



**NEWARK &  
SHERWOOD**  
*DISTRICT COUNCIL*

## **Newark & Sherwood Local Development Framework**

### **Draft Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

### **SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL SCREENING REPORT**

**June 2014**

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## **Sustainability Appraisal Screening Report**

### **Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings Supplementary Planning Document**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The District Council has produced a draft Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to supplement the policies within the Newark and Sherwood Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 1.2 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a tool that is used to improve the sustainability of LDF documents. It uses a range of sustainability objectives and indicators to test whether the plans, policies and proposals can deliver sustainable development. SA can be viewed as a yardstick against which the social, economic and environmental effects of the plan can be tested. Integrated into the SA are the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive<sup>1</sup>. However, the SA covers wider social and economic effects of plans, as well as the more environmentally-focused considerations in the SEA Directive.
- 1.3 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required that all Local Development Documents, including DPDs (now local plans) and SPDs be subject to SA prior to publication. Alterations to Section 19(5) of the 2004 Act under the Planning Act 2008 removed the requirement for local authorities to produce an SA for SPDs. The rationale behind this is that SPDs do not contain any new policies, but provide supplementary guidance relating to policies set out in overarching local plans that have been subject to SA.
- 1.4 A SPD may, however, occasionally be found likely to give rise to significant effects which have not been formally assessed in the context of a higher-level planning document. Therefore, local authorities need to screen their SPDs to ensure that legal requirements for SA are met where there are impacts that have not been covered in the appraisal of the parent plan or where an assessment is required by the SEA Directive.
- 1.5 The District Council does not believe that a SA/SEA is likely to be required for the purpose of the draft Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings SPD as outlined in this report and sets out the assessment on which the Council's screening opinion is based.

<sup>1</sup> European Directive 2001/42/EC transposed into United Kingdom law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

#### **2. Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings SPD**

- 2.1 The draft Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings SPD will replace the existing Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings SPD which was adopted in October 2005, and should be read alongside other LDF documents, particularly the Core Strategy

Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Allocations & Development Management DPD. The primary purpose of the new SPD is to set out what is required from applicants when applying for permission to convert traditional rural buildings and the issues that will be taken into account when considering such applications.

- 2.2 The SPD provides guidance on the interpretation and implementation of adopted LDF policies. From the Core Strategy, Spatial Policy 3 'Rural Areas' is of particular relevance, and Core Policy 7 'Tourism Development' as well as Core Policy 9 'Sustainable Design' are also referred to. From the Allocations and Development Management DPD, Policy DM8 'Development in the Open Countryside' is the key enabling policy for the SPD, and Policy DM5 'Design', Policy DM6 'Householder Development', Policy DM9 'Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment' and Policy DM 12 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development' are also relevant to the SPD.

### **3. Strategic Environmental Assessment**

- 3.1 Firstly, the screening process ascertains whether the draft Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings SPD gives rise to significant environmental effects, using the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC and Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 3.2 Paragraph 10 of the SEA Directive only requires SEA for plans which 'determine the use of small areas at a local level' or, which are 'minor modifications' to plans, when these are determined to be likely to cause significant environmental effects. Therefore the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects as listed in SEA Directive 2001/42/EC Annex II and the Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 have been reviewed to determine whether the exception applies to the draft Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings SPD.
- 3.3 Appendix 1 sets out the assessment of the contents of the draft Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings SPD against the SEA criteria. The results of the assessment clearly demonstrate that the SPD should not be subject to a SEA. The SPD merely provides further guidance on existing policies from LDF documents which have already been subject to SEA.

### **4. Sustainability Appraisal**

- 4.1 Government guidance (Office of Deputy Prime Minister - Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents (2005)) suggests that where the authority has made a determination that the plan is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects (and is therefore exempt from the SEA directive) it must consider whether there are likely to be any significant economic or social effects.

