



Core Strategy: Issues and Options Paper

Sustainability Appraisal Report for Topic Issues

January 2011

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF THE ISSUES AND OPTIONS STAGE OF KNOWSLEY'S CORE STRATEGY

NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Introduction

This Report outlines the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council's Core Strategy. It has been produced to accompany the Issues and Options Paper which was the subject of public consultation from 27th November 2009 to 22nd January 2010.

SA is a systematic process used to assess the extent to which an emerging plan or strategy helps to achieve the relevant social, environmental and economic objectives. It also suggests ways of avoiding or reducing negative impacts. The findings of the SA should be reflected in the adopted Core Strategy to help ensure that it maximises its contribution to future sustainability.

A previous SA¹ considered the potential implications of the Core Strategy by assessing the Strategic Spatial Options, Scale of Future Growth and Development Options and Township Priorities against available baseline data and sustainability objectives.

This SA considers the potential implications of the Core Strategy by assessing the themed options, that is "Supporting a diverse and prosperous economy", "Balancing the housing market", "Promoting quality of place", "Caring for Knowsley", and "Infrastructure Delivery and Funding". The baseline data and sustainability objectives were developed in the SA's Scoping Report².

Requirements of Sustainability Appraisals and Strategic Environmental Assessments

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 Sustainability Appraisal 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 Core Strategy Consultation on Issues and Options Paper Sustainability Appraisal Report, Urban Vision, 2009

² Core Strategy Development Plan Document Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report, KMBC, 2009 (amended 2010)

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. Such sites are known as Natura 2000 sites. Article 6 of the Directive introduced the requirement to assess the implications of proposed land use plans, such as Core Strategies, for the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites. The Habitat Regulations Assessment will be conducted alongside, but separate from, the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Sustainability Objectives

This SA considers the potential implications of the Core Strategy by assessing the plan against a series of social, environmental and economic objectives.

The SA Scoping Report³ identified 22 objectives that reflected Knowsley’s priorities for achieving a sustainable Borough. This was obtained through analysis of baseline data and the review of other relevant plans and strategies. The objectives cover a range of issues including housing, social deprivation, health, crime, climate change, biodiversity, air quality, water quality, landscape, cultural heritage, business competitiveness, educational attainment and unemployment. In addition, 35 sub-objectives were identified to assist with the assessment against the sustainability objectives.

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:

- for over 25 years the population of Knowsley decreased markedly but over the last 10 years it has started to stabilise;
- 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;
- two of the 15 conservation areas in Knowsley are included on the latest Heritage at Risk register⁴;

³ Core Strategy Development Plan Document Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report, KMBC, 2009 (amended 2010)

⁴ Heritage at Risk Register 2010 / North West, English Heritage

- 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.

Appraisal Results

This SA applies the 22 strategic objectives identified in the Scoping Report to the 17 topic issues in the Core Strategy's Issues and Options paper in order to assess each option in the "Supporting a diverse and prosperous economy", "Balancing the housing market", "Promoting quality of place", "Caring for Knowsley", and "Infrastructure Delivery and Funding" topic area sections.

Assessment of the options that seek to support a diverse and prosperous economy

Issue TH 1: Release of land for employment development

Although there is some uncertainty, in the event of the Core Strategy pursuing "Sustainable Urban extensions", it was considered that Green Belt locations should only be considered for employment purposes after land within the current urban area has been developed. This was especially so if the negative environmental impacts can be mitigated against.

Issue TH 2: Safeguarding of employment land

Employment land should continue to be reserved for employment uses. Uses on some sites, however, should be restricted to specific employment types for example offices or knowledge based industries. Good design will be needed to mitigate negative environmental effects.

Issue TH 3: Food supply and use of agricultural land

Although a broader mix of rural uses on all agricultural land would obtain most positive sustainable outcomes, once development takes place, any high quality agricultural land affected would potentially be sterilised and permanently lost.

Issue TH 4: Future role of Knowsley's district and local shopping parades

The future of some shopping centres / parades would be more secure if their retail function was concentrated into a smaller area with other uses such as housing being encouraged in de-designated areas.

Assessment of the options that seek to provide a balanced Housing Market

Issue TH 5: Affordable housing

Affordable housing would best be provided by setting an overall affordable housing target for all suitable private sector developments but the amount required for each township would vary dependant on localised need.

