

Core Strategy: Consultation on Preferred Options Report

Sustainability Appraisal Report

May 2011

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SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF THE PREFERRED OPTIONS STAGE OF KNOWSLEY'S CORE STRATEGY

1. NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

This Report outlines the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council's Core Strategy Preferred Options report. It has been produced to accompany the Preferred Options report which is the subject of public consultation from 27th June to 5th September 2011.

SA is a systematic process used to assess the extent to which an emerging plan or strategy will help to achieve the relevant social, environmental and economic objectives. It also suggests ways of avoiding or reducing negative impacts.

This SA considers the potential implications of the Core Strategy by assessing the Spatial Strategy, Principal Regeneration Areas and Thematic Policies against available baseline data and sustainability objectives. The findings of SA should be reflected in the Core Strategy to help ensure that it maximises its contribution to future sustainability.

1.2 Requirement to Undertake a Sustainability Appraisal

Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning the planning system. In order to ensure that new plans and strategies contribute towards the sustainable development, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a SA to be carried out on all new or revised Development Plan Documents.

In addition, local planning authorities must comply with European Union Directive 2001/42/EC, which requires a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of plans and programmes that are likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

1.3 Sustainability Objectives

The SA considers the potential implications of the Core Strategy Preferred Options report by assessing the plan against a series of social, environmental and economic objectives. Accordingly, the establishment of these objectives is central to the SA process.

Drawing upon the sustainability issues identified through analysis of baseline data and the review of other relevant plans and strategies, twenty-two objectives that reflect Knowsley's priorities for achieving a sustainable borough have been identified in the SA Scoping Report. These cover a range of issues, for example relating to housing, social deprivation, health, crime, climate change, biodiversity, air quality, water quality, landscape, cultural heritage, business competitiveness, educational attainment and unemployment. In addition, thirty-seven sub-objectives have been identified to assist with the assessment against the sustainability objectives.

1.4 Baseline Characteristics and Key Sustainability Issues

The review of plans, programmes and strategies, the analysis of the baseline data, and consultation with the public and statutory bodies enabled the following key sustainability issues to be identified:

- Over the past 25 years the population of Knowsley has decreased markedly;
- Knowsley is among the most deprived districts in England;
- There is a need to increase the proportion of households that are owner-occupied and reduce the number of homes that do not have access to modern amenities;
- Over half of persons in Knowsley aged 16 to 74 have no qualifications;
- Binge drinking, smoking and obesity are particular problems in Knowsley;
- There is a need to reduce the need to travel by car and increase the use of more sustainable forms of transport;
- Economic activity rates and incomes are lower than the North West average;
- There is a need to retain a greater proportion of retail expenditure within Knowsley to enhance the vitality and viability of the Borough's town centres;
- 2 of the 15 conservation areas in Knowsley are included on the latest Heritage at Risk register;
- Access to areas of natural and semi-natural open space is poor in parts of the Borough;
- There is a need to conserve and enhance the natural environment recognising the importance of biodiversity;
- There is a need to secure and promote increased energy efficiency and renewable energy sources;
- There is a need to promote and secure more sustainable waste management;
- There is a need to consider the impacts of flooding and flood risk;
- The biological and chemical condition of rivers needs to be improved; and
- The re-use of land should be promoted to minimise the take-up of greenfield land.

Source: Sustainability issues were derived from the baseline data gathered in 2008 – 2009 to inform the SA Scoping Report (May 2009).

1.5 Appraisal Results: Positive and Negative Effects

The SA process concluded that the Core Strategy Preferred Options document has the potential to deliver a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits. A number of recommendations were however made about how individual preferred options could perform better against the sustainability objectives. In addition, there were several instances where it was recommended that further information be provided on the effects of the options in order to provide greater certainty about their impact on the SA objectives.

Preferred Spatial Strategy

The preferred options for the Spatial Strategy (CS1) and Development Principles (CS2) are considered to be likely to have a largely positive impact on the sustainability objectives. In particular, the Development Principles preferred option is likely to have a major positive impact in the long-term on the objectives relating to

health; reducing climate change; and reducing the need to travel. It was concluded that the preferred options for Housing Supply (CS3), the Economy and Employment (CS4) and Town Centres and Retail (CS6) would have a positive impact on a range of objectives, particularly those that relate to social and economic issues and it is predicted that the preferred option for Green Infrastructure (CS8) would have a positive impact on a range of objectives, particularly those relating to landscape character and accessibility; biodiversity; adapting to climate change; and green infrastructure.

It was however considered that the preferred option relating to the Green Belt would have an uncertain or negative impact on several SA objectives. Nevertheless, it was recognised that the performance of this preferred option against the SA objectives could be improved through the provision of further information on the effects of the option which is likely to be included within the Green Belt study when it is published.

Principal Regeneration Areas

The preferred options for each of Principal Regeneration Areas would have a positive impact on a range of sustainability objectives, particularly those relating to social issues. The preferred options relating to Kirkby town centre (CS10), Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks (CS11), South Prescott (CS13) and Prescott town centre (CS14) would also have a major positive impact on at least one of the economic objectives. Nevertheless, as each of the preferred options would result in built development, their impact on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change and the prudent use of minerals is uncertain. There is also some uncertainty over the impact of the preferred option for Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks (CS11) on the objectives relating to air quality and need to travel.

Thematic Policies

On the whole, the Thematic Policies performed well in the SA process. In particular, the preferred options relating to housing and the accommodation needs of the community (CS 15 – CS18) would all have a positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; health and the provision of good quality housing. The preferred options relating to Sustainable and Low Carbon development (CS22) and Renewable and Low Carbon Infrastructure (CS23) would have a major positive impact on the objective relating to mitigating climate change and the preferred option for Urban Greenspaces (CS21) would have a major positive impact on the objectives relating to landscapes; biodiversity; and green infrastructure.

Nevertheless, a number of measures have been suggested to improve the performance of several of the preferred options against the SA objectives. These include, for example, requiring specialist and supported residential accommodation to be located near to public transport links and incorporating a reference to preserving and enhancing archaeological assets in the preferred option on Managing the Borough's Heritage (CS20).

1.6 Difference the Sustainability Appraisal Process has Made

The SA process concluded that the Core Strategy has the potential to deliver a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits. However, it also identified some instances where options have the potential to have a negative impact on

sustainability objectives, a number of uncertain impacts and a range of opportunities for further enhancements to improve the Core Strategy's sustainability.

There were several instances where it was recommended that further information be provided on the policy details in order to provide greater certainty about their impact on the SA objectives. For example, the uncertainty of the impact of the preferred option relating to the Green Belt (CS5) could be reduced by providing additional information on the reserved and safeguarded locations that may be released from the Green Belt. It is however acknowledged that this information will be provided by the Green Belt study when this is published.

A number of specific recommendations have also been made to improve the performance of the preferred options. These include:

Preferred Spatial Strategy

- Including the managing and enhancing of Knowsley's heritage assets as a Spatial Development Priority in preferred option CS1;
- Strengthening the wording of preferred option CS4 to require proposals for town centre uses in out of centre locations to demonstrate that there are no sites in a town centre or edge of centre location that are suitable, available and viable; and
- Incorporating a direct reference to protected and endangered species in preferred option CS8.

Principal Regeneration Areas

- Include proposals to improve access to training in the preferred option for Kirkby town centre (CS10); and
- Strengthening the wording of the preferred option for Prescot town centre (CS14) in relation to the provision of a range of services and facilities.

Thematic Policies

- Providing more information on why the proposed 25% affordable housing contribution is a 'realistic and appropriate' figure;
- Requiring specialist and supported residential accommodation to be located near to public transport links;
- Including the impact of the proposal on the accessibility of the landscape as an issue that would be taken into account when considering the suitability of sites for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople;
- Incorporating a reference to preserving and enhancing archaeological assets in the preferred option on Managing the Borough's Heritage (CS20);
- Incorporating a requirement for proposals for the recycling of aggregates to comply with the criteria in the Site Allocations and Development Policies DPD;
- Ensuring proposals for minerals working are required to retain existing local access routes or amend them to maintain a similar level of access; and
- Providing more information on the effects of infrastructure contributions on the viability of development.

1.7 Next Steps

This SA Report is being published alongside the Knowsley Core Strategy Preferred Options report to provide the public, statutory consultees and other stakeholders with an opportunity to express opinions on this SA Report and to use it as a reference point whilst commenting on the Core Strategy Preferred Options report.

Following consideration and analysis of the consultation responses received, a publication version of the Core Strategy will be produced. Any significant changes made to the Plan will be subjected to SA and the Plan, together with its accompanying SA Report, will be consulted upon in early 2012. It is envisaged that the Core Strategy will be submitted to the Secretary of State in April 2012.

1.8 How to Comment

This SA Report will be subject to a consultation period running from 27th June to 5th September 2011 alongside the Core Strategy Preferred Options report. Comments are invited on the contents of the report, in terms of the appraisal methodology, the accuracy of the assessment of the likely significant effects of the plan and the opportunities for additional mitigation to ensure that the Core Strategy is as 'sustainable' as possible.

Comments can be submitted using the following methods:

- By email, to ldf@knowsley.gov.uk;
- By fax to 0151 443 2370;
- By Facebook by posting on the "Help Plan Knowsley!" page; or
- By post, to:
LDF Strategic Planning Manager

Chief Executive's Directorate,
Knowsley Council,
Archway Road
Huyton
Knowsley
Merseyside
L36 9YU.

The Council should receive all comments no later than 5.00pm on 5th September 2011.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Purpose of the Report

In September 2004, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act came into effect and introduced the requirement for Knowsley Metropolitan Council to replace its existing land use development plan – the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (Adopted June 2006) – with a new “spatial” development plan – the Knowsley Local Development Framework. The Local Development Framework (LDF) is not a single plan but comprises a series of individual documents that collectively deal with the spatial issues that will affect the people, who will live, learn, work and relax in the Borough.

The Core Strategy is the overarching element of the LDF and all other Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) prepared by the Council need to be in conformity with it. The Core Strategy will outline the Council’s vision for Knowsley up to the year 2027, and will set out the strategic framework to promote, guide and manage future growth and development in the Borough. Accordingly, it will make important choices about how and where new development will take place and establish an appropriate balance between growth, regeneration and environmental protection / improvement.

Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning the planning system and, as a consequence, sustainability will be at the heart of the Core Strategy. In order to ensure that new plans and strategies contribute towards the sustainable development, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to be carried out on all new or revised DPDs.

The purpose of this SA is to promote sustainable development through the integration of sustainability considerations into the preparation, adoption and implementation of the Core Strategy. SA does not constitute a separate stage in the production of the Core Strategy but instead represents an iterative, on-going process that forms an integral part of the plan-making process. It involves the identification and evaluation of the social, environmental and economic impacts of the plan. In doing so, it provides an opportunity to consider ways in which the Core Strategy can make an effective contribution to sustainable development and provides a means of avoiding or reducing any adverse effects that the plan might have.

This report outlines the findings of the SA of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council’s Core Strategy Preferred Options report. It appraises the Core Strategy against baseline data and sustainability objectives in order to assess the plan’s impact on economic, social and environmental aims. It is being published for consultation alongside the Core Strategy Preferred Options report to provide the public, statutory consultees and other stakeholders with an opportunity to express opinions on this report and also to use it as a reference point whilst commenting on the Core Strategy Preferred Options report. It should be read alongside the previous SA reports issued for consultation.

2.2 Requirement for SA / SEA

Under Section 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, where a Local Planning Authority is preparing a Core Strategy it is mandatory for the plan to be subject to a SA throughout its production, to ensure that it is fully consistent with, and helps to implement, the principles of sustainable development. The SA performs a key role in providing a sound evidence base for the Core Strategy and provides a means of demonstrating to decision makers, and the public, that the plan is the most appropriate given reasonable alternatives.

In parallel with this, the European Directive 2001/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment” (the Strategic Environmental Assessment or ‘SEA Directive’), which is transposed into United Kingdom law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the ‘SEA Regulations’), introduced a statutory obligation to conduct an environmental assessment of certain plans. The Regulations apply to a range of UK plans and programmes prepared by public bodies, including Knowsley’s Core Strategy which meets the relevant criteria in that:

- It is “prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government, and is required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions” (Article 2(b)); and
- It concerns “town and country planning or land use... which sets the framework for future development consent of projects” (Article 5.2(a)).

While SA and SEA are distinct processes, many of their requirements overlap. As a consequence, the Government has prepared guidance¹ which advises that an integrated approach to SA and SEA should be pursued, so that the SA process also meets the requirements of the SEA Directive and Regulations. This involves extending the breadth of (predominantly environmental) issues required to be considered under SEA to cover the full range of aspects (including social and economic) for sustainability.

