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# **Bath & North East Somerset Council**

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## **Replacement dwellings and extensions in the Green Belt**

**Supplementary Planning Document**

**Sustainability Appraisal**

**Final Scoping Report**

**Planning Services  
Bath & North East Somerset Council**

**December 2007**

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## Abbreviations

AA	Appropriate Assessment
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government
DPD	Development Plan Documents
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
LDD	Local Development Documents
LDF	Local Development Framework
LPA	Local Planning Authority
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy

## Details of consultation

The scoping report has been submitted to the consultation bodies with environmental responsibilities. These consultation bodies are:

- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Natural England

Other appropriate stakeholders have been contacted. These include:

- Government Office for the South West
- Highways Agency

Further and wider consultation with stakeholders will take place when the draft Sustainability Appraisal Report is made available along with the draft SPD.

The Guidance<sup>1</sup> states that LPAs should allow 5 weeks for this stage of consultation. However, as this consultation was running over the summer holiday season, the Council has decided to extend the consultation period to 7 weeks. The consultation was carried out from 31<sup>st</sup> July to 17<sup>th</sup> September 2007.

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### Consultation Questions asked:

- Q1 Are there any other plans of programmes relevant to the SPD that have not been included within this review (including Appendix A)?
- Q2 Is the baseline data (including Appendix B) appropriate to the SPD?
- Q3 Is there any other relevant baseline data?
- Q4 Are there any inaccuracies or anomalies in the data?
- Q5 Do you agree that these are the key issues for the SPD?
- Q6 Do you have any comments about the SA Framework?
- Q7 Do you have any comments about the proposed timetable?
- Q8 Do you have any comments about the proposed structure of the SA report?

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<sup>1</sup> *Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks* (ODPM Nov 2005)

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose of this report

1.1.1 The purpose of this Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is to ensure that environmental, social and economic considerations have been integrated into the preparation of the **Replacement Dwellings & Extensions in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**. This scoping report sets out the SA framework which will be used to test the SPD objectives and options and help to identify the most sustainable options available. The scoping report also identifies the issues that Bath & North East Somerset is seeking to address through this SPD in order to achieve sustainable development in the District.

### 1.2 Legislative background

1.2.1 Sustainability Appraisals are now an integral part of producing planning documents under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Act). When preparing SPDs local authorities must also meet the requirements of the European Directive<sup>2</sup> 'on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment' commonly known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. The SEA Directive was transposed in the UK by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004<sup>3</sup> applying to plans and programmes with a significant environmental effect. The SEA process is aimed at providing strategic alternatives and concentrates more specifically on the environmental issues of sustainability.

1.2.2 The main purpose of SEA is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with view to promoting sustainable development (Article 1 of the SEA Directive).

1.2.3 *Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks* (ODPM Nov 2005) has recommended a combined assessment approach integrating SEA and SA which will satisfy the requirements of the SEA directive and integrate sustainability issues with a high level of environmental protection on a strategic basis. For ease, the combined approach is simply referred to as SA throughout this Scoping Report.

### 1.3 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

1.3.1 In order to protect the integrity of European sites, Local Authorities are obliged to carry out an Appropriate Assessment (AA) as a part of the planning process under the Habitats Directive. European sites are collectively termed Natura 2000 sites and comprise Special Areas for Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) together with Ramsar sites. There are several Natura 2000 sites in B&NES and the Council anticipates undertaking a screening process accordingly. The AA is based on a rigorous application of the precautionary principle and therefore requires those undertaking the exercise to prove that the plan will not have a significant impact on these conservation objectives.

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<sup>2</sup> 2001/42/EC

<sup>3</sup> SI 1633

- 1.3.2 AA and SA are two separate processes each with their own legal requirements. AA will be carried out in conjunction with the SA as recommended by the Guidance.

#### **1.4 Sustainable Development**

- 1.4.1 This Scoping Report identifies the issues that Bath & North East Somerset is seeking to address through this SPD in order to achieve sustainable development in the District.

- 1.4.2 The most widely accepted definition of sustainable development is:

*'Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'*<sup>4</sup>

- 1.4.3 *The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy* (March 2005) sets out key principles of sustainable development:

- § Living within environmental limits;
- § Ensuring a strong healthy and just society;
- § Achieving a sustainable economy;
- § Promoting good governance;
- § Using sound science responsibly.

- 1.4.4 The sustainable development strategies and policies that will have an influence on the SPD are reviewed. Please see *Appendix A* for more details.

#### **1.5 Brief for the Replacement Dwellings & Extensions in the Green Belt SPD**

- 1.5.1 The Replacement Dwellings and Extensions in the Green Belt SPD will set out detailed planning guidance to supplement policies HG.14 and HG.15 in the *Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan (including minerals and waste)*.

<b>POLICY HG.14</b>	
Outside the scope of policies HG.4 and 6 permission will only be given for:	
i)	the rebuilding or replacement of existing dwellings where the replacement or reconstructed dwelling and ancillary buildings would not be materially larger, and would not have a materially greater impact on the countryside or to the openness of the Green Belt, than that to be replaced; and
ii)	the creation or extension of any residential curtilage would not detract from rural character nor conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt.

<b>POLICY HG.15</b>	
Proposals to extend a dwelling in the Green Belt will be permitted unless they would:	
i)	represent a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original dwelling; or

<sup>4</sup> Adopted by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987.

ii) contribute to a deterioration in rural character as a result of the cumulative effect of dwelling extensions.
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- 1.5.2 Dwellings in the Green Belt are entitled to the same permitted development rights as dwellings elsewhere (provided permitted development rights have not been removed) and therefore the Council cannot control all extensions that are constructed.
- 1.5.3 It is the remit of local planning policy to ensure that any applications for inappropriate development would not be in accordance with the Development Plan. Local planning policy should make clear the approach that local planning authorities will take in relation to extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt and the circumstances under which replacement dwellings are acceptable.
- 1.5.4 The purpose of the Replacement Dwellings and Extensions in the Green Belt SPD is to provide detail and clarity Local Plan policy. The SPD cannot be used to formulate new planning policy. Furthermore, the SPD cannot be used to make boundary changes to the Green Belt or allocate Green Belt land. Once adopted by the Council the SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 1.5.5 A Sustainable Development Appraisal was undertaken for the Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan including policies HG.14 and HG.15. However this was produced under the 'old' system as a discretionary Sustainability Development Appraisal and does not meet the requirements of Section 39(2) of the *Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004*. Therefore a full Sustainability Appraisal will be undertaken for this SPD.