Issue TH 6: Tackling low demand areas and renewing the existing housing stock

From a sustainability perspective, housing renewal initiatives should be targeted into existing priority areas and also localised deprived areas such as Stockbridge Village.

Issue TH 7: Dwelling sizes and types

For larger residential developments, the mix of dwelling sizes and types should be prescribed in each of the townships.

Issue TH 8: Accommodation for older people and other vulnerable groups

Accommodation for older people and other vulnerable groups would best be provided if the Core Strategy were to set criteria such as ensuring that sites are in accessible locations and close to health and other community facilities.

Issue TH 9: Sites for Gypsies and Travellers and / or travelling showpeople

The setting of broad locations and the setting of criteria that would need to be satisfied when sites are being proposed for development would produce similar outcomes. The setting of broad locations would, however, need to be followed by identification of specific sites in a further Development Plan Document. This would further delay provision of identified housing need for these people groups.

Assessment of the options that seek to promote quality of place

Issue TH 10: Promoting quality of place

The quality of place would best be improved by, in addition to the design and accessibility principles contained in Table 2 of the Issues and Options Paper, providing additional guidance for key regeneration and high profile locations. It is suggested that Table 2 could be improved if item number 6 included the use of national benchmarks such as Building for Life, Code for Sustainable Homes and Lifetimes Homes. It is also suggested that the design principles could further be improved by requiring that new development be designed with the ability adapt to the predicted future effects of climate change.

Issue TH 11: Heritage management

Knowsley's rich diversity of cultural, historic and archaeological buildings and areas could be better protected if a "local listing" was developed in addition to

the statutory designations such as Conservation Areas and the national listing system.

Issue TH 12: Urban and strategic greenspace

Lowering the greenspace's quantity standards would allow the continuation of the sites' maintenance and would therefore be the most sustainable option. Reductions may not, however, fully reflect local need.

Assessment of the options that seek to Care for Knowsley

Issue TH 13: Locations for new renewable energy installations

Specifying broad areas of search will give greater protection for sensitive areas. If this were to be combined specifying criteria for determining proposals it would bring the most sustainable benefits.

Issue TH 14: Environmental performance of new development

In addition to building regulations requirements, the use of an established assessment method such as Code for Sustainable Homes (residential development) and / or BREEAM (commercial / industrial development and public buildings) would ensure that new and refurbished development are constructed to high environmental standards including energy efficiency.

Issue TH 15: Carbon reduction in new developments

The setting of a Borough-wide percentage for carbon reduction in new development would be most effective. If this is not feasible or viable then developers should be required to pay a fee into a 'Carbon Compensation' fund. Care will need to be taken to ensure that payment, rather than producing a well-designed development, does not become a preferred mechanism because it is considered to be easier and more convenient.

Issue TH 16: Management of mineral resources

The creation of a Minerals Safeguarding Area around Cronton clay pit may protect future extraction and allow the clay pit to continue to contribute to flood alleviation combating flooding in the area by acting as a sump for surface run-off. It may, however, negatively impact on adjacent Local Wildlife sites.

It should be noted that the options included in the Issues and Options Paper did not include the use of criteria based policies for minerals development. Coal bed methane, for example, could come forward whether or not MSAs have been defined.

Assessment of the option that considered Infrastructure Delivery and Funding

Issue TH 17: Developer funding for new infrastructure provision

From a Sustainability Appraisal Framework perspective, it will make little difference whether developers contribute towards local infrastructure provision

or as a standard financial contribution that will help fund infrastructure across the Borough. It is considered likely, however, that introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will increase contributions and therefore the Council's ability to fund new infrastructure provision. It is unknown, at this time, how much of an increase this will be and how much additional infrastructure the CIL will be able to provide. The introduction of CIL may make it more difficult for the Council to address specific infrastructure needs associated with a particular development.

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. It also identified, however, instances where options have the potential to have a negative impact on sustainability objectives, together with a number of uncertain impacts. It suggests that the Core Strategy can be improved by:

- including the use of national benchmarks such as Building for Life, Code for Sustainable Homes and Lifetimes Homes in its design and accessibility principles;
- requiring that new development be designed with the ability adapt to the predicted future effects of climate change; and
- if Option TH15.3 becomes the preferred option, take steps to ensure that payment, rather than producing a well-designed development, does not become a preferred mechanism because it is considered to be easier and more convenient.