In accordance with this guidance, this SA Report meets the SEA requirements, and acts as the ‘environmental report’ for the purposes of Regulation 12 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Throughout this report, all references to SA must be taken to include the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC.

2.3 Compliance with these Requirements

As outlined in section 2.2, the SA of DPDs should also fully incorporate the requirements of the European Directive 2001/42/EC, known as the SEA Directive, which are transposed into United Kingdom law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations). While SEA and SA are distinct processes, the intention of this SA is to adopt an approach to appraisal which also meets the requirements of the SEA Directive and Regulations. The following table shows how this report meets the requirements of the SEA Directive.

Table 1: Compliance with the SEA Directive

¹ Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents: Guidance for Regional Planning Bodies and Local Planning Authorities – ODPM, November 2005.

Information to be included in an Environmental Report under the SEA Regulations	Relevant sections in the SA Report
An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.	3.2 3.4 – 3.6
The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan.	3.3
The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.	3.3
Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan, including in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.	3.3 3.8
The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.	3.3 3.5
The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soils, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage, landscape, and the interrelationship between the above factors.	4.1 – 4.4 Appendix Report
The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan.	4.5 Section 6 Appendix Report
An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties.	3.1 3.7
A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring.	5
A non-technical summary of the information provided above.	1

2.4 History of the SA in Relation to the Core Strategy

SA provides a means to assess the economic, social and environmental effects of a Core Strategy at various points during its preparation. It is not a one-off event in the preparation of a Core Strategy; instead, it should be undertaken in tandem with the plan preparation process and fed into its development at appropriate points. The key milestones in the SA process for Knowsley's Core Strategy are shown in the table below.

Table 2: Key Stages in the SA Process

Task	Date
Publication of the SA Scoping Report	May 2009
Consultation on the SA Scoping Report	May – June 2009
Finalised SA Scoping Report	October 2009
Publication of the SA of Issues and Options	November 2009
Consultation on the SA of Issues and Options	November 2009 – January 2010
Publication of the SA of the Preferred Options	June 2011
Consultation on the SA of the Preferred Options	June – September 2011
Publication of the SA of the publication version of the Core Strategy	January 2012

2.5 Feedback from Consultation

In May 2009 an SA Scoping Report was produced to define the scope of the SA with regard to the Core Strategy, and to define the important features of the baseline that will inform the plan. The aim was to ensure that the SA was comprehensive and would address all relevant issues and objectives, by enabling input from key stakeholders and consultation bodies at an early stage in the process.

In particular, the Scoping Report provides an initial assessment of:

- The relationship between the Core Strategy and other relevant plans and programmes;
- The current environmental, social and economic baseline and any trends; and
- The likely key sustainability issues.

The Report also set out the proposed methodology for the SA, giving details of its level of detail and scope.

Consultation on the SA Scoping Report took place between May and June 2009. Comments were invited from the consultation bodies required by the SEA Regulations – the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England². The main comments from consultation on the SA Scoping Report were the need to:

- Review additional relevant plans, policies and programmes to identify their implications for the Core Strategy;
- Incorporate additional baseline information on the historic environment, landscape, geodiversity, recreation, rural green space and green infrastructure;
- Identify any sustainability issues for the historic environment and cultural heritage, conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, geodiversity and geological conservation, local landscape and townscape quality and character, public enjoyment of the countryside and green infrastructure; and
- Incorporate additional references to the Biodiversity Duty and the North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan.

² The SEA Regulations require the Environment Agency, English Heritage, Natural England and the Countryside Agency to be consulted on the scope of sustainability appraisals. However, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act merged the Countryside Agency and English Nature to form a new agency - Natural England.

The SA Scoping report has been updated to address these comments.

The SA of the Core Strategy Issues and Options report was consulted upon between November 2009 and January 2010. Comments were received on this report from the Natural England. The main comments were:

- Overall, the SA report was considered to be clearly presented and easy to use. The inclusion of a concise non-technical summary at the beginning of the report was commended and the report was considered to be well structured throughout;
- The confirmation that the Habitats Regulations Assessment will be undertaken separately from the SA/SEA process was welcomed;
- The inclusion of a SA objective concerning local character and accessibility of the landscape was welcomed – however it was commented that consideration of the local townscape could be incorporated in this objective;
- The inclusion of objectives regarding biodiversity, habitats and geodiversity and green infrastructure was also welcomed;
- Generally the findings of the SA were supported but it was considered that more references to the baseline information and specific sensitive receptors that may be affected by particular options (e.g. particular communities, nature conservation sites, heritage assets, etc) could be included. Although it was recognised that this may not be possible until subsequent stages in the SA; and
- The range of indicators for monitoring the objectives relating to the natural environment was supported. However, it was suggested that the list of indicators for objective E2 be amended to focus more on monitoring the quality of habitats and designated sites, rather than simply their presence.

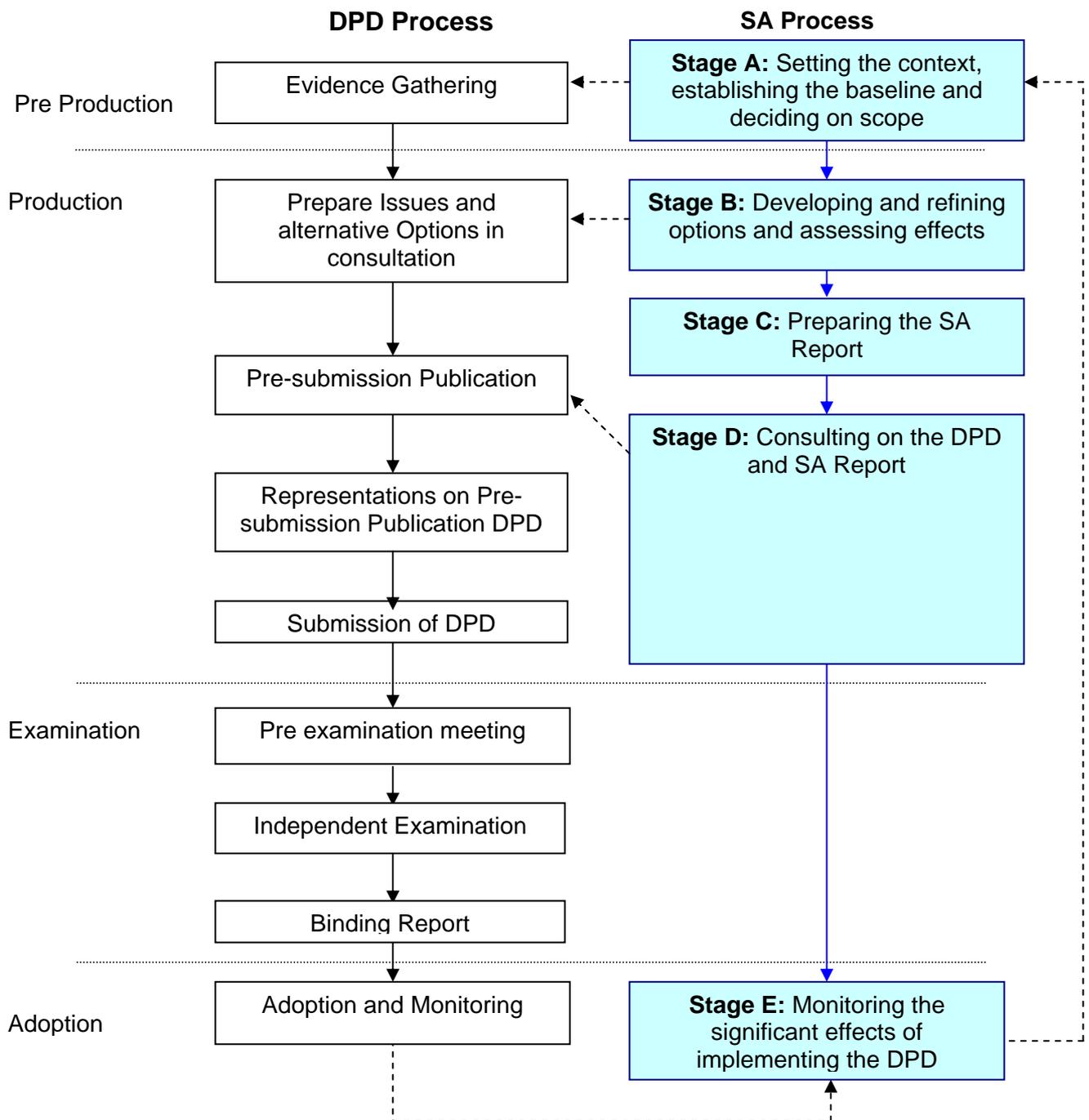
These comments have been taken into account when undertaking the SA of the Preferred Options report.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overall Approach

The approach adopted to undertake the SA was based on the process set out in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Guidance Paper “Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents” November 2005. This guidance advocates the following process to undertaking SA:

Figure 1: DPD and SA preparation process



There are five stages in the SA process. Knowsley Council undertook the first stage (Stage A), identifying the initial scope of the SA, in May 2009. In conjunction with key stakeholders, the Council identified and reviewed other relevant plans, policies and programmes that will affect and influence the Core Strategy; set out relevant social, environmental and economic baseline information; identified the key sustainability issues for the SA to address; established an SA Framework consisting of sustainability objectives, indicators and targets; and produced a Scoping Report for consultation on the scope of the appraisal.

As part of Stage A of the SA process, twenty-two sustainable development objectives were established for appraising the Core Strategy. The establishment of SA objectives and criteria is central to the SA process. The SA framework, based on these objectives provides a way in which sustainability effects are described, assessed and compared. Sustainability objectives are distinct from those of the Core Strategy.

The sustainability objectives used for the SA of the Core Strategy Preferred Options report were drawn from the sustainability issues identified through analysis of the baseline data and review of other plans and strategies set out in the SA Scoping Report. These objectives reflect Knowsley's priorities for achieving a sustainable borough and cover a range of issues, for example relating to housing, social deprivation, health, crime, climate change, biodiversity, air quality, water quality, landscape, cultural heritage, business growth, educational attainment and unemployment. In addition, thirty-seven sub-objectives have been identified to assist with the assessment against the sustainability objectives.

The SA Framework can be found in the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Appendices report, which is available on the Council's website.

3.2 Links to Other Plans, Programmes and Strategies

Stage A of the SA process involves establishing the context in which the Core Strategy is being prepared, namely the other plans, programmes and strategies that influence its content (and vice-versa) and the opportunities and challenges they present. The SEA Directive specifically requires environmental objectives established at international, European Community or national levels to be taken into account in developing the Core Strategy. However, in order to facilitate a comprehensive approach and maximise its sustainability, guidance on SA recommends that this should be widened to consider how the Core Strategy can support the full range of other plans, policies and programmes that already exist, including at the regional, sub-regional and local levels, taking into account their economic and social as well as environmental objectives.

In reviewing these plans, policies and programmes the aim is to identify their implications for the Core Strategy to ensure that the relationship between these documents and the Core Strategy has been fully explored. This will in turn ensure that Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council is able to exploit potential synergies and address any identified inconsistencies between international, national, regional and local objectives.

Table 2 below shows a list of the plans, policies and programmes that were reviewed as part of the SA. The full review is provided in the SA Scoping Report for the Core Strategy (June 2007), which is available on the Council's website.