**Timetable for the SPD**

<b>Replacement dwellings &amp; extensions in the Green Belt SPD</b>	
Evidence gathering	June 2007
Scoping Report Consultation	July – Sep 2007
Public participation on Draft SPD and draft SA report (Reg.17)	April -May 2008
<b>Adoption</b>	<b>Sep 2008</b>

## 2. SEA/SA process and methodology

### 2.1 Overall Methodology

- 2.1.1 The methodology for this appraisal was developed in accordance with guidance published by the ODPM (now DCLG).<sup>5</sup>
- 2.1.2 In order to carry out the SA process effectively in an integrated manner, the Council has established the SA Group. This Group consists officers with specialised expertise to cover Economic, Social and Environmental aspects. The SA Group work is led by the Planning Policy Team and SA workshops will run parallel to the SPD process in order to appraise SPD objectives and options.
- 2.1.3 The methodology is as follows in Table 1. For the purposes of this scoping report, Stage A of the methodology has been undertaken.

**Table 1: Key Tasks for Sustainability Appraisals**

<b>Stage A:</b>	Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding the scope
Task A1:	Identifying other relevant plans, programmes and sustainability objectives
Task A2:	Collecting baseline information
Task A3:	Identifying sustainability issues and problems
Task A4:	Developing the SA Framework
Task A5:	Consulting on the scope of the SA
<b>Stage B:</b>	Developing and Refining Options and assessing effects
Task B1:	Testing the SPD objectives against the SA framework
Task B2:	Developing the SPD options
Task B3:	Predicting the effects of the draft SPD
Task B4:	Evaluating the effects of the draft SPD
Task B5:	Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects
Task B6:	Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the SPD
<b>Stage C:</b>	Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report
Task C1:	Preparing SA Report
<b>Stage D:</b>	Consulting on draft SPD and SA Report
Task D1:	Public participation on the SA Report and the draft SPD.
Task D2:	Assessing significant changes
Task D3:	Making decisions and providing information
<b>Stage E:</b>	Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the SPD
Task E1:	Finalising aims and methods for monitoring
Task E2:	Responding to adverse effects

Source: Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks (ODPM Nov 2005)

<sup>5</sup> Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks (ODPM Nov 2005)

### 3. Identifying relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainable development objectives (Task A1)

#### 3.1 Key Policy Review directly relevant to the SPD

3.1.1 The LPA must take account of relationships between the SPD and other policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives. The purpose of this review is to highlight the key influences on both SPDs and the SA. **Appendix A** records the detailed review of policies and plans undertaken for the SA.

**Table 2: Key Policies directly relevant to the SPD**

Key Policy	Details of relevance to the plan and SA
<p><b><u>International Policy</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ EU Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of Wild Birds European Commission</li> <li>§ EU Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive 1992)</li> <li>§ The Convention on Biological Diversity, Rio de Janeiro 1992</li> <li>§ Managing Natura 2000 sites The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC</li> </ul>	<p>The aim of the Habitats Directive is to create a coherent European ecological network known as Natura 2000. It requires member states to take necessary measures to maintain/ restore habitats and species' populations, maintain Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) at favourable status and develop national biodiversity strategy.</p> <p>Appropriate Assessments must be carried out for any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary for the management of the sites but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, should be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objective.</p> <p>The aim of the Habitats Directive is to create a coherent European ecological network known as Natura 2000. It requires member states to take necessary measures to maintain/restore habitats and species' populations, maintain Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) at favourable status and develop national biodiversity strategy.</p>
<p><b><u>National Policy</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development (and supplement to this)</li> <li>§ PPG2: Green Belts</li> <li>§ Town &amp; Country Planning Green Belt Direction (ODPM, 2005)</li> <li>§ PPS3: Housing</li> <li>§ PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas</li> <li>§ PPG15: Planning and Historic Environment Community and Local</li> </ul>	<p>National Policy (such as UK Sustainable Development Strategy, DEFRA Rural Strategy, PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development, PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment, PPG16 Archaeology and Planning, PPG 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation) aims to balance social progress and economic development with the protection of the natural and built environment.</p>



<p>Government</p> <p>§ PPG 16: Archaeology and Planning Community and Local Government</p> <p>§ PPG 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation and Assessing needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17</p> <p>§ Streamlining Local Development Frameworks (DCLG Consultation Draft November 2007)</p>	<p><b>PPG2: Green Belts</b> sets the general intentions of green belt policy, reaffirms the specific purposes of including land in green belts, specifies objectives for the use of land in Green Belts and confirms that Green Belts must be protected as far as can be seen ahead.</p> <p>PPG2 maintains the presumption against inappropriate development within Green Belts and refines the categories of appropriate development, including making provision for the future of major existing developed sites and revising policy on the re-use of buildings.</p> <p>Part 3 of PPG2 outlines the presumption against inappropriate development, defines when the construction of new buildings is not inappropriate (including alteration or extension to existing buildings) and gives details of where the re-use of buildings is not inappropriate.</p>
<p>§ Planning for a Sustainable Future White Paper (2007) DCLG (for consultation)</p>	<p><b>PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas</b></p> <p>PPS7 outlines of government’s objectives relevant to sustainable development in rural areas.</p> <p>PPS7 also outlines the government policy in relation to planning for housing in rural areas, the re-use of buildings in the countryside and replacement of buildings in the countryside</p>
<p>§ Changes to Permitted</p>	<p><b>PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation</b></p> <p>PPG17 asks LPAs to proactively plan for the protection and enhancement of valued green space in towns and cities, including efficient and effective countryside.</p> <p>Planning for a Sustainable Future Annex B: Schedule of Government Responses to the Barker Report -Recommendation 9. States that the government is committed to the principles of the Green Belt and will make no fundamental change to policy in this area in current policy reform.</p> <p>The White Paper also suggests the removal of the blanket requirement for SA for SPDs.</p> <p>Aims to encourage the residential take-up of</p>