Next Steps

A Preferred Options report will be produced in June / July 2011. This will be informed on analysis of the consultation responses of the Issues and Options Paper, the Sustainability Appraisals of the strategic options together with this paper. A full SA of the preferred options will be consulted on together with the Preferred Options paper itself. The SA will then be fully updated and augmented ahead of the publication of the Proposed Submission Core Strategy DPD. The Core Strategy will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in public in 2012.

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1. Sustainability Appraisal of the Topic Issues	

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a requirement on local authorities to produce a portfolio of documents called a Local Development Framework (LDF). LDFs were introduced in order to streamline the local planning process, improve flexibility in the planning system, strengthen community and stakeholder involvement and contribute to achieving sustainable development.
- 1.2 Transitional arrangements in the Act allowed local authorities to progress the production of development plans already commenced under the previous Act. The Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (UDP)⁵ was adopted by the Council on 14 June 2006 under the transitional arrangements. The policies contained within the UDP were 'saved' initially for three years. Four of the policies, however, have since lapsed. The currently 'saved' policies and the Regional Spatial Strategy together form the "development plan" for the Borough.
- 1.3 The Borough's Local Development Framework (LDF) will comprise a series of individual documents that collectively deal with the spatial issues that affect the people who will live, learn, and work in the Borough. As each document that makes up the LDF is adopted, they will supersede individual 'saved' policies of the Unitary Development Plan.
- 1.4 The Core Strategy is the overarching document of the LDF and all other Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and other subsequent documents will need to be in conformity with it. The Core Strategy will outline the Council's vision for Knowsley up to 2027. It will set out a strategic framework that will seek to promote, guide and manage future growth and development in the Borough. It will contain important choices about how and where new development will take place and establish an appropriate balance between growth and regeneration, and environmental protection and improvement.
- 1.5 Production of the Core Strategy involves a number of formal steps including public consultation on an Issues and Options Paper. This took place between 27th November 2009 and 22nd January 2010. Responses to the consultation will inform a Preferred Options paper which itself will be consulted on 2011. The comments received during the Preferred Options consultation will be used to inform the preparation of the draft Core Strategy. The draft Core Strategy will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination.
- 1.6 Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning the planning system. In order to ensure that plans and strategies contribute towards sustainable development, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) be carried out on all new or revised DPDs.

⁵ Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan, KMBC, 2006

- 1.7 European Directive 2001/42/EC requires that an assessment be made of the effects that certain plans and programmes will have on the environment. This is known as a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and applies to a wide range of plans and programmes, including land use plans. The effect on the environment has to be significant before the directive applies. Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council has determined that the scale of environmental change in the Core Strategy will have a significant impact and therefore a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
- 1.8 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. Such sites are known as Natura 2000 sites. Article 6 of the Directive introduced the requirement to assess the implications of proposed land use plans, such as Core Strategies, for the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites. The Habitat Regulations Assessment will be conducted alongside, but separate from, the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Purpose of the Report

- 1.9 The Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper has been the subject of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in addition to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The requirement to carry out a SA and a SEA are distinct but it is possible to satisfy both through a single appraisal process if it considers social and economic factors as well as environmental issues. This is the approach that is being taken with the appraisal of the Issues and Options Paper.
- 1.10 This report outlines the findings of the SA of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council’s Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper. It applies the objectives identified in the Scoping Report⁶ to the Core Strategy Issues and Options paper in order to assess each option in the “Supporting a diverse and prosperous economy”, “Balancing the housing market”, “Promoting quality of place”, “Caring for Knowsley”, and “Infrastructure Delivery and Funding” topic area sections.
- 1.11 A previous SA⁷ considered the potential implications of the Core Strategy by assessing the Strategic Spatial Options, Scale of Future Growth and Development Options and Township Priorities against available baseline data and sustainability objectives.