Table 3: List of all Plans, Programmes and Strategies reviewed as part of the SA

INTERNATIONAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, 1992 • Environment 2010: Our Future, Our Choice: The Sixth Environment Action Programme of the European Community, 2002 • Sustainable Development Strategy EU, May 2001 • European Council Directive 2000/60/EC- Integrated river basin management for Europe • European Council Directive 75/442/EEC on waste • Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC • European Landscape Convention • European Spatial Development Perspective
NATIONAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981 • Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) • Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 • The Conservation (Natural Habitats & C.) Regulations, 2004 • Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 • Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 • The Historic Environment: A Force for Our Future, 2001 • Heritage Protection for the 21st Century, a joint England and Wales White Paper • Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities: A Review and Toolkit for their Implementation, 2003 • By All Reasonable Means: Inclusive access to the outdoors for disabled people, 2005. • Circular 01/06 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites • Sustainable Communities Plan, building for the Future, 2003 • Biodiversity Strategy for England, 2002 • Guidance for Local Authorities on Implementing the Biodiversity Duty, 2007 • Biodiversity by Design, 2004 • The Code for Sustainable Homes • Green Infrastructure Guidance, 2009 • Climate Change and Biodiversity Adaptation: the role of the spatial planning system, 2009 • Heritage Works: The use of historic buildings in regeneration • Securing The Future: delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005. • The Countryside in and around Towns – a Vision for Connecting Town and Country in Pursuit of Sustainable Development • PPS 1 Delivering Sustainable Communities • PPS 1 (Supplement) Planning and Climate Change • PPG 2 Green Belts • PPS 3 Housing • Draft PPS 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Development • PPS 6 Planning for Town Centres • PPS 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas • PPS 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation • Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: A Guide to Good Practice • PPS 10 Planning for Sustainable Waste Management • PPS 12 Local Spatial Planning • PPG 13 Transport. • PPG 15 Planning and the Historic Environment • PPG 16 Archaeology and Planning • PPG 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation • PPS 22 Renewable Energy • PPS 23 Planning and Pollution Control • PPG 24 Planning and Noise • PPS 25 Development and Flood Risk

REGIONAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 • North West Plan Regional Spatial Strategy Partial Review 2008 - 2009 • North West Regional Housing Strategy, 2005 • Action for Sustainability – The Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the North West, 2004 • Investment for Health - Action plan for the North West. • The North West Plan for Sport and Physical Activity, 2004-2008. • The Green Infrastructure Guide for the North West • Rising to the Challenge – A Climate Change Action Plan for England's North West • Countryside Character Volume 2: North West • North West Regional Biodiversity Targets • Streets for All
MERSEYSIDE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second Local Transport Plan for Merseyside 2006 – 2011, 2006 • Merseyside "New Heartlands" Housing Market Renewal Initiative 2003 • North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan • Merseyside Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, MWDA, 2005 • Merseyside Joint Waste Development Plan Document • Action Plan for the City Region 2002-2005, Mersey Partnership, 2001 • Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy, The Mersey Partnership, 2007 • Merseyside Heritage Investment Strategy, Culture North West, 2005 • Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for the Liverpool City Region: Draft Discussion Document, 2009
LOCAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowsley the Borough of Choice: sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2023 • Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006 • Ensuring Choice of Travel SPD (Draft) • Greenspace Standards and New Development SPD • Householder Development SPD • North Huyton SPD • Tower Hill (Kirkby) SPD • Knowsley Annual Monitoring Reports • Knowsley MBC Corporate Plan • Knowsley MBC Housing Strategy • Knowsley MBC Economic Development Plan • Knowsley Economic Regeneration Strategy (currently being prepared) • Knowsley MBC Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2005-2008 • Knowsley MBC Building Schools for the Future programme • Knowsley Guide to Development • Conservation Area Character Appraisal for each of the 15 conservation areas. • An Environmental Policy for Knowsley Council • Knowsley Council's Climate Change Strategy 2008 - 2009

3.3 Baseline Characteristics and Key Sustainability Issues

The collection and analysis of baseline information is a key component of the SA process and a legal requirement under the SEA Directive. It facilitates the identification of the key sustainability issues that need to be taken into account when developing a plan and assists in the formation of objectives, indicators and targets for the plan. Baseline data also provides the information necessary to assist in predicting and monitoring the effects of a plan.

For the Core Strategy, baseline data was obtained from a number of different sources. The analysis of the key baseline characteristics for Knowsley, together with an assessment of other relevant plans, policies and programmes, has facilitated the

identification of the key sustainability issues that need to be taken into account when developing the Core Strategy.

From this analysis it is evident that Knowsley is one of the most deprived districts in England, with significant problems in parts of the Borough in relation to unemployment, health, educational attainment and fear of crime. Nevertheless, it is recognised that Knowsley also contains a number of valuable assets that must be protected and enhanced. The major social, environmental and economic issues for Knowsley are identified below:

- Over the past 25 years the population of Knowsley has decreased markedly;
- Knowsley is among the most deprived districts in England;
- Knowsley currently has an unbalanced mix of housing. There is a need to increase the proportion of households that are owner-occupied and reduce the number of homes that do not have access to modern amenities;
- Over half of persons in Knowsley aged 16 to 74 have no qualifications. Accordingly, there is a need to improve educational attainment and increase access to training and opportunities for lifelong learning;
- A significant proportion of Knowsley's population experience serious health issues, with binge drinking, smoking and obesity being particular problems;
- Fear of crime is a significant issue;
- There is a need to reduce the need to travel by car and increase the use of more sustainable forms of transport;
- Economic activity rates and incomes are lower than the North West average and need to be improved;
- There is a need to retain a greater proportion of expenditure within Knowsley to enhance the vitality and viability of the Borough's town and local centres;
- 2 of the 15 conservation areas in Knowsley are included on the latest Heritage at Risk register;
- Access to areas of natural and semi-natural open space is often poor;
- The quality of the built environment in parts of the Borough is poor;
- There is a need to conserve and enhance the natural environment recognising the importance of biodiversity;
- There is a need to secure and promote increased energy efficiency and renewable energy sources;
- There is a need to promote and secure more sustainable waste management;
- There is a need to consider the impacts of flooding and flood risk;
- The biological and chemical condition of rivers in the Borough need to be improved; and
- The re-use of land should be promoted to minimise the take-up of greenfield land.

Source: Sustainability issues were derived from the baseline data gathered in 2008 – 2009 to inform the SA Scoping Report (May 2009).

3.4 Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

The SA appraises the potential implications of the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper from a social, environmental and economic perspective. SA is fundamentally based on an objectives-led approach whereby the potential impacts of a plan are

gauged in relation to a series of objectives for sustainable development. The establishment of these objectives is therefore central to the SA process as it provides the methodological yardstick against which the sustainability effects of the Core Strategy can be described, assessed and compared.

Drawing upon the sustainability issues identified through analysis of baseline data and the review of other relevant plans and strategies, the SA Scoping Report for the Core Strategy identifies twenty-two objectives that reflect Knowsley's priorities for achieving a sustainable borough. In addition, a number of sub-objectives have been identified for each objective to assist with the assessment against them. These objectives and their sub-objectives are listed below.

The objectives have been designed to be fully comprehensive, whilst minimising any overlap between individual objectives that could potentially cause confusion and skew the results of any appraisal. Each objective is inevitably broad in its scope given the wide-ranging nature of the Core Strategy and its potential sustainability implications.

SOCIAL

- S1 To reduce poverty and social deprivation and secure economic inclusion.**
- Improve the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation rating of the Borough.
 - Reduce the proportion of children living in poverty.
 - Reduce the percentage of lower level Super Output Areas that are in the top 10% most deprived in England.
 - Improve health and reduce long-term limiting illness.
 - Improve rates of economic activity.
- S2 To improve local accessibility of goods, services and amenities and reduce community severance.**
- Improve community facilities.
- S3 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime.**
- Improve road safety.
 - To reduce crime and fear of crime.
- S4 To support voluntary and community networks, assist social exclusion and ensure community involvement in decision making.**
- S5 To improve health and reduce health inequalities.**
- Increase life expectancy.
 - Reduce mortality rates.
 - Reduce levels of obesity.
- S6 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing.**
- Provide a wider choice of accommodation to create a greater tenure mix.
 - Increase the quality of housing by improving housing amenities.
 - Minimise resource and energy use when developing housing and the energy efficiency of housing.

- S7 To improve educational attainment, training and opportunities for lifelong learning and employability.**
- Increase educational achievement.
- S8 To preserve, enhance and manage Knowsley's rich diversity of cultural, historic and archaeological buildings, areas, sites and features.**

ENVIRONMENTAL

- E1 To protect, enhance and manage the local character and accessibility of the landscape and countryside across Knowsley.**
- Provide the required amount of open space.
 - Provide open space in accessible locations.
 - Improve the quality of open space.
 - Improve the cleanliness of open areas.
 - Increase number of parks with green flag award.
- E2 To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity, the viability of protected and endangered species, habitats, geodiversity and sites of geological importance.**
- To conserve and enhance the natural environment, including species and habitat diversity.
- E3 To adapt to climate change including flood risk.**
- Reduce flood risk
- E4 To mitigate climate change including using energy prudently and efficiently and increasing energy generated from renewable sources.**
- Reduce CO₂ emissions.
- E5 To provide, conserve, maintain and enhance green infrastructure.**
- To improve the size and quality of the green infrastructure network.
 - To improve the size and quality of the Ecological Framework.
- E6 To protect, manage and restore land and soil quality.**
- Reduce the amount of derelict land.
 - Direct new housing to previously developed land.
 - Reduce the amount of contaminated land.
- E7 To protect, improve and where necessary, restore the quality of inland, and estuarine waters.**
- Increase the length of rivers in 'Good' or 'Fair' biological condition.
 - Increase the length of rivers in 'Good' or 'Fair' chemical condition.
- E8 To protect, and where necessary, improve local air quality.**
- E9 To use water and mineral resources prudently and efficiently.**
- E10 To reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of more sustainable transport mode.**
- Encourage sustainable transport use.

E11 To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates.

ECONOMIC

EC1 To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business, exploit the growth potential of business sectors and increase the number of new businesses.

- Increase number of local and new businesses.
- Increase industrial / commercial floorspace.

EC2 To enhance the vitality and viability of town and local centres.

- Increase the vitality of shopping areas.
- Improve community facilities.

EC3 Maintain high and stable levels of employment and reduce long-term unemployment.

- Reduce unemployment

3.5 Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy

The proposed Core Strategy spatial vision seeks to achieve the following Strategic Objectives by 2027.

Table 4: Core Strategy Strategic Objectives

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE NO.	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE
1	To encourage and maintain sustainable economic and employment growth in Knowsley, complementary to that within the wider Liverpool City Region, by accommodating employment related development, improving skills within the workforce, and promoting enterprise, entrepreneurship and innovation.
2	To promote a well-balanced housing market throughout Knowsley by providing a sufficient quantity and mix of high quality sustainable housing in appropriate locations to meet needs and demand (including for market, affordable and supported housing).
3	To regenerate and transform areas of social and economic deprivation so they become more sustainable, safer, healthier and more cohesive communities, hence narrowing the gap between the richest and poorest communities in Knowsley.
4	To promote distinctive, viable and sustainable town centres in Huyton, Kirkby and Prescot, by improving choice, variety and quality in their range of retail, leisure and other town centre uses, with renewed and thriving district centres for Halewood and Stockbridge Village and a more sustainable pattern of local centres.
5	To promote the quality of place within Knowsley by protecting historically important features and enhancing the character, quality and diversity of Knowsley's built environment, including town centres, key employment areas, residential neighbourhoods, conservation areas, rural areas and villages, key gateways and transport routes.
6	To ensure new development in Knowsley encourages a reduction in the overall need to travel, and prioritises sustainable transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. This will help to ensure accessibility and linkage between housing areas and employment locations, shopping, leisure, culture, health care, education, community and sporting facilities, green spaces and other services.
7	To manage environmental resources in Knowsley prudently by focusing on sustainable development, recycling and renewable technologies, reducing carbon emissions and responding to the impacts of climate change.
8	To support and strengthen the role of Knowsley's Green Infrastructure (in rural and urban areas), promote biodiversity, and maintain the character of rural settlements including Cronton, Tarbock and Knowsley Village.

3.6 Testing the Core Strategy Objectives against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework

In order to ensure that the Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy are consistent with the principles of sustainable development they must be tested against the SA framework. This enables conflicts and tensions between the objectives to be identified and recommendations made for their amendment or identify additions to them.

Table 5 'tests' the Core Strategies objectives against each of the SA objectives.

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Summary SA Objective	Reduce poverty	Improve local access to goods & services	Improve safety & reduce crime	Support voluntary & community networks	Improve health	Good housing	Education & training opportunities	Preserve built heritage	Protect & enhance countryside & landscape	Protect & enhance biodiversity	Adapt to climate change	Mitigate climate change	Preserve green infrastructure	Restore land & soil; quality	Protect & improve water quality	Protect & improve air quality	Use resources efficiently	Reduce need to travel & use more sustainable modes	Minimise waste & increase recycling	Business growth	Vitality & viability of town centres	High & stable levels of employment
SA Objective	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	E11	EC1	EC2	EC3
Summary Core Strategy Objective																						
Encourage sustainable economic and employment growth	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	0	?	0	+	+	+
To create a well-balanced housing market	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	?	?	0	?	0	?	0	0	0	?	0	+	+	0
Regenerate and transform areas of social and economic deprivation	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	+	0	+	+	+
Promote distinctive, viable and sustainable town centres	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	+	+	+
Promote the quality of place within Knowsley	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	?	0	?	0	+	+	0
Ensure new development reduces the need to travel and prioritises sustainable transport links	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	+	+

Summary SA Objective	Reduce poverty	Improve local access to goods & services	Improve safety & reduce crime	Support voluntary & community networks	Improve health	Good housing	Education & training opportunities	Preserve built heritage	Protect & enhance countryside & landscape	Protect & enhance biodiversity	Adapt to climate change	Mitigate climate change	Preserve green infrastructure	Restore land & soil; quality	Protect & improve water quality	Protect & improve air quality	Use resources efficiently	Reduce need to travel & use more sustainable modes	Minimise waste & increase recycling	Business growth	Vitality & viability of town centres	High & stable levels of employment
SA Objective	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	E11	EC1	EC2	EC3
Summary Core Strategy Objective																						
Manage environmental resources prudently and respond to the impacts of climate change	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	+	0
Support and strengthen the role of Knowsley's Green Infrastructure	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Objectives are compatible



Objectives are not compatible



Uncertain relationship



No direct relationship

Overall the Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy are considered to be compatible with the SA objectives. In particular, the objectives concerning the regeneration of areas of social and economic deprivation; promoting distinctive, viable and sustainable town centres; managing environmental resources prudently; ensuring new development reduces the need to travel and prioritises sustainable transport links, are especially consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

There were no instances where the Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy were incompatible with a SA objective. Nevertheless, there were some uncertain relationships between the two sets of objectives.