<p>Development. Consultation Paper 1: Permitted Development Rights for Householder Microgeneration</p> <p>§ Changes to Permitted Development. Consultation Paper 2: Permitted Development Rights for Householders</p>	<p>microgeneration in order to meet a significant proportion of our future energy needs.</p> <p>The consultation paper on Permitted Development Rights for Householders suggests that extensions are the most common type of householder development both in terms of what is permitted development and development which requires planning application.</p> <p>Considers the current system to be regulating development that has no impact beyond the host property. It is also explicitly acknowledged that the current framework of householder PD rights is based on arbitrary size and volume based approach, anomalous in terms of impact as to what is and is not permitted.</p> <p>The consultation paper proposes 12 limits for extensions relating to criteria such as: depth of extension; eaves, ridge and roof pitch height of extension; maximum coverage of garden area; use of materials and visibility of extension from highway or from principle elevation.</p> <p>The consultation paper also states that roof extensions are the second most common type of householder development and are particularly prevalent in urban areas. Changes to the GDPO relating to roof extensions and roof alterations are also suggested.</p> <p>Changes to Article 4 directions are also suggested.</p>
<p><b><u>Regional Policy</u></b></p> <p>§ Joint Replacement Structure Plan</p> <p>§ RPG10</p>	<p>Policy 16 of the Joint Replacement Structure Plan reaffirms the purpose of the Bristol-Bath Green Belt which are to: (1) check the unrestricted sprawl of the Bristol conurbation and Bath; (2) assist in safeguarding the surrounding countryside from encroachment; (3) prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; (4) preserve the setting and special character of villages, towns and historic cities &amp; (5) Assist in urban regeneration.</p> <p>Policy SS.4 of RPG10 confirms that Green Belts in the region should continue to fulfil the purposes set out in PPG2.</p>

<p>§ Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (March 2007)</p>	<p>The draft RSS states that the regions landscape, countryside, historic environment and coast have categories which define the character of the South West (para 1.6.15). The draft RSS also states that development in open countryside, particularly of housing, will be strictly controlled in accordance with national guidance and other policies in the draft RSS (para 3.4.3).</p>
<p><b>Local Policy</b></p> <p>§ Bath &amp; North East Somerset Local Plan including minerals and waste Adopted 2007</p> <p>§ Bath &amp; North East Somerset - City of Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan (2003-2009)</p> <p>§ Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan</p>	<p>The Local Plan defines some key local policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ The settlement classification for the district including for rural settlements (policy SC.1).</li> <li>§ Policy in relation to the re-use of rural buildings (ET.9).</li> <li>§ Policy in relation to residential curtilages (HG.11).</li> <li>§ Policy in relation to replacement dwellings (HG.14).</li> <li>§ Policy in relation to householder development in the Green Belt (HG.15).</li> <li>§ Relevant Green Belt policies (GB.1 &amp; GB.2).</li> </ul> <p>Main aims of the City of Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan (2003-2009) are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Promote sustainable management of the World Heritage Site;</li> <li>§ Ensure that the unique qualities and outstanding universal values of the World Heritage Site are understood and are sustained in the future;</li> <li>§ Sustain the outstanding universal values of the World Heritage Site whilst maintaining and promoting Bath as a living and working city which benefits from the status of the World Heritage Site;</li> <li>§ Improve physical access and interpretation, encouraging all people to enjoy and understand the World Heritage Site;</li> <li>§ Improve public awareness of and interest and involvement in the heritage of Bath, achieving a common local, national and international ownership of World Heritage Site management.</li> </ul> <p>The Cotswold AONB management plan outlines the vision for planning and</p>

(under review - July 2007)	development/the historic environment and the living and working landscape in the Cotswold AONB, forces for change and objectives and policies.
§ Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan 2004 – 2009	The Mendip AONB management plan provides a snapshot, a vision, objectives and policies for Mendip AONB.
§ 'BE: Better for Everyone - The Community Strategy for Bath & North East Somerset 2004 and beyond'	The Local Government Act 2000 requires every local authority to prepare a Community Strategy. Community Strategies are designed to improve the quality of life of local communities by linking the actions of councils with those of other public, private and voluntary sector organisations.
§ Bath & North East Somerset's Statement of Community Involvement Adopted 2007	Outlines how Bath & North East Somerset will consult on SPDs and associated Sustainability Appraisals. Must be read in conjunction with the <i>Town &amp; Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004</i> . This SCI has not yet been adopted.
§ Housing Strategy 2005 – 2010 B&NES	<p>Relevant strategic objectives from the Housing Strategy are:</p> <p>(1) Affordable Housing: To maximise the supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of local people; promoting and maintaining sustainable balanced communities; and recognising the support requirements of individuals for specialist accommodation.</p> <p>(2) Planning &amp; Empty Homes: Making best use of the local and strategic planning process; identifying assembling and bringing forward and suitable development sites to meet local needs across all tenures; and making the best use of existing resources including empty or under-used housing and other property.</p>
§ Bath City-wide Character Appraisal SPD, 2005 (supplementary to the Bath Local Plan)	Bath & North East Somerset has a rich and diverse range of landscapes.
§ 'Rural Landscapes of Bath & North East Somerset – A Landscape Character Assessment' (2003) SPG	<p>Aims to identify character and inform decisions following the Bath city-wide character appraisal.</p> <p>Overarching objective of maintaining and enhancing landscape character and local distinctiveness.</p>

## **3.2 Key Messages from other relevant policies**

### **Climate Change**

- 3.2.1 Following the Kyoto Protocol, the Government has set a target to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20% below 1990 levels by 2010. The Climate Change Programme will take the UK closer to this domestic target, and ensure that the UK can make real progress by 2020 towards the Government's long-term ambition to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by some 60% by about 2050. UK target for renewable is 10% of UK energy consumption by 2010.
- 3.2.2 In signing the Nottingham Declaration, the Council has made a commitment to contributing towards the delivery of the UK climate change programme. This has a long-term target of reducing CO2 emissions by 60% by 2050 over 1990 levels with real progress by 2020, and, until recently, had a short-term target of a 20% reduction by 2010.
- 3.2.3 The climate change issue, both mitigation and adaptation is an overarching issue for sustainable development therefore the implications of climate change must be considered through all topic areas.