⁶ Core Strategy Development Plan Document Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report, KMBC, 2009 (amended 2010)

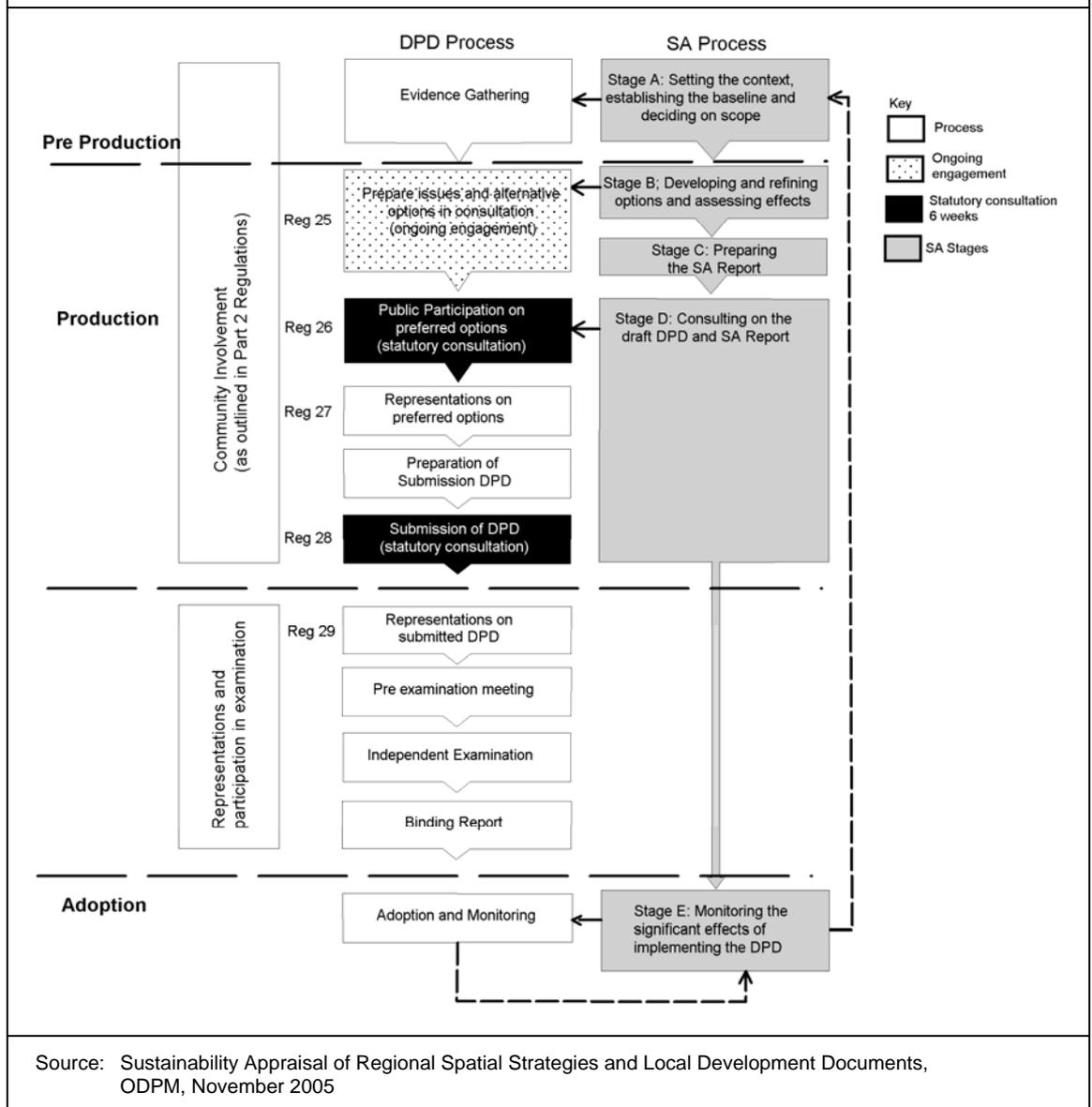
⁷ Core Strategy Consultation on Issues and Options Paper Sustainability Appraisal Report, Urban Vision, 2009

2. REQUIREMENTS OF SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISALS AND STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

