	North and South
NNR	National Nature Reserve
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SB	South Bucks
SBDC	South Bucks District Council
SE	South East
SEEDA	South East England Development Agency
SEERA	South East England Regional Assembly
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TC	Town Centre
UCS	Urban Capacity Study

For more information please contact
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