### **Sustainable Construction**

- 3.2.4 National and regional policies in relation to sustainable construction are relevant considerations to this SPD. Bath & North East Somerset Council's Position Statement on Environmental Sustainability (2006) confirms the Council's commitment to moving towards a low carbon economy and avoiding unnecessary energy consumption. See Appendix A for summaries of these policies.

### **Housing**

- 3.2.5 Strategic Housing Policy Objectives in PPS3 include 'achieving a wide choice of high quality homes, both affordable and marketing housing, to address the requirements of the community'. It also states that 60% of additional housing to be provided on previously developed land or through conversions.
- 3.2.6 Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1) makes it clear that good design is a key element in achieving sustainable development and that it is indivisible from good planning.

### **Stronger Communities**

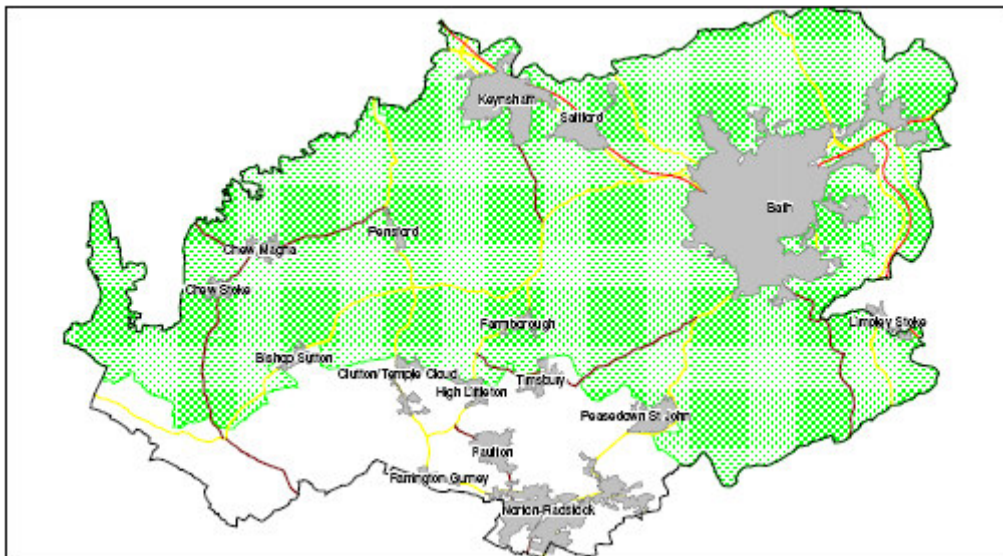
- 3.2.7 The B&NES Community Strategy contains five shared ambitions setting out how the Council plan to work with a wide range of organisations and make links with their plans:
  - § *BE: distinctive* Promoting a 'sense of place' so people identify with and take pride in our communities.
  - § *BE: inclusive* Celebrating the contributions people from different backgrounds and with different experiences can make, and promoting equality of opportunity.
  - § *BE: creative* Sharing resources, working together, and finding new ways of doing things
  - § *BE: safe* Building communities where people feel safe and secure.
  - § *BE: sustainable* Taking responsibility for our environment and natural resources, now and over the long term.
- 3.2.8 Delivering Safer & Stronger Communities is central to what the Local Area Agreement is trying to achieve for the communities of B&NES.

## 4. Baseline Information (Task A2)

- 4.1.1 Baseline data gives a picture of the current situation and provides the basis for predicting and monitoring the effects of the SPD. It also helps to identify sustainability issues and alternative ways of dealing with them. Baseline data has been collected for the criteria required by the SEA Directive and the UK SEA Regulations. Information collected was primarily focused on the social, environmental and economic characteristics of the area that relate to the issues to be tackled in the SPDs. Baseline information includes data influenced by a number of factors beyond spatial policies.
- 4.1.2 The key baseline review relevant to the SPD is shown below. Please see **Appendix B** for more information.

### Green Belt

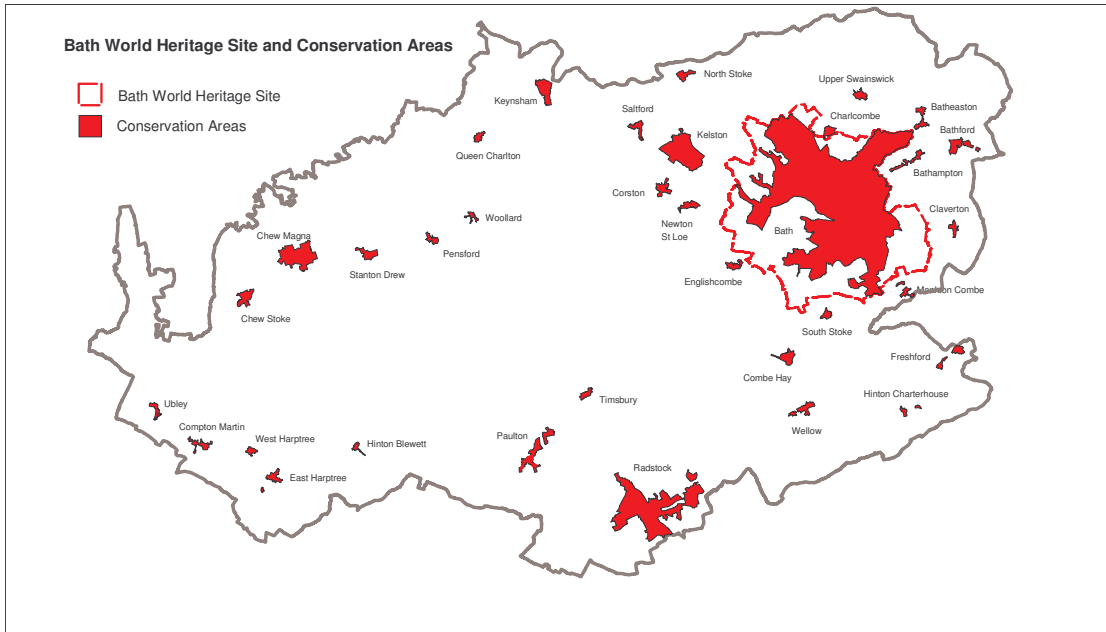
- 4.1.3 The Bristol/Bath Green Belt was designated in 1966 in the Gloucestershire and Somerset County Development Plans. The former Avon area includes 60,760 hectares of designated Green Belt land, over 57% of the total Green Belt designated for the whole of the South West. 21,440 hectares of this is within the B&NES area.