3.7 Data Limitations/Technical Difficulties

The SEA Directive requires the identification of any difficulties encountered; these may include technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge. There were no significant technical difficulties encountered during the undertaking the SA of the Preferred Options report. However, there were some areas of uncertainty that resulted from the limited detail of some of the proposals (partly resulting from the strategic nature of the document and also partly due to the limited information on implementation that is provided at this stage of the Core Strategy's evolution) and evidence constraints particularly in terms of quantifying impacts. It was also necessary to make a number of assumptions in order to carry out the assessment.

Some of the key limitations/difficulties included:

- Limited information is presented on the reserved and safeguarded locations that may be released from the Green Belt;
- Limited information available to assess the impact of a number of the Preferred Options on carbon dioxide emissions and the use of water and minerals;
- Limited baseline data is available on geodiversity and sites of geological interest; and
- There is limited certainty over the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy and limited information is available on the effects of the proposed infrastructure contributions on the viability of development.

3.8 Screening for Habitats Regulation Assessment

Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna – the 'Habitats Directive' – provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Article 6 of this Directive introduced the requirement to undertake a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' of the implications of proposed land use plans for the integrity of nature conservation sites of European importance. Such sites are known as Natura 2000 sites, and include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs), Special Areas of Protection (SPAs), potential Special Areas of Protection (pSPAs), Ramsar sites and Offshore Marine Sites (OMSs).

The purpose of a Habitats Regulations Assessment is to determine whether or not significant effects on European sites are likely and to suggest ways in which they could be avoided. Under the provisions of the Habitats Directive, consent can only be

granted for such a plan if, as a result of the Habitats Regulations Assessment, it can be demonstrated that the integrity of the sites will not be adversely affected or, where adverse impacts are anticipated, there is shown to be no alternative solutions and imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to go ahead.

Consultants Scott Wilson has been appointed by Knowsley Borough Council to assist in undertaking a Habitat Regulations Assessment of the potential effects of the Core Strategy on the Natura 2000 network and Ramsar sites. This Habitats Regulations Assessment will investigate the potential impacts of the plan – in combination with other plans and projects – on relevant European sites (including sites beyond the Knowsley area). This Habitats Regulation Assessment is being conducted alongside, but separate from, the SA.

4. PREFERRED OPTIONS APPRAISAL

This section provides a summary of the results of the sustainability appraisal of the Core Strategy Preferred Options report. The Preferred Spatial Strategy, Principal Regeneration Areas and Thematic Policies were appraised against the twenty-two sustainability objectives. This appraisal considered the degree and type of impact, split by short term (0-5 years), medium term (5-10 years), and long-term (10+ years). It also predicted the certainty of impact (in terms of high, medium and low); the scale of impact (which ranged from local to national); the permanence of the impact; any key secondary, cumulative and/or synergistic impacts; and options for mitigation. When undertaking this appraisal the default level of certainty was considered to be medium.

The full sustainability appraisal matrices are available in the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report Appendices, which is available on the Council's website.

4.1 Summary of the Significant Effects of the Preferred Spatial Strategy

In order to achieve the Vision for Knowsley the Preferred Options report sets out a Spatial Strategy which sets out the overarching strategy on which the remainder of the report is based. This Spatial Strategy is supported by a series of other Preferred Options which are fundamental to the delivery of the objectives of the Core Strategy. The following section gives a brief summary of the outcomes of the SA of each of the Spatial Strategy for Knowsley and the supporting Preferred Options.

CS1: Spatial Strategy for Knowsley

The Spatial Strategy for Knowsley would have a largely positive impact on the sustainability objectives. There is however some scope for further improvement to the performance of the Spatial Strategy against the sustainability objectives.

By seeking to regenerate existing residential neighbourhoods and through appropriate investment in services and facilities it is considered that the Spatial Strategy has the potential to have a positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and social deprivation; improving access to goods, services and amenities; improving health and reducing health inequalities; and improving educational attainment. The emphasis placed upon re-balancing the housing stock by providing a wide choice of new market sector and affordable housing should ensure that the Spatial Strategy has a positive impact on the objective relating to the provision of good quality housing.

By seeking to enhance existing employment areas, provide a range of sites and premises for new employment development and maintaining and enhancing the Borough's town and district centres. It is considered that the Spatial Strategy would have a positive impact on the economic objectives. It is however considered that there would be greater certainty that the Spatial Strategy would have a positive impact on the objective relating to the vitality and viability of the Borough's town and local centres if a reference to maintaining and enhancing the Borough's local centres was included. The Spatial Strategy would also have a positive impact on the objectives relating to landscape; biodiversity and geodiversity; adapting to climate change; mitigating climate change; green infrastructure; land and soil; air quality; and

reducing the need to travel. Nevertheless, the level of certainty that the Spatial Strategy would have a positive impact on some of these objectives is only low and a number of mitigation measures are suggested to ensure the Spatial Strategy would have a positive impact on these objectives, including ensuring that any new development built within the Green Belt is accessible by a choice of means of transport and ensuring new development is built to an appropriate density to minimise loss of countryside.

There are no anticipated negative impacts on the sustainability objectives. The impact of the Spatial Strategy on the objective of preserving, enhancing and managing Knowsley's rich diversity of cultural, historic and archaeological buildings, areas, sites and features is however considered to be uncertain due to the increased development pressure being placed on the urban area. In order to mitigate this uncertainty it is considered that 'managing and enhancing Knowsley's heritage assets' could be included as a Spatial Development Priority.

CS2: Development Principles

The preferred option would have a positive impact on a wide range of social, environmental and economic objectives. The preferred option would have a particularly significant impact on the objectives relating to health; reducing climate change; and reducing the need to travel. It is anticipated that the positive impact on each of these objectives will become increasingly significant as the Plan's proposals take effect.

The emphasis placed upon encouraging development that promotes sustainable economic development, tackles deprivation and helps reduce economic inequality should ensure that the preferred option has some positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; improving the competitiveness and productivity of business; and maintaining high and stable levels of employment. The development principles also seek to ensure the provision of a range of services and facilities which should have some positive impact on the objectives relating to the accessibility of goods, services and amenities; and improving educational attainment. In addition, the inclusion of development principles relating to the protection of environmental assets and the quality of places ensures that the preferred option should have some positive impact on the objectives relating to Knowsley's built heritage; landscape character and accessibility; biodiversity and geodiversity; land and soil; and water quality.

There are no negative or uncertain impacts on the sustainability objectives.

CS3: Housing Supply, Delivery and Distribution

The preferred option would have a largely positive impact on the sustainability objectives. The preferred option seeks to deliver a sufficient number of houses to meet Knowsley's needs and ensure that the tenure, type and size of housing delivered supports the re-balancing of the housing market to better meet the needs and demands of Knowsley's communities. As a result, it is considered that the preferred option has the potential to have a major positive impact on the objective of providing good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing, and some positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and social deprivations; and health.

The preferred option is likely to generate some employment and training opportunities in the construction sector. In addition, the provision of high quality residential developments can ensure that the Borough attracts a suitable workforce

and thereby have a positive impact on the ongoing competitiveness of businesses and support the Borough's town and local centres. As a result, it is envisaged that the preferred option would have a positive impact on the economic objectives and the objective of improving educational attainment, training and employability.

There are no anticipated negative impacts on the sustainability objectives. It is however considered that the preferred option would have an uncertain impact on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change and the use of water and minerals due to the environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of new dwellings. It is however recognised that there is an identified need to provide housing in the Borough and that the new dwellings would be built to higher environmental standards.

CS4: Economy and Employment

The preferred option would have a largely positive impact on the sustainability objectives. The preferred option seeks to support sustainable economic growth; provide sufficient land to meet employment development needs; improve accessibility to an appropriate range of jobs; and address skills and educational barriers to employment. It is therefore envisaged that the preferred option would have a major positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; improving the competitiveness of business and increasing the number of new businesses; and maintaining high and stable levels of employment; and some positive impact on the objective relating to improving opportunities for lifelong learning and employability. It is anticipated that the positive impact on each of these objectives will become increasingly significant as the Plan's proposals take effect.

The preferred option seeks to direct retail and town centre leisure uses to existing town centres. It is therefore anticipated that the preferred option would also have a major positive impact on the objective of enhancing the vitality and viability of town and local centres. It is however considered that there would be a greater level of certainty that the preferred option would have a positive impact on this objective if the wording was strengthened to require proposals for town centre uses in out of centre locations to demonstrate that there are no sites in a town centre or edge of centre location that are suitable, available and viable. The directing of retail and town centre leisure uses to existing town centres, which are all considered to be accessible by public transport, should also have some positive impact on the objectives relating to air quality and improving the use of more sustainable modes of travel. It is however considered that the certainty of this impact is also low.

It is not anticipated that the preferred option would have a negative impact on any of the sustainability objectives. It is however considered that the preferred option would have an uncertain impact on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change and the use of water and minerals due to the environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of new dwellings. Nevertheless, it is recognised that there is an identified need to for new employment premises in the Borough and that the new development would be built to higher environmental standards.

CS5: Green Belts

The preferred option would have a positive impact on a number of sustainability objectives, particularly in the short and medium term. However, the number of mitigation recommendations is indicative of the fact that there are a number of opportunities to improve the sustainability performance of this policy.

Through the provision of a number of reserve and safeguarded locations for housing and employment development the preferred option would provide an additional mechanism to ensure that there is sufficient housing and employment land to meet the needs of the Borough in the latter stages of the plan period. It is therefore envisaged that the preferred option would have a positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; housing; the growth potential of business sectors; and maintaining high and stable levels of employment.

By ensuring housing and employment development are directed to the urban area in the short and medium term, the preferred option is likely to result in the protection of greenfield sites outside the urban area and thereby have a positive impact in the short and medium term on the objectives relating to health; landscape character and accessibility; mitigating climate change; green infrastructure; and land and soil. However, the preferred option would result in some housing and employment development in the Green Belt in the longer term. Consequently, in the longer term it is envisaged that the preferred option would have a negative impact on the objective relating to land and soil and an uncertain impact on the objectives relating to health; landscape character and accessibility; mitigating climate change; and green infrastructure. This uncertainty will however be addressed through the publication of the Green Belt study. This will provide information on, amongst other things, the recreational value of the sites and their role in the green infrastructure network.

The preferred option would result in a more dispersed pattern of development. Limited information is currently provided on the accessibility of the reserve and safeguarded locations that may be released from the Green Belt later in the plan period. As a result, in the longer term, the preferred option would have an uncertain impact on the objectives relating to access to goods, services and amenities; air quality; sustainable transport use; and the vitality and viability of town and local centres. Similarly, the limited information provided on the biodiversity and geodiversity value of these sites and their proximity to the Borough's historic assets means that the impact of the preferred option on the objectives relating to built heritage and biodiversity are uncertain in the long term.

CS6: Town Centres and Retail Strategy

The preferred option would have a positive impact on a wide range of social, environmental and economic objectives. By directing investment to Knowsley's town, district and local centres it is envisaged that the preferred option would have a major positive impact on the objectives relating to enhancing the vitality and viability of town and local centres and exploiting the growth potential of business sectors and increase the number of new businesses. Given that each of the Borough's town centres is accessible by public transport and that the preferred option would also lead to appropriate shopping and service provision in Knowsley's district and local centres, it is considered that the preferred option would also have some positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; access to goods, services and amenities; health; education; mitigating climate change; air quality; and reducing the need to travel and improving the use of more sustainable transport modes.

By enhancing the vitality and viability of Knowsley's centres, the preferred option is likely to increase the amount of activity in these centres and thereby have a positive impact on the objective of reducing crime and fear of crime. The investment in

Knowsley's centres, particularly Prescott town centre, could also result in some positive impact on the objective to preserve, enhance and manage Knowsley's rich diversity of cultural, historic and archaeological buildings, areas, sites and features. The preferred option would also have some positive impact on the objectives relating to housing; protecting land and soil; and maintaining high and stable levels of employment. It is however considered that the degree to which these employment opportunities will be attainable for the long-term unemployed is uncertain.