- 4.2 Secondly, the screening process therefore considers whether the draft Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings SPD gives rise to significant social and economic effects. If these have been formally assessed in the context of the higher-level policies in local plans, it is unlikely that significant social and economic effects arise from the draft Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings SPD.
- 4.3 The Core Strategy DPD and the Allocations & Development Management DPD were appraised during their preparation and the appraisal results were reported in Sustainability Appraisal Reports. The SAs for those plans assessed their policies against a range of social, economic and environmental ‘sustainability objectives’ using a range of indicators to consider the contribution that each policy makes towards the achievement of each sustainability objective.
- 4.4 The SPD’s key enabling policies from the LDF are Spatial Policy 3 ‘Rural Areas’ and Policy DM8 ‘Development in the Open Countryside’. The results of the Appraisals for Spatial Policy 3 and Policy DM8 are summarised below. The social and economic effects of the LDF policies that the draft SPD draws from primarily have been considered against the sustainability objectives of the Core Strategy and Allocations & Development Management DPD Sustainability Appraisals.

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
Spatial Policy 3 – Rural Areas	This Policy would allow for limited development and growth in rural communities which helps to meet the broad social sustainability objectives. However, this could lead to some limited negative impacts on the environmental sustainability objectives and lead to a minor increase in car borne traffic. It is compatible with Spatial Policy 2 which seeks to concentrate most development into the major centres in the District.
Policy DM8 – Development in the Open Countryside	This policy was assessed against the 14 Sustainability Objectives set out in Appendix 2. The assessment shows that the policy contributes positively overall to the Objectives. For nine of them, the assessment was that the policy supports the objective, but the beneficial impact may be minor. For five of them, the policy had no impact or the effect was neutral. Policy DM8 is clearly in line with the priorities that underlie the Objectives.

## **Conclusion**

- 5.1 The draft Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings SPD does not determine the use of land or constitute a minor modification to a plan. Based on the assessment in Appendix 1, it is demonstrated that the draft SPD does not give rise to significant environmental effects.
- 5.2 The draft Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings SPD does not give rise to significant social and economic effects. Based on the review in Appendix 2, it is demonstrated

that social and economic effects that are likely to arise from the draft SPD have been formally assessed in the context of the Core Strategy and the Allocations and Development Management DPD, and no significant environmental effects have been identified that have not already been mitigated.

## Appendix 1

<b>Schedule 1 Criteria</b>	
<b>The characteristics of the Draft Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings SPD having regard to</b>	
(1a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	The SPD does not introduce new policy, but rather provides guidance on the interpretation and implementation of existing LDF policies. These policies are set out in the Core Strategy and the Allocations & Development Management DPDs, both of which have been subject to Sustainability Appraisals (including SEA assessment). It is not the SPD but rather the existing LDF policies, as well as national policies and regulations, which set the framework for projects and other activities.
(1b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	The SPD will provide detailed guidance for the conversion of traditional rural buildings in accordance with local and national policies and regulations. It is influenced by other higher tier plans rather than influencing other plans itself.
(1c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	<p>The SPD has relevance to the integration of environmental considerations and the promotion of sustainable development in that it promotes high standards of design.</p> <p>Sustainable development can be viewed as having three aspects: environmental, social and economic. The promotion of good design within the District could be seen as contributing to all three of these aspects.</p> <p>The purpose of the SPD, however, is to provide additional guidance on the policies within the Council's Core</p>

	Strategy and Allocations & Development Management DPDs. District policies aimed at addressing environmental matters, in particular those aimed at promoting sustainable development, are set out within these documents. The SPD provides additional guidance on the application of these policies, but the requirement for integrating environmental considerations is set in the LDF.
(1d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	The SPD itself only supplements adopted policy and does not introduce new policy. Policies seeking to address environmental problems within the District are set out in the Core Strategy and Allocations and Development Management DPD. There are no environmental problems that are specifically relevant to the SPD only.
(1e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The draft SPD is limited in its scope to providing guidance on the conversion of traditional rural buildings, in the light of existing policies.
<b>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular to</b>	
(2a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	The draft SPD provides guidance on the conversion of rural buildings, and it is probable that such a conversion will be proposed during the time that the document remains relevant. The consideration of frequency and duration is of little relevance. Many developments can be restored to their previous condition or redesigned, so the effects if any of the guidance within the SPD are likely to be reversible.
(2b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	The cumulative effects of the SPD, if any, should be to encourage good design in the conversion of traditional rural buildings within the District.
(2c) the trans-boundary nature of the effects;	The effects of the SPD are likely to be limited to the District.
(2d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	The guidance contained within the SPD presents no risks to human health or the environment. The guidance may also make a small contribution to

