

1. What is Sustainability Appraisal?

Government guidance in PPG12 requires local planning authorities to carry out a full environmental appraisal of their development plans. The purpose of such an appraisal is to review the policies and proposals of the plan to evaluate their individual and combined impacts on the environment. However, in accordance with best practice, the Council has extended the process to include social and economic considerations in addition to environmental ones by carrying out a Sustainability Appraisal. This process therefore places sustainable development at the heart of the UDP.

2. How was the process carried out?

An Environmental Appraisal of the first UDP was carried out late in the preparation process but was not published. Its results however influenced early thinking on the review of the UDP and informed the Issues Report.

The Sustainability Appraisal was carried out by a small team from within the Planning and Development Department including the Council's Sustainability Co-ordinator and with outside assistance from the Sustainability Assessment expert from the North West Regional Assembly. The process was overseen by the Borough's Environment and Development Partnership acting as independent assessor.

3. Main stages of the process

A full description of the appraisal process and the results derived from it is given in Appendix 8. Given below however is a brief summary of the main stages undertaken as part of the appraisal:-

1. Defining the area's environmental stock - this work was carried out as part of the preparation of the UDP Issues Report on which pre-deposit consultation was undertaken;
2. Scoping the Plan - an examination of Government guidance along with other policies and guidance which the Plan needs to have regard to;
3. Derivation of sustainability criteria - 18 criteria were evolved based primarily on the Council's Local Agenda 21 Plan themes and the criteria in *Action for Sustainability* (the regional sustainable development framework);
4. Assessment of the compatibility of UDP objectives against each other - this process uses a compatibility matrix to assess each objective against all the others;
5. Appraisal of the UDP objectives against the sustainability criteria;

6. Appraisal of the policy and proposals of the UDP against the sustainability criteria.

For a full description of the process and the results of the Sustainability Appraisal, see Appendix 7.