The preferred option would result in significant investment being directed to Knowsley's town centres. The SFRA noted that surface water flooding incidents in the Borough are predominantly associated with highway flooding and are prevalent in all major conurbations within the Council's boundaries, including Halewood, Huyton, Prescott, Knowsley Village and Kirkby. Nevertheless, other policies in the Core Strategy should ensure that development is directed to areas at the lowest risk of flooding and that appropriate measures are taken to ensure new development does not exacerbate flood risk. It is therefore considered that the preferred option is unlikely to have any significant impact on the objective relating to adapting to climate change.

There are no negative or uncertain impacts on the sustainability objectives.

CS7: Transport Networks

The preferred option relating to Transport Networks would have a largely positive impact on the sustainability objectives. The preferred option would improve the choice and use of more sustainable transport modes, require larger scale proposals to be located in the most accessible parts of the Borough and give priority to schemes that provide for improvements to the rail network, enhanced provision for buses, line 1 of the Mersey tram scheme, and the delivery of an enhanced provision of walking and cycling routes as part of the Green Infrastructure network. It is therefore envisaged that the preferred option would have a major positive impact on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change and improving the use of more sustainable modes of transport, and some positive impact on the objective of protecting air quality.

The preferred option seeks to ensure that the Borough has a sustainable transport system that enables people to get to where they need to go by walking, cycling and public transport. It is therefore anticipated that the preferred option would improve access to services and facilities and thereby have a positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; community severance; health inequalities; and educational attainment. It is also considered that the preferred option would have a positive impact on the economic objectives relating to the competitiveness of businesses in Knowsley and maintaining high and stable levels of employment.

There are no negative or uncertain impacts on the sustainability objectives and, as such, no mitigation measures are proposed.

CS6: Green Infrastructure

The preferred option for green Infrastructure would have a positive impact on a large number of objectives, particularly those relating to environmental issues. In particular, it is considered that the preferred option would have a major positive impact on the objectives relating to landscape character and accessibility; biodiversity; adapting to climate change; and green infrastructure. By providing opportunities for sport and

recreation the preferred option may also have some positive impact on the objective relating to health and the creation of green paths and cycle ways could encourage walking and cycling as an alternative to travelling by car and thereby have a positive impact on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change; air quality; and the use of more sustainable transport modes.

The protection afforded to open spaces and watercourses ensures that the preferred option should have some positive impact on the objectives of protecting land and soil; and water quality. In addition, the provision of an enhanced green infrastructure network within the Borough may increase the desirability of Knowsley as a destination for investment which would have a positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; business competitiveness; and high and stable levels of employment. It is however acknowledged that there is only a low level of certainty about the impact on these three objectives. It is also anticipated that the preferred option would have a positive impact on the objective to Knowsley's built heritage.

There are no negative or uncertain impacts on the sustainability objectives. It is however considered that the level of certainty that the preferred option would have a major positive impact on the objective relating to biodiversity could be improved by the incorporation of a direct reference to protected and endangered species.

4.2 Summary of the Significant Effects of the Principal Regeneration Areas

The Council recognises that significant change and development will be needed in large parts of Knowsley if the vision and spatial strategy for the Borough are to be achieved. The Council also acknowledge that the greatest need and opportunity for comprehensive change are in a series of areas defined as Principal Regeneration Areas. As a consequence, the Preferred Options report sets out a preferred approach to guiding future development in each of these areas. The following section gives a summary of the outcomes of the SA of the preferred option for each of these Principal Regeneration Areas.

CS9: North Huyton and Stockbridge Village

The preferred option for North Huyton and Stockbridge Village would have a positive impact on a wide range of objectives. In particular, by providing new housing development of a range of types suitable for local needs and also leading to the enhanced provision of retail, leisure and community facilities, the preferred option would have a major positive impact on the objectives relating to deprivation and social exclusion; access to goods, services and amenities; and housing, and some positive impact on the objectives relating to health and educational attainment.

The preferred option would result in the provision of public open spaces within a wider green infrastructure network. It is therefore envisaged that the preferred option would have a positive impact on the objectives relating to landscape and green infrastructure. The proposed transport provision, including public transport, walking and cycling, should also ensure that the preferred option has some positive impact on the objectives relating to air quality and the use of more sustainable transport mode. The investment that would be directed to Stockbridge Village centre together with the specification that the retail provision in this centre must be of a scale and function which meets the needs of the area should ensure that the preferred option

has a positive impact on the objective relating to the vitality and viability of town and local centres. It is also envisaged that the preferred option would have some positive impact on the objectives relating to crime and fear of crime; protecting land and soil; and reducing long-term unemployment.

There are no anticipated negative impacts on the sustainability objectives. Nevertheless, it is considered that the preferred option would have an uncertain impact on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change and the use of water and minerals due to the environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the built development proposed by the preferred option. It is however recognised that there is an identified need to re-balance the housing market to meet local needs. In addition, the new development would be built to higher environmental standards.

The SFRA has demonstrated that parts of the Principal Regeneration Area are within Flood Zones 2 and 3. It is likely that climate change will exacerbate this flood risk. Nevertheless, as other policies in the Core Strategy will ensure that appropriate measures are taken to ensure flood risk is managed, it is considered that the preferred option would have no significant impact on the objective.

CS10: Kirkby Town Centre

The preferred option would have a positive impact on a wide range of sustainability objectives. In particular, the preferred option would lead to the retail-led regeneration of Kirkby town centre and would lead to the provision of space for employment uses in the centre. It is therefore envisaged that the preferred option would have a major positive impact on the objectives relating to the enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres and increasing the number of new businesses.

The preferred option would result in the provision of facilities and employment opportunities in a location that is accessible from areas of deprivation. It is therefore considered that the preferred option has the potential to have a positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and social exclusion; and reducing long-term unemployment. Nevertheless, there is only a low level of certainty that the preferred option would have a positive impact on the objective as it does not seek to address low skills/training and, as a result, it is not clear whether these employment opportunities would be accessible to the long-term unemployed. By not seeking to directly address low skills/training it is also considered that the preferred option would have no significant impact on the objective relating to educational attainment and employability.

The preferred option would deliver improved facilities for sustainable transport, including improvements to Kirkby bus station, safeguarding the potential delivery of the Merseytram Line 1 and the creation of new footpaths and cycleways. Whilst it is noted that the funding for delivering the Merseytram is unsecured, it is considered that the other aspects of the preferred option should ensure some modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport and, as a result, has some positive impact on the objectives relating to air quality and the use of more sustainable transport modes. It is also anticipated that the preferred option would have some positive impact on the objectives relating to access to goods, services and amenities; crime and fear of crime; health; and protecting land and soil.

The preferred option would result in significant investment being directed to Kirkby town centre. The SFRA noted that surface water flooding incidents in the Borough are predominantly associated with highway flooding and are prevalent in all major conurbations within the Council's boundaries, including Kirkby. Nevertheless, other policies in the Core Strategy should ensure that development is directed to areas at the lowest risk of flooding within the centre and that appropriate measures are taken to ensure new development does not exacerbate flood risk. It is therefore considered that the preferred option is unlikely to have any significant impact on the objective relating to adapting to climate change.

There are no anticipated negative impacts on the sustainability objectives. Nevertheless, it is considered that the preferred option would have an uncertain impact on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change and the use of water and minerals due to the environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the built development proposed by the preferred option. It is however recognised that the development proposed is necessary to support the retail-led regeneration of Kirkby town centre. In addition, the new development would be built to higher environmental standards. The preferred option would also have an uncertain impact on the objective relating to protecting the Borough's heritage as the impact of the additional footfall on Old Hall Conservation Area is unclear.

CS11: Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks

The preferred option would have a positive impact on several objectives. By resulting in the provision of a mix of new employment development in a location that is accessible from areas of deprivation and introducing measures to improve the accessibility of the parks from Kirkby, the preferred option would have a major positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; the growth potential of businesses; and levels of employment and long term unemployment. It is anticipated that the significance of the positive impact on each of these objectives will increase as the Plan's proposals take effect. Nevertheless, due to the preferred option not seeking to address low skills/training, it is considered that there is only a limited level of certainty about its impact on long-term unemployment.

The preferred option would have some positive impact on the objectives relating to community severance; health; and green infrastructure. By protecting the countryside and landscape from inappropriate development in the short and medium term, it is envisaged that the preferred option would initially have a positive impact on the objectives relating to landscape character and accessibility; and protecting land and soil. Nevertheless, the preferred option has the potential to result in the loss of Green Belt sites later in the plan period and it is therefore considered that in the longer term the preferred option would have an uncertain impact on the objective relating to landscape character and accessibility and a negative impact on the objective relating to protecting land and soil. Ensuring development is built to an appropriate density to minimise the need to release further greenfield sites is likely to be a key mitigation measure.

The preferred option would have an uncertain impact on several other objectives. It is considered that the impact of the preferred option on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change and the use of water and minerals would be uncertain due to the environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the built development proposed by the preferred option. It is however recognised that the development proposed is necessary to support the Borough's economy and the

regeneration of Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks. In addition, the new development would be built to higher environmental standards and the preferred option includes a proposal to identify the parks as a 'Priority Zone' for the production of renewable, low carbon and decentralised energy.

The preferred option would result in the parks being identified as a 'Priority Zone' for the production of renewable, low carbon and decentralised energy. The supporting text to the policy notes that this does not imply that the parks are suitable locations for Energy from Waste schemes. It is also noted that the Merseyside Joint Waste DPD identifies no need for site allocations for new Energy from Waste uses. It is therefore considered that the preferred option is unlikely to have any significant effects on the objective relating to waste.

The impact of the preferred option on the objective relating to air quality and sustainable transport is uncertain.

CS12: Tower Hill

The preferred option for Tower Hill would largely have a positive impact on the SA objectives. The preferred option would deliver a range of dwellings to provide a wider choice of housing in Tower Hill and would also result in small scale enhancements to health and leisure facilities and improvements to the quality and accessibility of open space. It is therefore considered that the preferred option would have a major positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and social exclusion; health; and the provision of good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing. The provision of this housing, facilities and accessible open space should also ensure that the preferred option has some positive impact on the objectives relating to community severance; the accessibility of the landscape; and green infrastructure.

It is envisaged that the preferred option would have a positive impact on the objectives relating to green infrastructure and the vitality and viability of Knowsley's town centres. Due to the range of public transport enhancements proposed, it is considered that the preferred option has the potential to support a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport and thereby have a positive impact on the objectives relating to air quality and the use of sustainable modes of transport. There is however only a low level of certainty over the positive impact on these objectives due to the funding for several of the public transport enhancements being unsecured.

Whilst parts of the Tower Hill regeneration area may be susceptible to surface water flooding, other policies in the Core Strategy should ensure that development is directed to areas at the lowest risk of flooding and that appropriate measures are taken to ensure new development does not exacerbate flood risk. It is therefore considered that the preferred option is unlikely to have any significant impact on the objective relating to adapting to climate change.

There are no anticipated negative impacts on the sustainability objectives. However, the preferred option would have an uncertain impact on a number of sustainability objectives. It is considered that the impact of the preferred option on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change and the use of water and minerals would be uncertain due to the environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the built development proposed by the preferred option. It is however recognised that the development proposed is necessary to support the regeneration

of Tower Hill. In addition, the new development would be built to higher environmental standards.

The impact of the preferred option on the objective relating to educational attainment is also uncertain due to it being unclear whether small-scale enhancements would be delivered to educational facilities. Similarly, the impact of the preferred option on the objective relating to protecting land and soil is also uncertain due to it being unclear the extent to which the new housing proposed would be delivered on previously developed land.

CS13: South Prescott

The preferred option for South Prescott would have a largely positive impact on the sustainability objectives. It would result in the redevelopment of former industrial land, much of which is now vacant, and could therefore have a major positive impact on the objective of protecting, managing and restoring land and soil quality. The preferred option would result in the provision of accessible employment opportunities and a range of dwellings to meet identified local need. It is therefore considered that the preferred option would also have a major positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and social exclusion; providing good quality housing; increasing the number of new businesses; and maintaining high and stable levels of employment. It is considered that this positive impact will increase in significance as the Plan's proposals take effect. Nevertheless, there is only a low level of certainty that the preferred option would have a positive impact on the objective relating to unemployment due to uncertainties over whether the employment opportunities would be accessible to the long-term unemployed.

Due to the proposed creation of new footpaths and cycle routes it is considered that the preferred option is also likely to have some positive impact on the objectives relating to community severances; health; green infrastructure; air quality; and the use of sustainable modes of transport.

There are no anticipated negative impacts on the sustainability objectives. It is however considered that the preferred option would have an uncertain impact on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change and the use of water and minerals due to the environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the built development proposed by the preferred option. It is however recognised that the development proposed is necessary to support the rebalancing of the Borough's housing market and the provision of an adequate supply of employment land. In addition, the new development would be built to higher environmental standards.