Sustainability Appraisal

- 2.1 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Sustainability Appraisals (SAs) have to be produced for each level of development plan.
- 2.2 Sustainability Appraisals should ensure that plans and programmes are socially, environmentally and economically sound. The SA should appraise plans in relation to the five principles of sustainable development contained within the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs document *Securing the Future*. The aims are as follows:
 - a. Living within environmental limits. Respecting the limits of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity – to improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations.
 - b. Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society. Meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal wellbeing, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunity for all.
 - c. Achieving a sustainable economy. Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy which provides prosperity and opportunities for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them (polluter pays), and efficient resource use is incentivised.
 - d. Promoting good governance. Actively promoting effective, participative systems of governance in all levels of society – engaging people's creativity, energy, and diversity.
 - e. Using sound science responsibly. Ensuring policy is developed and implemented on the basis of strong scientific evidence, while taking into account scientific uncertainty (through the precautionary principle) as well as public attitudes and values.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 Figure 2.1 demonstrates the relationship between the Core Strategy and SPD processes.

Figure 2.1 - Relationship between the Core Strategy and the SA processes



Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 2.5 European Directive 2001/42/EC requires that an assessment be made of the effects that certain plans and programmes will have on the environment. This is known as a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and applies to a wide range of plans and programmes, including land use plans. The effect on the environment has to be significant before the directive applies. Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council has determined that the scale of environmental impact of the Core Strategy will be significant and therefore a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.

- 2.6 The following criteria will be considered under the requirements of the SEA directive, defining the focus and scope for SEAs.
- a. biodiversity
 - b. population
 - c. human health
 - d. fauna and flora
 - e. soil
 - f. water
 - g. air
 - h. climatic factors
 - i. material assets
 - j. cultural heritage, and
 - k. landscape.

2.7 Table 2.2 shows how this report meets the requirements of the SEA Directive.

Table 2.2 - Compliance with the SEA Directive	
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.	3.5 – 3.6 3.8
The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan.	3.4
The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.	3.4
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.	1.8 3.4
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.	3.7 3.9 - 3.10
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.	4.4 - Error! Reference source not found. Appendix 1
The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan.	4.50 Chapter 6 Appendix 1

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 - 3.3 3.11 - 3.12
A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring.	Chapter 5
A non-technical summary of the information provided above.	Page i

- 2.8 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 the remainder of this report all references to SA should be taken to include the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC.

Key Stages in the Sustainability Appraisal Process

- 2.9 The key milestones in the SA process for Knowsley's Core Strategy are shown in the Table 2.3.

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 – Stage 1	October – November 2009
Consultation on the SA of Issues and Options – Stage 1	November – December 2009
Publication of the SA of Issues and Options – Stage 2	December 2010
Publication of the SA of Preferred Options	Mid 2011
Stage 1 involves Issues and Options for "Strategic Spatial Options", "Scale of Future Growth and Development Options", and "Township Priorities". Stage 2 involves Issues and Options for the topics of "Supporting a diverse and prosperous economy", "Balancing the housing market", "Promoting quality of place", "Caring for Knowsley", and "Infrastructure Delivery and Funding"	

Feedback from Consultation

- 2.10 In May 2009 a 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.
- 2.11 In particular, the Scoping Report provided 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.
- 2.12 The Report also set out the proposed methodology for the SA, giving details of its level of detail and scope.
- 2.13 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 England⁸. 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.
- 2.14 The SA Scoping report has been updated to address these comments.

⁸ The SEA Regulations require the Environment Agency, English Heritage, Natural England and the Countryside Agency to be consulted on the scope of sustainability appraisals. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, however, merged the Countryside Agency and English Nature to form a new agency - Natural England.

3. METHODOLOGY

Overall Approach

- 3.1 The approach adopted to undertake this SA is in accordance with the Core Strategy's SA scoping report (as amended)⁹ which was based on the process set out in Government guidance¹⁰. The Sustainability Appraisal process consists of five stages.

Table 3.1: Stages of the SA process.
Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope.
Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects.
Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report.
Stage D: Consulting on the preferred options of the Core Strategy and SA Report.
Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Core Strategy.