Map 1: General Extent of the Green Belt in Bath & North East Somerset

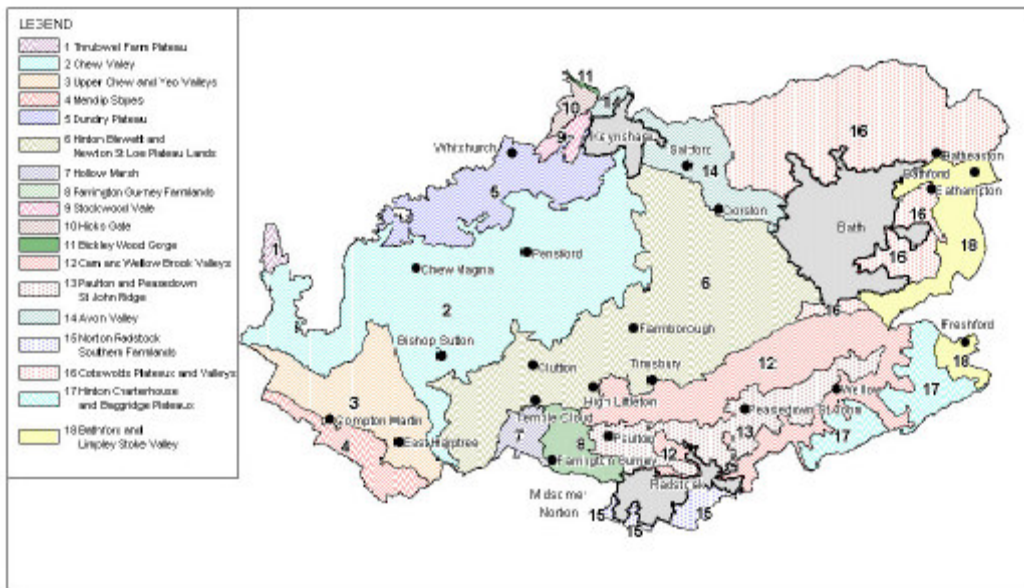
### Cultural Heritage, Archaeology and Landscape

- 4.1.4 Thirty seven separate conservation areas have been designated in B&NES since 1968. The total area covered by conservation area status amounts to some 2,310 hectares. The entire city of Bath was designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage site in 1987. B&NES has approximately 6,400 listed buildings and structures in its area of which 5000 lie within the City of Bath.
- 4.1.5 Many of the settlements within the Green Belt also contain conservation areas; there is significant overlap of these designations.



**Map 2: City of Bath World Heritage Site and Conservation Areas in Bath & North East Somerset**

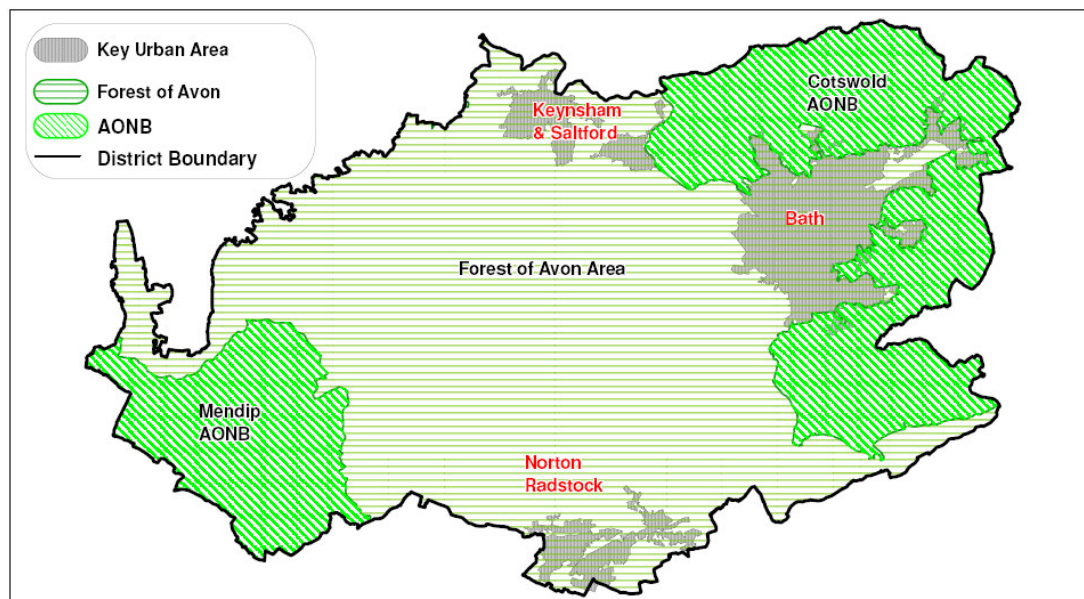
- 4.1.6 Bath & North East Somerset’s Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) is a cumulative record of all known archaeological sites, monuments and historic landscape features in B&NES. There are over 5,000 entries in the database relating to monuments and sites, and over 2,000 entries relating to archaeological investigations carried out over the past 100 years.
- 4.1.7 84 sites are protected as Scheduled Ancient Monuments under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979.
- 4.1.8 Landscape Character Appraisals has been carried out following landscape assessments and landscape character areas have been identified.