It is acknowledged that there are existing heritage constraints in Prescott town centre which may mean that there are no suitable, available and viable locations in the town centre for B1 offices of the scale that can be accommodated in South Prescott. However, the impact of the preferred option on vitality and viability of town centres is also considered to be uncertain as no evidence is provided to demonstrate that office provision could not be accommodated in centre or that directing it to this out of centre location would not have a detrimental impact on Prescott town centre.

CS14: Prescott Town Centre

The preferred option for Prescott town centre has the potential to have a positive impact on a wide range of sustainability objectives. It is envisaged that the preferred option would have a particularly significant impact on the objective of enhancing the

vitality and viability of town and local centres by directing investment to Prescott town centre and encouraging a wider mix of uses in the centre to create a distinctive identity and a complimentary evening economy. The provision of this mix of uses in Prescott town centre should also improve access to services and facilities and also create a number of employment opportunities. It is therefore envisaged that the preferred option would have some positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and social exclusion; community severance; health; educational attainment; and levels of employment. It is however recognised that there is only a low level of certainty that the preferred option would have a positive impact on the objectives relating to health and educational attainment as it only indicates a willingness to accommodate these uses in the town centre rather than proposing to provide them.

The preferred option would direct investment in Prescott town centre, which is a designated conservation area that is considered to be at risk. This investment would present opportunities to enhance the setting and significance of this heritage asset and it is noted that other policies in the Plan will ensure that the Borough's historic and architectural assets are protected. It is therefore considered that the preferred option would have a positive impact on the objective relating to Knowsley's built heritage. The provision of a mix of uses in Prescott town centre should also help people to meet their needs locally and could thereby have a positive impact on the objectives relating to air quality and reducing the need to travel.

There are no anticipated negative impacts on the sustainability objectives. It is however considered that the preferred option would have an uncertain impact on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change and the use of water and minerals due to the built development proposed by the preferred option. It is however recognised that there is a need to regenerate Prescott town centre and that the new dwellings would be built to higher environmental standards.

4.3 Summary of the Significant Effects of the Thematic Policies

In addition to the Spatial Strategy and Principal Regeneration Areas, the Core Strategy Preferred Options report also contains a series of Thematic Policies. These policies will be essential for realising the Vision for Knowsley. The following section gives a brief summary of the outcomes of the SA of each of these policies.

CS15: Delivering Affordable Housing

The preferred option has the potential to have a positive impact on a number of social, environmental and economic objectives. It would support the delivery of well-designed, affordable housing and would require new affordable housing to comply with the design standards set out in preferred option CS17, including Code for Sustainable Homes Standards. The preferred option is therefore likely to have a positive impact on the objectives of providing good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing; reducing poverty and social deprivation; and improving health and reducing health inequalities. Nevertheless, it is noted that the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identified a need to provide over 5,000 affordable housing units over a ten-year period in order to meet the outstanding and arising need for affordable housing in Knowsley. The required percentage contribution to affordable housing set out in the preferred option (25%) will however only provide approximately 1,900 units during the entire plan period although registered providers may contribute additional units. Pursuing a higher percentage

contribution to affordable housing may however impact on the viability of residential development. Nevertheless, no evidence is provided to demonstrate that requiring a higher percentage contribution would impact upon viability. It is considered that this reduces the level of certainty that the preferred option would have a positive impact on this objective.

By requiring new affordable housing to comply with the design standards set out in preferred option CS17, including Code for Sustainable Homes Standards, the preferred option should have some positive impact on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change; using water and mineral resources prudently; and minimising the production of waste and increasing reuse, recycling and recovery rates.

By helping to ensure the Borough attracts an adequate workforce to support its economy, the preferred option also has the potential to have some positive impact on the objective of exploiting the growth potential of business sectors and increasing the number of new businesses. Nevertheless, there is only a limited level of certainty over this impact as the preferred option would not deliver the required levels of affordable housing identified by the SHMA.

There are no negative or uncertain impacts on the sustainability objectives.

CS16: Specialist and Supported Accommodation

It is considered that the preferred option for Specialist and Supported Accommodation has the potential to have a positive impact on a wide range of sustainability objectives. In particular, by resulting in the provision of housing to meet the needs of households requiring specialist housing or supported accommodation, the preferred option should have some positive impact on the objectives of providing good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing; reducing poverty and social deprivation; and improving health and reducing health inequalities.

The preferred option would require specialist housing and supported accommodation to comply with the design standards set out in preferred option CS19. These standards include Code for Sustainable Homes standards and it is therefore envisaged that the preferred option would have a positive impact on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change; using water and mineral resources prudently; and minimising the production of waste and increasing reuse, recycling and recovery rates. The standards also include requiring new development to respond to the challenges posed by climate change and be designed to minimise crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. As a result, the preferred option should also have some positive impact on the objectives relating to adapting to climate change and reducing crime, disorder and fear of crime.

The preferred option requires specialist and supported residential accommodation to be located in an appropriate environment, near to transport links and local amenities. It is therefore envisaged that the preferred option would have some positive impact on the objectives of improving local accessibility of goods, services and amenities and reduce community severance; protecting local air quality; and reducing the need to travel and improving the choice and use of more sustainable transport modes. Nevertheless, as the preferred option does not specify that the specialist and supported residential accommodation should be located near to be public transport links, it is considered that there is a lower level of certainty that the preferred option

would have a positive impact on the objectives relating to air quality and the use of sustainable transport.

There are no negative or uncertain impacts on the sustainability objectives.

CS17: Housing Sizes and Design Standards

The preferred option has the potential to have a positive impact on a range of social and environmental objectives. The preferred option would ensure that a mix of housing is provided to meet local needs. It also specifies that the new housing would need to comply with the Code for Sustainable Homes standards and, as such, the preferred option should ensure that the new homes are built to a high standard of energy efficiency. The preferred option should therefore have a major positive impact on the objective of providing good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing and its sub-objectives relating to providing a wider choice of accommodation and improving the energy efficiency of housing. Requiring new housing to be built to Building for Life and Lifetime Homes standards should also ensure that the preferred option has some positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation and health.

The preferred option would require dwellings to comply with the design standards set out in preferred option CS19. These standards include Code for Sustainable Homes standards and it is therefore envisaged that the preferred option would have a positive impact on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change; using water and mineral resources prudently; and minimising the production of waste and increasing reuse, recycling and recovery rates. The standards also include requiring new development to respond to the challenges posed by climate change and be designed to minimise crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. As a result, the preferred option should also have some positive impact on the objectives relating to adapting to climate change and reducing crime, disorder and fear of crime.

There are no negative or uncertain impacts on the sustainability objectives.

CS18: Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

The preferred option would have a positive impact on a range of social, environmental and economic objectives. The preferred option would ensure that sites for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople have ease of access to local centres, health facilities, education facilities and public transport nodes. The preferred option would also require sites to have a sufficient level of supporting physical infrastructure, including ensuring it can be served by adequate electricity, water, sewerage and other utilities connections. It is therefore envisaged that the preferred option has the potential to have a major positive impact on the objective relating to health and some positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; accessibility of goods, services and amenities; education; air quality; reducing the need to travel; the vitality and viability of town and local centres and levels of employment.

The preferred option specifically states that flood risk will be taken into account when considering the suitability of sites for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople. It is therefore considered that the preferred option should have some positive impact on the objective of adapting to climate change, including flood risk. The preferred option would also ensure that sites for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople maintain local environmental quality

and have suitable physical environmental conditions, including ground conditions. It should therefore have some positive impact on the objectives of protecting land and soil quality and protecting the local character and accessibility of the landscape. It is however noted that the preferred option does not state that the impact of the proposal on the accessibility of the landscape will be taken into account. This reduces the level of certainty that the preferred option would have a positive impact on the objective of protecting the local character and accessibility of the landscape.

There are no negative or uncertain impacts on the sustainability objectives.

CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

The preferred option has the potential to have a positive impact on a wide range of social, environmental and economic objectives. The preferred option includes a range of measures to improve the sustainability of new development. In particular, it requires new development to comply with Code for Sustainable Homes/BREEAM standards, which should ensure that the preferred option has some positive impact on the objectives relating to providing good quality, resource efficient housing; mitigating climate change; using water and mineral resources prudently; and minimising the production of waste and increasing reuse, recycling and recovery rates.

Requiring new development to be built to BREEAM standards should ensure that new premises provided for businesses are more energy efficient and thereby reduce their operating costs for businesses and improve their competitiveness. In addition, the higher standards of design in new development that are required by the preferred option could help stimulate investment and attract skilled workers to the Borough. It is therefore envisaged that the preferred option could also have some positive impact on the objective of improving the competitiveness and productivity of business, exploiting the growth potential of business sectors and increasing the number of new businesses.

The preferred option would include an expectation for new development to be well integrated with Knowsley's town centres and larger centres outside of the Borough and provide safe, secure and convenient routes for movement, with priority given to walking, cycling and public transport. It is therefore considered that the preferred option would have a positive impact on the objectives relating to community severance; air quality; the use of more sustainable transport modes; and the vitality and viability of the Borough's town centres. It is, however, acknowledged that there is only a low level of certainty that the preferred option would have a positive impact on the objective relating to the vitality and viability of the Borough's town centres due to the fact that the preferred option also seeks to ensure that new development has linkages to larger centres outside of the Borough which could potentially exacerbate existing levels of expenditure leakage.

The preferred option states that new development will be expected to respond to, compliment and integrate with green infrastructure. It also requires new development to respond to the challenges of climate change, incorporate landscaping which promotes biodiversity, ensure the integration of high quality open spaces, compliment the positive characteristics of features of historic interest, and be designed to minimise crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. The preferred option should therefore have a positive impact on the objectives relating to green infrastructure,

adapting to climate change, biodiversity, landscape character and accessibility, health, Knowsley's built heritage and crime.

There are no negative or uncertain impacts on the sustainability objectives.

CS20: Managing the Borough's Heritage

The preferred option would have a largely positive impact on the sustainability objectives. In particular, by supporting the preservation and enhancement of the Borough's historic assets and encouraging the sympathetic reuse of vacant and underused historic assets, it is envisaged that the preferred option would have a major positive impact on the objective of preserving, enhancing and managing Knowsley's rich diversity of cultural, historic and archaeological buildings, areas, sites and features. It is however noted that the preferred option does not contain any reference to protecting archaeological assets. It is considered that this reduces the level of certainty that the preferred option would have a major positive impact on this objective.

The preferred option encourages the re-use of vacant and underused historic assets and states that favourable consideration will be given to schemes that enhance the importance of the asset for the economy. The preferred option could thereby result in the creation of premises for new businesses. In addition, protecting and enhancing buildings and features of historic interest should help create more attractive places to invest in and would lead to enhancements to Prescott town centre. Consequently, the preferred option also has the potential to have a positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; increasing the number of new businesses; enhancing the vitality and viability of town and local centres; and maintaining high and stable levels of employment and reducing long-term unemployment.

The preferred option would encourage the preservation and enhancement of the Borough's heritage assets, including sites included on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens. Accordingly, the protection afforded by the preferred option to parts of Knowsley Hall Park and Croxteth Park should ensure that the preferred option has a positive impact on the objectives of protecting the local character and accessibility of the landscape and conserving and maintaining green infrastructure.

There are no negative or uncertain impacts on the sustainability objectives.

CS21: Urban Greenspaces

The preferred option for Urban Greenspaces would have a positive impact on a wide range of objectives. In seeking to resist the loss of greenspace in and supporting the provision of new areas of greenspace in order to maintain an appropriate range of sites the preferred option is likely to have a major positive impact on the objective of protecting, enhancing and managing the local character and accessibility of the landscape; and providing, conserving, maintaining and enhancing green infrastructure; and some positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and social deprivation; health; and protecting land and soil.

The preferred option encourages the provision of new areas of greenspace which conserve natural features, wildlife and fauna and encouraging the retention of trees, woodland and vegetation which offer a positive contribution to biodiversity/wildlife interest. It should therefore have a major positive impact on the objective relating to biodiversity. By seeking to retain existing woodland and secure the appropriate

planting of trees and other soft landscaping in new development the preferred option should have some positive impact on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change and air quality. Furthermore, the retention of greenspaces and existing trees and woodlands has the potential to provide enhanced flood risk management through water storage or reduced rates of surface water run-off. It is therefore considered that the preferred option has the potential to have a positive impact on the objectives relating to adapting to climate change and the protecting the quality of inland and estuarine waters.

The preferred option should help ensure that the borough has an adequate supply of accessible, high quality greenspaces. This should have a positive impact on the objective relating to community severance and, by increasing the attractiveness of the Borough as a place to live and invest, could also have a positive impact on the objective relating to improving competitiveness and increasing the number of new businesses.