- 3.2 Stage A, identifying the initial scope of the SA, was undertaken in May 2009. Its purpose was to develop a framework against which the Core Strategy can be assessed. In order to produce the framework, relevant plans, policies and programmes that will affect and influence the Core Strategy were identified and reviewed. Relevant social, environmental and economic baseline information was then collected and analysed. From this, key sustainability issues that the SA will be required to address were identified; the SA Framework consisting of sustainability objectives, indicators and targets was then established. A Scoping Report was produced for consultation on the scope of the appraisal.
- 3.3 This SA Report represents the completion of Stage C of the SA process. It should be noted that Sustainability objectives are distinct from those of the Core Strategy.

Baseline Characteristics and Key Sustainability Issues

- 3.4 From analysis of the key baseline characteristics, it is evident that Knowsley is one of the most deprived districts in England. Knowsley has high levels of unemployment generally but particularly in some parts of the Borough. Health, educational attainment and fear of crime are also issues which need addressing. Knowsley also contains a number of valuable assets that must be protected and enhanced. The major social, environmental and economic issues for Knowsley are:

⁹ Core Strategy Development Plan Document Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report, KMBC, 2009 (amended 2010)

¹⁰ Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, ODPM, 2005

- after 25 years of population decline, Knowsley's population has started to stabilise;
- Knowsley is among the most deprived districts in England;
- over half of persons in Knowsley aged 16 to 74 have no qualifications;
- a significant proportion of Knowsley's population experience serious health issues, with binge drinking, smoking and obesity being particular problems;
- fear of crime is seen as a serious issue;
- Knowsley has an unbalanced mix of housing with an increasing affordability issue;
- economic activity rates and incomes are lower than the North West average;
- 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;
- two of the Borough's conservation areas are included on the latest Heritage at Risk register;
- there is a need to reduce the need to travel by car and increase the use of more sustainable forms of transport;
- 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 are poor; and
- the re-use of land should be promoted to minimise the take-up of Greenfield land.

Links to other Plans, Programmes and Strategies

- 3.5 In developing Core Strategies, the SEA Directive requires that local authorities take into account relevant international, European Community, and national Plans, Programmes and Strategies. To ensure a comprehensive approach that maximises sustainability; this has been extended to include regional, sub-regional and local Plans, Programmes and Strategies taking into account their economic and social as well as environmental objectives.

3.6 Table 3.3 shows a list of the Plans, Programmes and Strategies that were reviewed as part of the SA. Their implications for the SA are contained within the Scoping Report¹¹.

Table 3.3: 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 • Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1992
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

¹¹ Core Strategy Development Plan Document Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report, KMBC, 2009 (amended 2010)

- 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

- 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
- Streets for All

MERSEYSIDE

- 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

LOCAL

- 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

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

- 3.7 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 identified 22 objectives that reflect Knowsley's priorities for achieving a sustainable Borough. In addition, a number of sub-objectives were identified for each objective to assist with the assessment. These objectives and their sub-objectives are listed below.

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 attainment.

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 of the green infrastructure network.

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.

- Improve the biological condition of the Borough's river.
- Improve the chemical condition of the Borough's river

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

Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy

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

Table 3.4 - Core Strategy Strategic Objectives

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE NO.	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE
1	To create successful suburban townships with a sense of place and community, having sustainable, diverse, more prosperous and healthy populations.
2	To encourage sustainable economic and employment growth, and improved skills within the workforce, that stimulates enterprise and innovation and promotes the creation of a diverse and prosperous local economy, complementary to that within the wider Liverpool City Region.
3	To ensure the development of distinctive, viable, vital and vibrant town centres in Huyton, Kirkby and Prescot, providing choice, variety and quality in their retail offer and other town centre uses, with renewed and thriving

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE NO.	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE
	district centres for Halewood and Stockbridge.
4	To regenerate and transform areas of social and economic deprivation so they become places where vibrant, safe and cohesive communities can flourish.
5	To create a well-balanced housing market that provides a sufficient quantity, high quality and good choice of housing types and affordability in appropriate locations to meet the needs and aspirations of existing and emerging households.
6	To improve the health and well-being of communities, particularly those within areas of social and economic deprivation, and their access to health care, leisure, sport and recreation, culture, community and education facilities and services.
7	To ensure new development has excellent sustainable transport links, securing a reduction in the overall need to travel, and to improve accessibility to existing destinations, services and facilities by sustainable means.
8	To manage the use of resources prudently, to tackle the causes and to respond to the impacts of climate change, and to reduce the Borough's overall carbon emissions.
9	To protect, conserve and enhance the character, quality and diversity of the Borough's built and natural heritage and to enhance the quality of place through the promotion of high quality design in new developments and public spaces.