**Map 3: Landscape Character Areas in Bath & North East Somerset**

## Forest of Avon and AONB Designations

- 4.1.9 Part of the Mendip Hills AONB and the Cotswold AONB also lie within the district. Only 37% of the Green Belt is AONB designated however more significantly 82% of the AONB is within the Green Belt.
- 4.1.10 The Mendip Hills AONB was designated in 1972. Characteristic of the Mendips is the open landscape comprising steep, usually wooded slopes and a roughly undulating plateau. The hills are of Carboniferous limestone origin and thin, dry soils restrict farming with pasture and forestry dominating. Within the District are the steep, northern scarp slopes and the upper reaches of the River Chew along the Chew Valley and Blagdon Lakes.
- 4.1.11 The Cotswolds AONB was designated in 1966. Designation of the southern extension was approved in 1990 and surrounds Bath to the north, east and south largely following the Green Belt boundary. Its outstanding landscape qualities are its visual unity, its unique vernacular architecture, its reputation as a rural idyll and its immense scenic diversity.
- 4.1.12 The Forest of Avon is one of 12 Community Forests in England. When it was established in the early 1980s the boundary was drawn to encompass Bristol and a wide swathe of 'urban fringe'. It covers 221 square miles in and around Bristol. In B&NES the boundary was extended in 2006 to include the whole of the District except for those parts designated as Mendip Hills and Cotswolds AONBs.



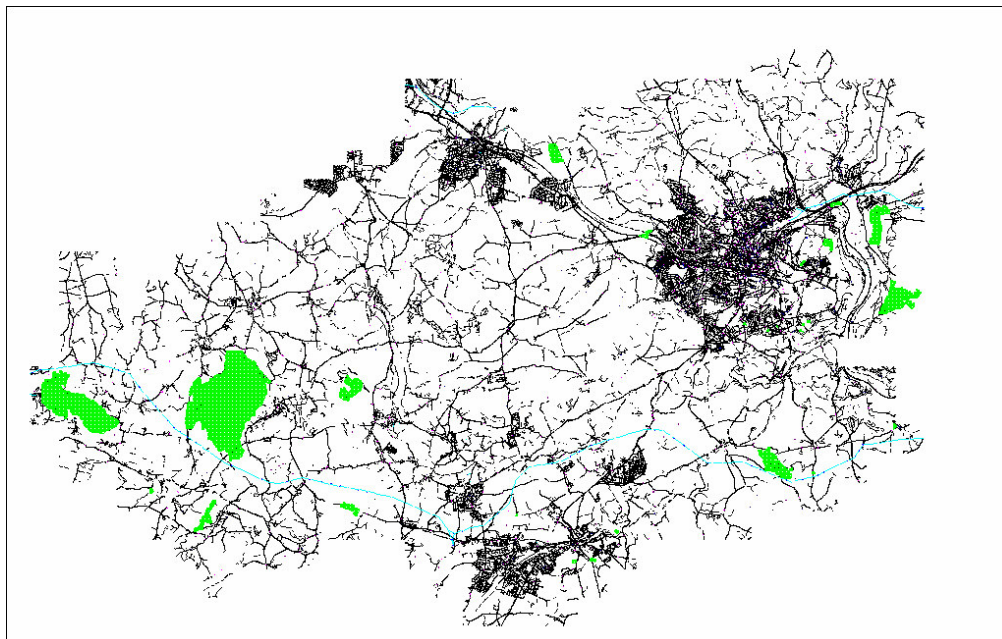
Map 4: Forest of Avon and AONB Designations in Bath & North East Somerset

## Biodiversity

- 4.1.13 A number of sites in the District are designated for their internationally important wildlife and/or habitat; these are additionally Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).



- 4.1.14 Chew Valley Lake Special Protection Area is recognised for its international importance for migrating birds and Natural England has identified a 'buffer' area around the Lake accordingly.
- 4.1.15 Combe Down and Bathampton Mines form part of the 'Bath & Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC'. Compton Martin Ochre Mine is a component site of the North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are areas which have been given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive. Greater Horseshoe Bats are a primary reason for selection of both sites together with Bechsteins bats for the Bath & Bradford-on-Avon SAC and Lesser Horseshoe Bats for the North Somerset and Mendips Bats SAC. These bats are protected under UK law and European Directive.
- 4.1.16 SSSIs are designated by Natural England and are of national importance for their flora, fauna or geological interest. There are currently 22 SSSIs within the District.



**Map 5: SSSIs in Bath and North East Somerset**

### **Brownfield Development**

- 4.1.17 Previously-developed land, often called brownfield land, is land that was developed but is now vacant or derelict, and land currently in use with known potential for redevelopment.
- 4.1.18 The national target is that 60% of additional housing should be provided on previously developed land and through conversions of existing buildings by 2008. The South West region RPG10 sets a target of 50% for Bath and North East Somerset which is incorporated in the B&NES Local Plan (1996-2011).
- 4.1.19 In 2005/06, 55% of additional housing was built on previously developed land. Cumulatively, 49% of the dwellings completed during the period 1996-2006 have been provided on previously developed land.
- 4.1.20 With regard brownfield development, reference should be made to PPS23 regarding the need for appropriate assessment / remediation requirements of potential developments to ensure the protection of controlled waters.

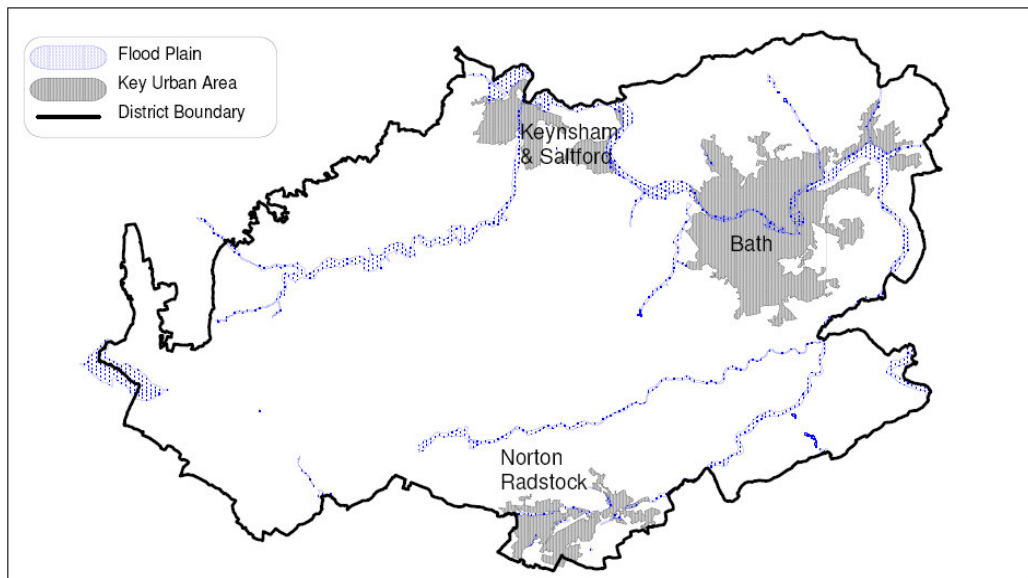
## Topography and Drainage

4.1.21 The District is drained primarily by the river Avon and its tributaries the River Chew and the Cam and Wellow Brooks. These watercourses have floodplains which are subject to flood risk. The river valleys are a significant component of the district's landscape character, providing an important resource for nature conservation and recreation and have rich historical and cultural associations.