	<p>improving the environment by promoting good design and by referring to good practice guidance on the protection of species.</p>
<p>(2e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);</p>	<p>The population of the District is approximately 115,000 and its area is around 65,181 hectares. The SPD provides guidance on existing policies rather than introducing policy, so any effects of the SPD could be seen as being effects of the wider LDF.</p>
<p>(2f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to—  (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;  (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or  (iii) intensive land-use; and</p>	<p>The District is in places both valuable and vulnerable due to special natural characteristics, cultural heritage or a combination of the two. The District includes the Birklands &amp; Bilhaugh Special Area of Conservation, the Sherwood Forest National Nature Reserve, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites. The District also contains heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and registered historic parks and gardens. The guidance contained within the SPD is likely to make a positive contribution to the maintenance and enhancement of special natural characteristics and cultural heritage.</p> <p>The guidance within the SPD is unlikely to have any relevance to issues around exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values. Therefore there is no area likely to be affected by the guidance within the SPD that is valuable or vulnerable for these reasons. Similarly, the guidance within the SPD is unlikely to have any relevance to issues around intensive land use so there is no area likely to be affected by the guidance within the SPD that is valuable or vulnerable for this reason.</p>

(2g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or protection status	The SPD only supplements and provides additional guidance on the policies contained in the Core Strategy and Allocations and Development Management DPDs which have been subjected to Sustainability Appraisals. If the guidance within the SPD has any effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or protection status, they are likely to be moderately beneficial in that the promotion of good design may contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of these areas.
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## Appendix 2

### Sustainability Appraisals of relevant Core Strategy and Allocations and Development Management DPD policies:

#### Key performance:

- +++ Strong and significant beneficial impact
- ++ Potentially significant beneficial impact
- + Supports objective, but beneficial impact may be minor
- 0 Policy has no impact or effect is neutral
- ? Uncertain or insufficient information on which to base the assessment at this stage
- Conflicts with objective and may have adverse impacts
- – Potentially significant adverse impact
- – – Strong and significant adverse impact

SA Objective:
1. To ensure that the housing stock meets the housing needs of the District
2. To improve health and reduce health inequalities
3. To provide better opportunities for people to value and enjoy the District's heritage
4. To improve community safety, reduce crime and the fear of crime
5. To promote and support the development and growth of social capital across the District
6. To increase biodiversity levels across the District
7. To protect and enhance the rich diversity of the natural, cultural and built environmental and archaeological assets of the District
8. To manage prudently the natural resources of the District including water, air quality, soils and minerals
9. To minimise waste and increase the re-use and recycling of waste materials
10. To minimise energy usage and to develop the District's renewable energy resource,

reducing dependency on non-renewable sources
11. To make efficient use of the existing transport infrastructure, help reduce the need to travel by car, improve accessibility to jobs and services for all and to ensure that all journeys are undertaken by the most sustainable mode available
12. To create high quality employment opportunities
13. To develop a strong culture of enterprise and innovation
14. To provide the physical conditions for a modern economic structure, including infrastructure to support the use of new technologies

### **POLICY AREA: Spatial Policy 3 – Rural Areas**

The District Council will support and promote local services and facilities in the rural communities of Newark & Sherwood. Local housing need will be addressed by focusing housing in sustainable, accessible villages. The rural economy will be supported by encouraging tourism, rural diversification, and by supporting appropriate agricultural and forestry development. The countryside will be protected and schemes to increase biodiversity, enhance the landscape and, in the right locations, woodland cover will be encouraged.