There are no negative or uncertain impacts on the sustainability objectives.

CS22: Sustainable and Low Carbon Development

It is envisaged that the preferred option for Sustainable and Low Carbon Development would have a positive impact on a number of sustainability objectives, particularly those that relate to environmental issues. The preferred option requires new development to manage flood risk, including through the use of sustainable drainage systems and flood resilience measures. It also requires new development to be built to Code for Sustainable Homes/BREEAM standard, requires new developments to limit energy use and encourages new development to incorporate low carbon and renewable energy technologies and use of locally sourced materials. It is therefore considered that the preferred option has the potential to have a major positive impact on the objectives of adapting to climate change and mitigating climate change. By requiring new development to comply with Code for Sustainable Homes/BREEAM standards the preferred option should also have some positive impact on the objectives relating to using water and mineral resources prudently; and minimising the production of waste and increasing reuse, recycling and recovery rates. In addition, the encouraging of Sustainable Drainage Systems, landscaping and green roofs/walls should ensure that the preferred option also has a positive impact on the objectives relating to biodiversity and water quality.

The preferred option would require new housing to incorporate high standards of insulation, heat retention, natural ventilation and passive solar techniques. The preferred option also requires compliance with Code for Sustainable Homes standards. It is therefore envisaged that the preferred option would have a positive impact on the objective relating to the provision of good quality, resource efficient housing. Given that good quality housing is a significant contributor to health, it is envisaged that the preferred option would thereby also have a positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and social deprivation and health.

There are no negative or uncertain impacts on the sustainability objectives.

CS23: Renewable and Low Carbon Infrastructure

It is envisaged that the preferred option for Renewable and Low Carbon Development would have a positive impact on a number of sustainability objectives, especially those that relate to environmental issues. In particular, by incorporating a

presumption in favour of proposals for decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy provided that the proposals would not have an unacceptable impact on communities or the natural and built environment that could not be mitigated, the preferred option could support the shift to more low carbon sources of energy generation and thereby have a major positive impact on the objective relating to mitigating climate change.

By recognising that there are a range of potential environmental and social considerations that should not be significantly harmed by proposals for decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy developments, it is considered that the preferred option should also have some positive impact on the objectives relating to health; Knowsley's built heritage; the character and accessibility of the landscape; biodiversity and geodiversity; water quality; and air quality.

There are no negative or uncertain impacts on the sustainability objectives.

CS24: Managing Flood Risk

The preferred option seeks to reduce the extent and impact of flooding by directing development away from areas of greatest risk of flooding, requiring development to incorporate mitigation measures to manage flood risk and the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems to significantly reduce surface water run-off. It is therefore envisaged that the preferred option would have a major positive impact on the objective of adapting to climate change, and some positive impact on the objectives relating to biodiversity; land and soil quality; and water quality.

The supporting text states that the majority of land at a greatest risk of flooding in Knowsley is located within the Green Belt and is therefore unlikely to be developed for employment unless it is identified as a 'reserve' or 'safeguarded' location in preferred option CS5. Whilst some of these locations for Green Belt release are within or adjacent to areas of flood risk, it is noted that the indicative development capacities for these locations assume no development takes places within Flood Zones 2 and 3. It is therefore considered that the preferred option is unlikely to restrict the provision of an adequate supply of housing and employment land in the Borough. As a result, it is concluded that the preferred option is unlikely to have any significant effects on the objectives relating to the provision of good quality housing and exploiting the growth potential of business sectors and increasing the number of new businesses.

It is not envisaged that the preferred option would have a negative impact on any of the sustainability objectives. Nevertheless, the SFRA noted that surface water flooding incidents are prevalent in all major settlements within the Council's boundaries, including Halewood, Huyton, Prescot, Knowsley Village and Kirkby. The preferred option would result in development being directed away from areas that are at a higher risk of flooding and could thereby have some impact on levels of investment in the Borough's centres. As a consequence, the impact of the preferred option on the objective of enhancing the vitality and viability of town and local centres is considered to be uncertain.

CS25: Management of Mineral Resources

The preferred option for the Management of Mineral Resources would have a positive impact on a wide range of objectives. In particular, the preferred option should have a major positive impact on the objective of using minerals prudently by

ensuring that mineral resources are not sterilised unnecessarily and encouraging the use of recycled or secondary construction aggregates as an alternative to primary extraction. The preferred option seeks to reduce the need for primary extraction by facilitating the greater use of recycled aggregates and secondary mineral products. In addition, it requires applications for mineral extraction to comply with a set of criteria which will ensure that the impacts of such developments are controlled and managed effectively. As a result, it is envisaged that the preferred option would have a positive impact on the objectives relating to health; Knowsley's built heritage; landscape character and accessibility; biodiversity and sites of geological importance; flood risk; land and soil quality; water quality; and air quality.

The preferred option would help minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates by seeking to ensure that construction and demolition wastes are managed sustainably in accordance with the waste hierarchy. It also seeks to ensure that operators transport minerals in a sustainable way. It is therefore envisaged that the preferred option would also have some positive impact on the objectives relating to waste and recycling and the use of sustainable modes of transport.

By identifying the importance of local sources of brick clay for the future viability of the brick making industry and ensuring that these resources are not needlessly sterilised, the preferred option should have a positive impact on the objectives relating to the provision of housing; exploit the growth potential of business sectors and increase the number of new businesses; and maintaining high levels of unemployment. It is however acknowledged that the requirement to extract minerals prior to non-minerals development taking place in a Mineral Safeguarding Area could however result in some delays to the development process.

It is not envisaged that the preferred option would have a negative impact on any of the sustainability objectives. Nevertheless, although the preferred option seeks to ensure that operators transport minerals in a sustainable way, it would also potentially encourage the extraction of coal. Recovering this coal would increase the likelihood of the UK being 'locked into' dependence on fossil fuels, which would have an adverse impact on the objective relating to mitigating climate change. As a result, it is concluded that the impact on the objective relating to mitigating climate change is uncertain. It is however recognised that there is little information about the viability of future coal extraction in Knowsley and it is therefore highly uncertain whether coal will be extracted again from the Borough. In addition, it is acknowledged that coal will remain an important part of the UK's energy mix and that the only alternative to incremental coal output in the UK is likely to be the importation of coal over long distances which would have a more significant negative impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

CS26: Waste Management

It is envisaged that the preferred option for Waste Management would have a positive impact on a number of sustainability objectives, particularly those that relate to environmental issues. The key purpose of the preferred option is to ensure that waste is managed sustainably in order to minimise waste and promote the use of recycled materials. The preferred option also specifies that new development should be designed so as to facilitate the collection and recycling of waste. It is therefore considered that the preferred option has the potential to have a major positive impact

on the objectives relating to using mineral resources prudently and minimising the production of waste and increasing reuse, recycling and recovery rates.

The preferred option would encourage the sustainable transport of waste and would promote the use of site waste management plans to minimise the volumes of waste that need to be transported. In addition, the requirement to comply with the waste hierarchy would reduce contributions to climate change by minimising the amount of biodegradable waste going to landfill. It is therefore considered that the preferred option would have a major positive impact on the objective of mitigating climate change, and some positive impact on the objectives relating to land and soil quality; water quality; air quality and the use of sustainable transport modes. The preferred option also seeks to minimise the impacts of waste development on communities and the environment. As such, the preferred option should have some positive impact on the objectives relating to health and landscape character.

There are no negative or uncertain impacts on the sustainability objectives.

CS27: Planning for and Paying for New Infrastructure

The preferred option has the potential to have a positive impact on a number of sustainability objectives. The preferred option would secure contributions towards the provision of new, and improvement of existing, physical, social, green and digital infrastructure. As a result, it is envisaged that the preferred option has the potential to have a positive impact on a wide range of sustainability objectives, including those that relate to poverty and deprivation; community severance; health; educational attainment; built heritage; landscape character and accessibility; biodiversity and geodiversity; adapting to climate change; mitigating climate change; green infrastructure; waste; the vitality and viability of centres; and unemployment. Nevertheless, there is limited information available on the introduction CIL at the moment. In addition, whilst the preferred option would seek to ensure that the economic viability of new development is not undermined by the required infrastructure contributions, it provides no certainty as to the effect on contributions to infrastructure. It is therefore considered that there is only a low level of certainty about the impact of the preferred option on many of the sustainability objectives.

It is not envisaged that the preferred option would have a negative impact on any of the sustainability objectives. Nevertheless, it is considered that the impact of the preferred option on several objectives is uncertain. In particular, as it is unclear whether the required contributions to infrastructure may reduce the ability of developers to also contribute to the provision of affordable housing and, as a result, the impact of the preferred option on the objective of providing good quality, affordable housing is uncertain. Similarly, as it is unclear the extent to which the required infrastructure contributions may impact on investment levels, the impact of the preferred option on the objective of exploiting the growth potential of business sectors and increasing the number of new businesses is uncertain. It is also unclear whether the preferred option would prioritise contributions to public transport infrastructure in preference to infrastructure for less sustainable modes of transport. As a result, the impact of the preferred option on the objectives relating to air quality and the use of sustainable transport modes is uncertain.

4.4 Secondary, Cumulative and Synergistic Effects

Under the provisions of the SEA Directive, when appraising the sustainability of the Core Strategy it is necessary to consider whether or not there are any secondary, cumulative and/or synergistic effects.

A wide range of positive secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects of the Core Strategy Preferred Options report have been identified, for example:

- By reducing poverty and social deprivation many of the preferred options would have the secondary effect of improving quality of life for residents in the Borough;
- By seeking to direct development to sustainable locations and/or encouraging the development and use of sustainable modes of transport, preferred options CS2, CS4, CS6, CS7 and CS8 and the proposals for several of the Principal Regeneration Areas could have a positive secondary impact on congestion and cumulatively deliver benefits for greenhouse gas emissions and air quality;
- By requiring new housing to be built to Code for Sustainable Homes standards preferred options CS15, CS16, CS17 and CS19 should have the positive secondary effect of reducing fuel poverty; and
- The proposals to improve the Borough's town and local centres that are within the defined Principal Regeneration Areas could lead to enhanced vitality and viability of these centres. This would have the secondary benefit of improving perceptions of the area.

Nevertheless, a number of negative secondary, cumulative and/or synergistic effects were also identified. For instance,

- Notwithstanding the proposals to secure enhancements to public transport provision, the preferred option for the Knowsley Business and Industrial Parks (CS11) has the potential to generate significant volumes of traffic which could cumulatively exacerbate congestion in parts of the Borough and have associated secondary impacts on air quality and carbon emissions; and
- By resulting in the release of Green Belt sites to meet the Borough's housing and employment land needs, the preferred option for Green Belts (CS5) has the potential to result in new communities being located some distance from services and facilities. This would have a secondary impact on need to travel and also potentially air quality.

4.5 Difference the Sustainability Appraisal Process has Made

The Sustainability Appraisal process concluded that the Core Strategy has the potential to deliver a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits. However, it also identified several instances where options have the potential to have a negative impact on sustainability objectives, a number of uncertain impacts and a range of opportunities for further enhancements to improve the Core Strategy's sustainability.

A number of recommendations were made about how individual preferred options could perform better against the sustainability objectives. In addition, there were several instances where it was recommended that further information be provided on the effects of the options in order to provide greater certainty about their impact on

the SA objectives. For example, the uncertainty of the impact of the preferred option relating to the Green Belt (CS5) could be reduced by providing additional information on the reserved and safeguarded locations that may be released from the Green Belt. It is however acknowledged that this information will be provided by the Green Belt study when this is published.

A number of specific recommendations have been made to improve the performance of the preferred Spatial Strategy. These include:

- Incorporating the managing and enhancing of Knowsley's heritage assets as a Spatial Development Priority in preferred option CS1;
- Specifying the need to improve linkages between housing and employment areas by public transport, walking and cycling in preferred option CS4;
- Strengthening the wording of preferred option CS4 to require proposals for town centre uses in out of centre locations to demonstrate that there are no sites in a town centre or edge of centre location that are suitable, available and viable;
- Ensuring new development is built to an appropriate density to minimise the need to release additional Green Belt sites; and
- Incorporating a direct reference to protected and endangered species in preferred option CS8.

A number of specific recommendations have also been made to improve the performance of the Principal Regeneration Areas preferred options. Key recommendations include:

- Including proposals to improve access to training in the preferred option for Kirkby town centre (CS10); and
- Strengthen the wording of the preferred option for Prescott town centre (CS14) in relation to the provision of a range of services and facilities.