**Map 6: Topography and Drainage**

4.1.22 There is a gap in data on flooding. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) will provide further information. The SFRA will be completed in December 2007 therefore data relating to flooding will be reconsidered following the findings of the SFRA.



**Map 7: Bath & North East Somerset: Flood Plain Map**

## **Development Management Context**

- 4.1.23 To give an impression of the current number of planning applications relating to replacement dwellings and extensions in the Green Belt a search of planning applications over a year period (from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 – 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2007) was undertaken. Replacement dwellings in the Green Belt constituted 1% (22/2563) of all planning applications in that period, while extensions in the Green Belt constitutes 5% (121/2563) of all planning applications in this same period.
- 4.1.24 An analysis of all recorded appeals between December 1996 and March 2007 shows that 8% of all appeal cases relate to replacement dwellings and extensions in the Green Belt (i.e. 71/926 appeals).
- 4.1.25 Of these appeals 20% related to Bath and only 3% to Keynsham. The appeals were predominantly related to replacement dwellings and extension in the Green Belt in rural areas. Using the settlement classification for rural settlements established in Local Plan policy SC.1: 34% of appeals related to R1 settlements, 3% to R2 settlements and 41% to R3 settlements.
- 4.1.26 The majority of these appeals were dismissed (76%), although 24% of these appeals were allowed.

## 5. Identifying Sustainability Issues and Problems (Task A3)

- 5.1.1 The SEA Directive requires that environmental problems be identified and analysed in an Environmental Report. This is incorporated within this SA. The key sustainability issues in relation to the SPD within Bath & North East Somerset has been identified as part of the policy and baseline review.
- 5.1.2 The Replacement Dwellings and Extensions in the Green Belt SPD will provide detail and clarity to supplement existing Local Plan policy in relation to extensions and replacement dwellings in the Green Belt with the aim of protecting the Green Belt against inappropriate development and facilitate appropriate development.
- 5.1.3 The main sustainability issues in relation to the Replacement Dwellings and Extensions in the Green Belt SPD are as follows:
- § Preserving the setting and special character of the City of Bath, the town of Keynsham and the many villages in the rural areas of Bath & North East Somerset
  - § Protecting rural character
  - § Maintaining and enhancing landscape character and local distinctiveness
  - § Maintaining the openness of the Green Belt
  - § Maintaining and enhancing environmental quality, and wildlife interest in the Green Belt
  - § Promoting the efficient use of previously developed (brownfield) land
  - § Facilitating appropriate residential development in the Green Belt (solely in terms of extensions and replacement dwellings) which meets the needs of residents
  - § Making the best use of existing resources including empty or under-used housing.
  - § The need to mitigate and to adapt to the effects of climate change.
  - § Considering the need to improve existing substandard access onto the truck road network.

## **6. EA/SA Objectives Framework and Appraisal Matrix (Task A4)**

### **6.1 Developing the SA Framework**

- 6.1.1 The SA framework provides a way in which sustainability effects can be described, analysed and compared. The process of undertaking a SA involves the identification of sustainability objectives and indicators which are used to measure and monitor the success of the SPD.
- 6.1.2 The Sustainability Appraisal Framework has been developed to assess the impact of the draft SPD on sustainability issues, to highlight issues that need addressing in the SPD. The appropriate indicators will be developed to measure the effectiveness of the SPD.

### **6.2 Sustainability Objectives**

- 6.2.1 The Sustainability Appraisals Framework for the Core Strategy was used as the main starting point for draft objectives for the SPD. The Framework was reassessed according to the reviews of the policies, baseline information and key sustainability issues.
- 6.2.2 Table 5 will be used to assess the relative performance of each option and objective using positive, negative or neutral symbols, then possible mitigation measures will be proposed. It should be noted that some of the sustainability objectives may not be feasible due to a lack of baseline data (therefore making monitoring difficult) and other objectives may be developed during the workshop and consultation stage.

**Table 3 Sustainability Appraisal Framework**

SEA/SA Objectives		Plan Objectives and Options			
		1	2	3	4 etc
Objective 1	Improve accessibility to community facilities and local services				
Objective 2	Improve the health and well-being of all communities				
Objective 3	Meet identified needs for sufficient and high quality housing				
Objective 4	Increase availability of affordable and specific needs housing				
Objective 5	Promote stronger and more cohesive communities				
Objective 6	Reduce anti-social behaviour, crime and the fear of crime				
Objective 7	Improve the availability and provision of training				
Objective 8	Ensure communities have access to a wide range of employment opportunities				
Objective 9	Enable local businesses to prosper				
Objective 10	Promote vibrant city, town, local and village centres				
Objective 11	Increase availability of local produce and materials				
Objective 12	Ensure everyone has access to high quality and affordable public transport and promote cycling and walking				
Objective 13	Reduce the need and desire to travel by car				
Objective 14	Protect and enhance local distinctiveness				
Objective 15	Protect and enhance the district's historic environment				
Objective 16	Encourage and protect habitats and biodiversity.				
Objective 17	Protect and enhance the district's cultural assets				
Objective 18	Reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions				
Objective 19	Encourage sustainable construction				
Objective 20	Ensure the development of sustainable and/or local energy sources and energy infrastructure				
Objective 21	Reduce vulnerability to, and manage flood risk				
Objective 22	Encourage careful and efficient use of natural resources				
Objective 23	Promote waste management accordance with the waste hierarchy (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle)				