Beyond Principal Villages, proposals for new development will be considered against the following criteria:

- Location - new development should be within the main built-up areas of villages, which have local services and access to Newark Urban Area, Service Centres or Principal Villages.
- Scale - new development should be appropriate to the proposed location and small scale in nature.
- Need - Employment and tourism which requires a rural/village location. New or replacement facilities to support the local community. Development which supports local agriculture and farm diversification. New housing where it helps to meet identified proven local need.
- Impact - new development should not generate excessive car-borne traffic from out of the area. New development should not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of local people nor have an undue impact on local infrastructure, including drainage, sewerage systems and the transport network.
- Character - new development should not have a detrimental impact on the character of the location or the setting of the landscape.

Within the main built-up area of villages consideration will also be given to schemes which secure environmental enhancements by the re-use or redevelopment of former farmyards/farm buildings or the removal of businesses where the operation gives rise to amenity issues. The scale of such enabling development should be appropriate to the location of the proposal.

Development away from the main built-up areas of villages, in the open countryside, will be strictly controlled and restricted to uses which require a rural setting such as Agriculture and Forestry. Consideration will also be given to the re-use of rural buildings of architectural

merit. The Allocations & Development Management DPD will set out policies to deal with such applications.

<b>SA Objective:</b>	<b>Short term</b>	<b>Long term</b>	<b>Comments / proposed mitigation</b>
<b>1 Housing</b>	+	+	Would allow limited small scale housing to meet local need in sustainable locations. However, the level of housing development will be restricted.
<b>2 Health and health inequalities</b>	+	+	Would enable local health provision to be maintained and where possible enhanced.
<b>3 Access to Recreation and Culture</b>	+	+	Would enable local recreation/culture provision to be maintained and where possible enhanced.
<b>4 Community Safety/Crime</b>	0	0	
<b>5 Develop Social Capital</b>	+	++	This Policy supports the development of local community facilities which will help to grow social capital.
<b>6 Biodiversity</b>	+	+	Encourages biodiversity and woodland replanting.
<b>7 Natural, built, cultural, archaeological assets</b>	+/-	+/-	There is potential for development allowed by this Policy to impact upon natural, built, cultural, archaeological assets in the rural areas. However safeguards are built into this policy to ameliorate these effects.
<b>8 Natural Resources</b>	+/-	+/-	Will result in limited development in rural areas and may thereby affect a number of natural resources.
<b>9 Waste and Recycling</b>	0	0	
<b>10 Energy</b>	0	0	
<b>11 Transport</b>	-	-	Limited development in rural areas could increase car borne traffic.
<b>12 Employment</b>	+	+	Policy allows for limited small scale employment, including tourism and rural diversification, and encourages agriculture and forestry
<b>13 Enterprise and Innovation</b>	+	+	The Policy may encourage rural enterprise.
<b>4 Modern Economic Structure</b>	0	0	

**Sustainability Appraisal of Policy DM8 of the Newark & Sherwood Allocations & Development Management DPD:**

Objective:	
To ensure that the housing stock meets the housing needs of the District	+
To improve health and reduce health inequalities	+
To provide better opportunities for people to value and enjoy the District's heritage	0
To improve community safety, reduce crime and the fear of crime	+
To promote and support the development and growth of social capital across the District	0
To increase biodiversity levels across the District	0
To protect and enhance the rich diversity of the natural, cultural and built environmental and archaeological assets of the District	+
To manage prudently the natural resources of the District including water, air quality, soils and minerals	+
To minimise waste and increase the re-use and recycling of waste materials	0
To minimise energy usage and to develop the District's renewable energy resource, reducing dependency on non-renewable sources	0
To make efficient use of the existing transport infrastructure, help reduce the need to travel by car, improve accessibility to jobs and services for all and to ensure that all journeys are undertaken by the most sustainable mode available	+
To create high quality employment opportunities	+
To develop a strong culture of enterprise and innovation	+
To provide the physical conditions for a modern economic structure, including infrastructure to support the use of new technologies	+

