

Conwy County Borough Council
Sustainability Appraisal of Part 1 Policies

1. APPROACH

1.1 This document describes the process of appraisal.

1.2 The National Assembly for Wales (formerly the Welsh Office) requires local planning authorities to undertake an environmental appraisal of any development plan that it may produce, in order to evaluate the effects of its policies and proposals on the environment, and to produce a plan which accords with Government policy on sustainable development and growth. This requirement is embodied in “Planning Guidance (Wales) Unitary Development Plans”, published by the Welsh Office in April 1996.

1.3 However, since publication of the above, Government guidance and thinking on sustainable development has developed rapidly. The following documents are some of those that have been published by the Government in the last few years:

- “Sustainable local communities for the 21st century”, published jointly by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) and the Local Government Association in 1997.
- “Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice”, published by the DETR in October 1998.
- “Sustainability Counts”, published by the DETR in November 1998.
- “A Better Quality of Life – A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the United Kingdom”, published by the DETR in May 1999 (Cm 4345).

1.4 A further statement of the Government’s position on the subject is also contained in “Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 Development Plans” (England), published by the DETR in January 2000.

1.5 The Government’s vision of sustainable development is based on 4 broad objectives:

- **Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment**

Concerned with (i) enabling businesses to produce high quality goods and services that consumers throughout the world want, at prices they are prepared to pay, (ii) having a workforce that is equipped with the education and skills for the 21st Century, (iii) having businesses ready to invest, and an infrastructure to support them, so that everyone can share in high living standards and greater job opportunities.

- **Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone**

Concerned with (i) sharing the benefits of increased prosperity and a clean and safe environment, (ii) improving access to services, tackling social exclusion, and reduce the harm to health caused by poverty, poor housing, unemployment and pollution, (iii) treating others, including future generations and people elsewhere in the world, fairly.

- **Effective protection of the environment**

Concerned with (i) limiting global environmental threats, such as climate change, (ii) protecting human health and safety from hazards such as poor air quality and toxic

chemicals, (iii) protecting things which people need or value, such as wildlife, landscapes and historic buildings.

- **Prudent use of natural resources**

Concerned with (i) the efficient the use of non-renewable resources like oil and gas and to ensure that alternatives are developed to replace them in due course, (ii) that renewable resources, such as water, are used in ways which do not endanger the resource or cause serious damage or pollution.

1.6 UDP appraisals are now expected to take account of social and economic criteria in addition to environmental criteria. Many local authorities in England and Wales have or are undertaking appraisals of their UDPs that include social and economic criteria. In light of the above, Conwy County Borough Council has undertaken a trial sustainability appraisal of its UDP Part 1 policies, incorporating a range of social, economic and environmental criteria. The appraisal will be subject to review before publication of the Deposit Version of the UDP. The remainder of the Plan will be also be appraised during the same review.

1.7 The selected criteria are as follows:

Environmental criteria

- Energy Efficiency
- Resources
- Pollution
- Landscape
- Biodiversity
- Built Form

Social criteria

- Health & Security
- Social Inclusion
- Community Provision
- Welsh Language

Economic criteria

- Wealth Creation
- Economic Diversification
- Regeneration
- Infrastructure

1.8 These criteria are defined in section 2 and the results of the appraisal appear in section 3. The perceived impact of each policy relative to each criterion has been characterised by the following symbols:

- ++ significant positive effect
- + positive effect
- O no effect/insignificant effect/neutral
- negative effect
- significant negative impact

Commentary

1.9 The appraisal of the Part 1 policies has resulted in the identification of many positive and negative effects. However, there are many more positive effects than there are negative effects. The positive and negative effects illustrate the tension between enabling development on the one hand and the protection of the environment on the other. The Part 1 policies are linked to more detailed policies in Part 2 of the UDP and, in many cases, the policies in Part 2 contain important caveats designed to limit the negative effects.

1.10 While many types of development have potentially negative environmental effects, in some cases these are outweighed by the socio-economic benefits deriving from the policy. The existence of negative environmental effects should not necessarily be used to prevent development but applied cautiously and wisely to improve the sustainability of development.

2. DEFINITIONS

CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
Energy Efficiency	To promote the efficient use of energy. To encourage the conservation of energy and the recovery of energy from secondary sources. To encourage the use of new techniques and technology in building and building design that will reduce energy consumption. To minimise inefficient use of energy, particularly of energy derived from fossil fuels, in favour of more sustainable and renewable forms of energy. To reduce traffic growth and the use of road vehicles, particularly the number and length of trips, in favour of other more energy efficient forms of transport. To locate new development accordingly.
Natural Resources	To conserve natural resources. To limit development on greenfield sites. To safeguard flood plains. To minimise waste and to encourage the recycling of materials/use of secondary materials.
Pollution	To safeguard air, soil and water quality. To control and limit emissions to air, land and water generally. To limit pollution arising from light or noise. To limit the emission of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere generally. To maintain existing tree cover and encourage new planting to limit and reduce emissions of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.

CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
Landscape	<p>To minimise urban expansion and the impact of new development on the landscape.</p> <p>To conserve and enhance the character and quality of the landscape and to protect areas designated for their importance.</p> <p>To protect significant features in the landscape.</p>
Biodiversity	<p>To maintain the range and diversity of animal and plant species.</p> <p>To protect important natural habitats</p> <p>To encourage the creation of new wildlife habitats and reserves.</p> <p>To protect features that are important to wildlife.</p>
Built Form	<p>To protect and enhance the cultural heritage and the historic environment generally.</p> <p>To safeguard archaeological sites, ancient monuments, listed buildings and conservation areas.</p> <p>To encourage the provision of attractive streets and buildings, and related spaces.</p> <p>To encourage quality in building design.</p>
Health and Security	<p>To maintain a healthy and safe environment generally.</p> <p>To ensure that polluting emissions do not cause harm to human health.</p> <p>To minimise development close to potential sources of pollution.</p> <p>To maintain and improve coastal defences where economic and appropriate.</p> <p>To limit development in flood risk areas.</p> <p>To reduce crime and the fear of crime.</p> <p>To respect the private amenity of individuals and families.</p>
Social Inclusion	<p>To improve access to education, employment, housing, leisure facilities and services generally.</p> <p>To enable the provision of affordable accommodation.</p> <p>To ensure that the disabled have access to all facilities and services.</p> <p>To encourage development in locations which can be served by public transport.</p> <p>To promote equality and equity.</p>
Community Provision	<p>To assist the viability of facilities and services.</p> <p>To ensure the provision of community facilities and services.</p> <p>To improve the provision of public open space.</p> <p>To improve public access to the countryside.</p>
Welsh Language	<p>To safeguard the Welsh language where it is an important feature of community life.</p>

CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
Wealth Creation	To provide a sound basis for economic growth. To increase employment and to reduce unemployment. To enable the expansion of existing businesses and to attract new businesses. To encourage investment in machinery, research and development.
Economic Diversification	To maintain and enhance the diversity and viability of the local economy, particularly the rural economy To provide a range of sites in all areas for different forms of employment.
Regeneration	To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town, district and village centres. To guide development to existing centres. To promote the re-use or conversion of vacant and redundant buildings generally. To bring long term vacant dwellings and the upper storeys of commercial premises back into use. To encourage the re-use of previously developed land. To encourage the restoration of mineral workings and other derelict sites.
Infrastructure	To maintain and improve the physical infrastructure – power, water supply, sewerage, telecommunications and transport.