**Table 4 Some notes to assist SA Objectives**

<b>Sustainability Appraisal Objectives</b>		<b>Explanation of the detailed question (where not obvious)</b>
Objective 1	Improve accessibility to community facilities and local services.	Accessibility: includes the provision of facilities and geographical accessibility. Community facilities: including educational establishments, libraries, GP surgeries, shops and art /leisure facilities.
Objective 2	Improve the health and well-being of all communities.	This objective includes the promotion of healthy exercise such as walking and cycling and the provision of Greenspace.
Objective 3	Meet identified needs for sufficient and high quality housing	Identified needs: according to RSS and other housing studies. High quality housing: measured against the government guidelines.
Objective 4	Increase availability of affordable and specific needs housing.	
Objective 5	Promote stronger and more cohesive communities.	Promoting a culture of respect and understanding between communities with a common sense of belonging.
Objective 6	Reduce anti-social behaviour, crime and the fear of crime.	
Objective 7	Improve the availability and provision of training.	
Objective 8	Ensure communities have access to a wide range of employment opportunities.	Range of employment opportunities: Building upon a diversity of employment sectors to provide jobs requiring a range of skills in the local area.
Objective 9	Enable local businesses to prosper.	Through provision of appropriate employment space, supporting an active labour market.
Objective 10	Promote vibrant city, town, local and village centres.	Centres with high footfall levels and engaged citizens, attracted by, for example, provision of required services.
Objective 11	Increase availability of local produce and materials.	Support the ability of local producers to compete in an international market. Local as in: low in transportation miles or produced regionally.
Objective 12	Ensure everyone has access to high quality and affordable public transport and promote cycling and walking.	High quality: frequency, compliant to accessibility standards and clean. Alter the car / cyclist / pedestrian priority relationship.
Objective 13	Reduce the need and desire to travel by car.	Good access to local services and employment, improve other modes of transport as feasible alternatives.
Objective 14	Protect and enhance local distinctiveness.	Local distinctiveness: the character and appearance of rural and urban areas. (Landscape/townscape)
Objective 15	Protect and enhance the district's historic environment.	
Objective 16	Encourage and protect habitats and biodiversity.	Biodiversity: The number and variety of organisms found within our geographic region.
Objective 17	Protect and enhance the district's cultural assets.	
Objective 18	Reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.	Pollution: contamination of air, water or soil by substances harmful to living organisms, light from built up areas emitted into the atmosphere at

		night, continuous noise loud enough to be annoying or physically harmful and heat from hot water discharged into waterways and lakes from industrial buildings endangering aquatic life. Components of the atmosphere that contribute to the green house effect including water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and ozone.
Objective 19	Encourage sustainable construction.	Including responsible siting and orientation of buildings, choice of materials, generation and handling of waste.
Objective 20	Ensure the development of sustainable and/or local energy sources and energy infrastructure.	
Objective 21	Reduce vulnerability to and manage flood risk	
Objective 22	Encourage careful and efficient use of natural resources	Natural resources; include land, water and minerals. Minimise consumption, collect and reuse water. By maintaining long term reserves of stone and encouraging the salvaging and recycling of Bath stone and other local stones such as lias Encourage re-use of existing buildings and adaptable architecture
Objective 23	Promote waste management accordance with the waste hierarchy (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle)	



## 7. The next steps

### 7.1 The next stages of the SA

7.1.1 Once any amendments have been made to the scope of the sustainability appraisal in the light of any comments received, work will commence on Stages B, C and D of the appraisal process.

SA Stage	Tasks	Timetable
<b>Stage A</b> Evidence gathering	Consultation on Scoping Report	June 2007
<b>Stage B</b> Developing and refining options and assessing effects	<b>B1:</b> Testing the SPDs' objectives against the SA framework <b>B2:</b> Developing the SPDs' options <b>B3:</b> Predicting the effects the SPDs <b>B4:</b> Evaluating the effects of the SPDs <b>B5:</b> Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects. <b>B6:</b> Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the SPDs	July - Sep 2007
<b>Stage C:</b> Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report	<b>C1:</b> Preparing the SA Report.	March 2008
<b>Stage D:</b> Consulting on the preferred options of the SPD and SA Report	<b>D1:</b> Public participation on the draft SPD and the SA Report. <b>D2:</b> Assessing significant changes <b>D3:</b> Making decisions and providing information	April-May 2008
<b>State E</b> Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the SPDs	<b>Adoption</b>	Sept 2008

## 8. Proposed Structure of the SEA/SA Report for Replacement Dwellings and Extensions in the Green Belt SPD

### 8.1 Proposed Structure

8.1.1 The table below suggests a structure for the SEA/SA report in accordance with relevant guidance.

<b>Structure of report</b>	<b>Information to include</b>
<b>1. Summary and outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Non-technical summary</li> <li>1.2 Outcome Statement</li> <li>1.3 How to comment on the report</li> </ul>
<b>2. Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Purpose of the SA and the SA Report</li> <li>2.2 Plan objectives and outline of contents</li> <li>2.3 Compliance with the SEA Directive/Regulations</li> </ul>
<b>3. Appraisal Methodology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Approach adopted to the SA</li> <li>3.2 When and who carried out the SA</li> <li>3.3 Who was consulted, when and how</li> <li>3.4 Difficulties encountered in compiling information or carrying out the assessment</li> </ul>
<b>4. Sustainability objectives, baseline and context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1 Links to other strategies, plans and programmes and sustainability objectives</li> <li>4.2 The baseline characteristics</li> <li>4.3 Main sustainability issues and problems identified</li> <li>4.4 The SA Framework</li> </ul>
<b>5. SPD issues and options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1 Main strategic options considered and how they were identified</li> <li>5.2 Comparison of the sustainability effects of the options</li> <li>5.3 How sustainability issues were considered in choosing the preferred option</li> <li>5.4 Other options considered and why these were rejected</li> <li>5.5 Proposed mitigation measures</li> </ul>
<b>6. Draft SPD objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.1 significant sustainability effects of the preferred objectives</li> <li>6.2 How sustainability problems were considered in developing the plan objectives</li> <li>6.3 Proposed mitigation measures</li> <li>6.4 Uncertainties and risks</li> </ul>
<b>7. Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7.1 Links to other tier of plans and programmes and the project level</li> <li>7.2 Proposals for monitoring</li> <li>7.3 Next Steps</li> </ul>