The key recommendations emanating from the SA of the Thematic Policies include:

- Providing more information on why the proposed 25% affordable housing contribution is a 'realistic and appropriate' figure;
- Requiring specialist and supported residential accommodation to be located near to public transport links;
- Consider including the impact of the proposal on the accessibility of the landscape as an issue that would be taken into account when considering the suitability of sites for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople;
- Incorporating a reference to preserving and enhancing archaeological assets in the preferred option on Managing the Borough's Heritage (CS20);
- Incorporating a requirement for proposals for the recycling of aggregates to comply with the criteria in the Site Allocations and Development Policies DPD;
- Providing a list of the types of applications that would be excluded from the requirement to demonstrate that the proposal would not sterilise mineral resources in a Mineral Safeguarding Area in order to ensure that a proportionate approach is taken to safeguarding mineral resources;
- Ensuring proposals for minerals working are required to retain existing local access routes or amend them to maintain a similar level of access; and
- Providing more information on the effects of infrastructure contributions on the viability of development.

5. MONITORING

5.1 The Annual Monitoring Report

The sustainability effects of implementing the Knowsley Core Strategy will be monitored on an annual basis and reported through the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), which is published in December each year. The production of an AMR is a statutory requirement under section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It will provide a basis for the:

- Identification of unforeseen adverse effects and any necessary remedial action.
- Assessment of whether the Strategy is achieving the SA objectives
- Assessment of the performance of mitigation measures

5.2 Monitoring Indicators

The indicators used to monitor the sustainability effects of implementing the Core Strategy were set out in the SA Scoping Report of May 2009. The indicators are set out below by sustainability objective and sub-objective:

Social

Objective	To reduce poverty and social deprivation and secure economic inclusion.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Improve the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation rating of the Borough.	Borough Index of Multiple Deprivation ranking
	Reduce the proportion of children living in poverty.	Proportion of children in poverty (NI 16)
		Percentage of children living in workless households
	Reduce the percentage of lower level Super Output Areas that are in the top 10% most deprived in England.	Lower Super Output Area ranking
	Improve health and reduce long-term limiting illness.	Residents with long term illness
	Improve rates of economic activity.	Overall employment rate (NI 151)

Objective	To improve local accessibility of goods, services and amenities and reduce community severance.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Improve community facilities.	The amount of new or renovated facilities.

Objective	To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Improve road safety	Numbers of people killed/seriously injured in traffic accidents (NI 47)
		Numbers of children killed/seriously injured in traffic accidents (NI 48)
	To reduce crime and fear of crime	Domestic burglaries per 1,000 dwellings
		Serious violent crime rate per 1000 population (NI 15)
		Theft of a vehicle per 1000 population.
		Percentage of residents surveyed who say that they feel fairly safe or very safe outside during the day.
		Percentage of residents surveyed who say that they feel fairly safe or very safe outside after dark.

Objective	To support voluntary and community networks, assist social exclusion and ensure community involvement in decision making.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	None identified in the SA Scoping Report	None identified in the SA Scoping Report

Objective	To improve health and reduce health inequalities.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Increase life expectancy.	Life expectancy of males
		Life expectancy of females
	Reduce mortality rates.	All age all cause mortality (males) (NI 120)
		All age all cause mortality (females) (NI 120)
		Mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75 (NI 121)
	Reduce levels of obesity.	Levels of obesity
		Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6 (NI 56)
		Children and young people's participation in high-quality PE and sport. (NI 57)

Objective	To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Provide a wider choice of accommodation to create a greater tenure mix.	Dwelling stock by council tax band.
		Net additional homes provided. (NI 154)
		Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (NI155)
		Housing by tenure type
	Increase the quality of housing by improving housing amenities.	Percentage of dwellings with central heating
	Minimise resource and energy use when developing housing and the energy efficiency of housing.	Percentage of non-decent council homes (NI 158)
		Percentage of new homes meeting Building for Life Assessments Good / Very Good.
		Percentage of new affordable / public homes achieving a level 3 or more code rating under the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Objective	To improve educational attainment, training and opportunities for lifelong learning and employability.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Increase educational achievement.	Percentage of residents with no qualifications.
		Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths (NI 75)
		Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19 (NI 80)
		Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher (NI 163)

Objective	To preserve, enhance and manage Knowsley's rich diversity of cultural, historic and archaeological buildings, areas, sites and features.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	None identified in the SA Scoping Report	Number of listed buildings on the Heritage at Risk Register
		Number of conservation areas with current character appraisals

		Number of conservation areas with management plans.
		Number of Conservation Areas on the Heritage at Risk register
		Number of Historic Parks and Gardens on the Heritage at Risk register

Environment

Objective	To protect, enhance and manage the local character and accessibility of the landscape and countryside across Knowsley.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Provide the required amount of open space.	Hectares of open space per 1000 population by type of open space
	Provide open space in accessible locations.	Percentage of population within walking distance of open space
	Improve the quality of open space.	Percentage of open space considered to be good quality.
	Improve the cleanliness of open areas.	Percentage of space that is of a high or acceptable standard of horticultural maintenance
	Increase number of parks with green flag award.	Number of parks with green flag award

Objective	To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity, the viability of protected and endangered species, habitats, geodiversity and sites of geological importance.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	<p>To conserve and enhance the natural environment, including species and habitat diversity.</p> <p>To improve the delivery of biodiversity targets as shown in the Ecological Framework</p>	Number and area (ha) of Local Wildlife Sites (Sites of Biological Interest)
		Progress against Biodiversity Action Plan targets
		Number of local sites in 'active conservation management' (NI 197)
		Number and area (ha) of Local Nature Reserves
		Number of Sites of Local Geological Interest
		Area (ha) of new habitats created

Objective	To adapt to climate change including flood risk.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Reduce flood risk	Number of planning permission proceeding against EA advice to refuse on flood risk grounds
		Percentage of new developments containing Sustainable Drainage Systems
		Planning to adapt to climate change (NI 188)

Objective	To mitigate climate change including using energy prudently and efficiently and increasing energy generated from renewable sources.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Reduce CO ₂ emissions.	Per capita CO ₂ emissions (NI 186)
		Renewable energy generation in megawatts

Objective	To provide, conserve, maintain and enhance green infrastructure.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	To improve size and quality of the green infrastructure network	Percentage change in the green infrastructure network
	To improve the size and quality of the Ecological Framework	Area (ha) of new habitats created

Objective	To protect, manage and restore land and soil quality.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Reduce the amount of derelict land.	Amount of previously developed land that is derelict.
	Direct new housing to previously developed land.	New build on previously developed land.
	Reduce the amount of contaminated land.	Amount of contaminated land

Objective	To protect, improve and where necessary, restore the quality of inland, and estuarine waters.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Increase the length of rivers in 'Good' or 'Fair' biological	Percentage of rivers in "Good" or "Fair" biological condition

	condition.	
	Increase the length of rivers in 'Good' or 'Fair' chemical condition.	Percentage of rivers in "Good" or "Fair" chemical condition

Objective	To protect, and where necessary, improve local air quality.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	None identified in the SA Scoping Report	Number and total area of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)
		Population living in AQMAs

Objective	To use water and mineral resources prudently and efficiently.	
	Sub Objective	Indicator
	None identified in the SA Scoping Report	Daily domestic water use (per capita consumption, litres)
		Use of mineral aggregates and proportion of primary aggregates used

Objective	To reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of more sustainable transport mode.	
	Sub Objective	Indicator
	Encourage sustainable transport use.	Method of travel to work
		Rates of car ownership

Objective	To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates.	
	Sub Objective	Indicator
	None identified in the SA Scoping Report	Household waste recycled and composted (NI 192)
		Household waste arisings which have been used to recover heat, power and other energy sources.
		Household waste arisings which have been landfilled.

Economic

Objective	To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business, exploit the growth potential of business sectors and increase the number of new businesses.	
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	Sub Objective	Indicator
	Increase number of local and new businesses.	Number of VAT registrations
		Number of VAT de-registrations
	Increase industrial / commercial floorspace.	Amount of floorspace developed for employment purposes

Objective	To enhance the vitality and viability of town and local centres.	
	Sub Objective	Indicator
	Increase the vitality of shopping areas.	Amount of floorspace developed for retail use.
		Number of vacant shops
	Improve community facilities.	Amount of new or renovated facilities

Objective	Maintain high and stable levels of employment and reduce long-term unemployment.	
	Sub Objective	Indicator
	Reduce unemployment	Working age people on out of work benefits (NI 153)
		Number of persons claiming job seekers allowance for twelve months or more.

5.3 Next Steps

To enable the community and other stakeholders to contribute to the production of Knowsley's Core Strategy, this SA Report will accompany the Preferred Options report for a period of formal public consultation. Comments can be submitted on the response form using the following methods:

- By email, to ldf@knowsley.gov.uk;
- By Facebook by posting on the "Help Plan Knowsley!" page; or
- By post, to:
LDF Strategic Planning Manager
Chief Executive's Directorate,
Knowsley Council,
Archway Road
Huyton
Knowsley
Merseyside
L36 9YU

All comments should be received no later than 5.00pm on 5th September 2011.

Following consideration and analysis of the consultation responses received, a publication version of the Core Strategy report will be produced. Any significant changes made to the Core Strategy will be subjected to SA and the Core Strategy, together with its accompanying SA Report, will be consulted upon in early 2012.

A sustainability statement showing how the SA process has influenced the content of the Core Strategy will then be published. This will constitute the final part of Stage D in the SA process. The Core Strategy will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in public. It is envisaged that the Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State in April 2012.

Once the Core Strategy has been adopted, the significant effects of implementing the plan will be monitored, which represents Stage E in the SA process.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Urban Vision Partnership Ltd were commissioned by Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal of their Core Strategy Preferred Options report. The appraisal work has been informed by national guidance, best practice and the methodology proposed by the Council in their Scoping Report.

The SA process involved the assessment of the Preferred Spatial Strategy, Principal Regeneration Areas and Thematic Policies against the twenty-two sustainability objectives identified in the Scoping Report. This appraisal considered the degree and type of impact, split by short term (0-5 years), medium term (5-10 years), and long-term (10+ years). It also predicted the certainty of impact (in terms of high, medium and low); the scale of impact (which ranged from Borough wide to national); the permanence of the impact; any key secondary, cumulative and/or synergistic impacts; and options for mitigation.

The SA process concluded that the Core Strategy Preferred Options document has the potential to deliver a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits. A number of recommendations were however made about how individual preferred options could perform better against the sustainability objectives. In addition, there were several instances where it was recommended that further information be provided on the effects of the options in order to provide greater certainty about their impact on the SA objectives.

Preferred Spatial Strategy

The preferred options for the Spatial Strategy (CS1) and Development Principles (CS2) are considered to be likely to have a largely positive impact on the sustainability objectives. In particular, it is envisaged that the Development Principles preferred option is likely to have a major positive impact in the long-term on the objectives relating to health; reducing climate change; and reducing the need to travel. It was concluded that the preferred options for Housing Supply (CS3), the Economy and Employment (CS4) and Town Centres and Retail (CS6) would have a positive impact on a range of objectives, particularly those that relate to social and economic issues and it is predicted that the preferred option for Green Infrastructure (CS8) would have a positive impact on a range of objectives, particularly those relating to landscape character and accessibility; biodiversity; adapting to climate change; and green infrastructure.

It was however considered that the performance of a number of the preferred options against the SA objectives could be improved by providing further information on the effects of the option. In particular, to accurately appraise the impact of preferred option relating to the Green Belt (CS5), additional information is needed on the reserved and safeguarded locations that may be released from the Green Belt. It is however acknowledged that this information will be provided by the Green Belt study when this is published.

Principal Regeneration Areas

The preferred options for each of Principal Regeneration Areas would have a positive impact on a range of sustainability objectives, particularly those relating to social issues. The preferred options relating to Kirkby town centre (CS10), Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks (CS11), South Prescott (CS13) and Prescott town

centre (CS14) would also have a major positive impact on at least one of the economic objectives.

Nevertheless, as each of the preferred options would result in built development, their impact on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change and the prudent use of minerals is uncertain. There is also some uncertainty over the impact of the preferred option for Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks (CS11) on the objectives relating to air quality and need to travel.

Thematic Policies

On the whole, the Thematic Policies performed well in the SA process. In particular, the preferred options relating to housing and the accommodation needs of the community (CS 15 – CS18) would all have a positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; health and the provision of good quality housing. The preferred options relating to Sustainable and Low Carbon development (CS22) and Renewable and Low Carbon Infrastructure (CS23) would have a major positive impact on the objective relating to mitigating climate change and the preferred option for Urban Greenspaces (CS21) would have a major positive impact on the objectives relating to landscapes; biodiversity; and green infrastructure.

Nevertheless, a number of measures have been suggested to improve the performance of several of the preferred options against the SA objectives. These include, for example, requiring specialist and supported residential accommodation to be located near to public transport links; incorporating a reference to preserving and enhancing archaeological assets in the preferred option on Managing the Borough's Heritage (CS20); and ensuring proposals for minerals working are required to retain existing local access routes or amend them to maintain a similar level of access.