Testing the Core Strategy Objectives against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework

3.9 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 (See Table 3.5). This enables conflicts and tensions between the objectives to be identified and recommendations made for their amendment or identify additions to them.

Table 3.5 'tests' the Core Strategies objectives against each of the SA objectives

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																						
Create successful suburban townships	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Encourage sustainable economic and employment growth	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	0	?	0	+	+	+
Ensure the development of distinctive, viable, vital and vibrant town centres	+	+	+	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	+	+	+
To create a well-balanced housing market	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	?	?	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	?	0	0	+	0
To improve the health and well-being	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	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																						
Ensure new development has excellent sustainable transport links	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	+	+
Manage the use of resources prudently and tackle the causes and to respond to the impacts of climate change	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	+	0
Protect, conserve and enhance the character, quality and diversity of the Borough's built and natural heritage and to enhance the quality of place	0	0	+	0	0	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+



Objectives are compatible



Objectives are not compatible



Uncertain relationship



No direct relationship

- 3.10 Overall the Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy are considered to be compatible with the sustainable appraisal objectives. There were no instances where the Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy were incompatible with a SA objective. There were, however, some uncertain relationships between the two sets of objectives.

Data Limitations / Technical Difficulties

- 3.11 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 Issues and Options paper. There were, however, some areas of uncertainty that resulted from the limited detail of some of the proposals 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.
- 3.12 Some of the key limitations/difficulties included:
- limited information is presented on how the Spatial Options would impact upon heritage assets;
 - limited baseline data is available on geodiversity and sites of geological interest;
 - open ended options were presented that could not be evaluated; and
 - uncertain how the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy will impact on the Council's ability to fund new infrastructure provision.

4. ISSUES AND OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 4.1 A previous Sustainability Appraisal (SA)¹² considered the potential implications of the Core Strategy by assessing the Strategic Spatial Options, Scale of Future Growth and Development Options and Township Priorities against available baseline data and sustainability objectives.
- 4.2 This SA considers the potential implications of the Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper by assessing the remaining options: "Supporting a diverse and prosperous economy", "Balancing the housing market", "Promoting quality of place", "Caring for Knowsley", and "Infrastructure Delivery and Funding". Each of the 17 topic issues were appraised against the 22 sustainability objectives.
- 4.3 Appendix 1 contains the full sustainability appraisal matrices. The following section gives a brief summary of the outcomes of the SA of each of these Topic Areas.

Summary of the Significant Effects of the Topic Issues

Supporting a diverse and prosperous economy

- 4.4 **Issue TH1** of the Issues and Options Paper considered whether, in the event of the Core Strategy pursuing "Sustainable Urban extensions", it would be best to:
 - develop land for employment uses on a phased basis ensuring that Green Belt locations are only considered after employment land within the current urban area has been developed (Option TH1.1); or
 - bring forward Green Belt locations for development in the early years of the Plan period (Option TH1.2).
- 4.5 In the Issues and Options consultation, consultees were also given the opportunity to state that they did not support "Sustainable Urban extensions" and that they considered that Green Belt locations should not be brought forward for employment development (Option TH1.3).
- 4.6 Option TH1.1 has the most positive effect on the SA's social and environmental objectives. Option TH1.2 produces a significant number of negative effects on the SA's environmental objectives. Many of them, however, could be mitigated against by good design and siting. Options TH1.1 and TH1.2 produce similar positive effects on the economic objectives. There is some uncertainty on the outcomes for Option TH1.3 because if this option is chosen some employment land will need to be provided in adjoining authorities and the exact location of the sites is unknown.
- 4.7 Overall, Option TH1.1 would be the most sustainable option.

¹² Core Strategy Consultation on Issues and Options Paper Sustainability Appraisal Report, Urban Vision, 2009

- 4.8 **Issue TH 2** considered whether employment land should be safeguarded. It asked if sites which are identified for employment development should:
- continue to be reserved for employment use in general but not reserved for specific employment uses (Option TH2.1);
 - continue to be reserved for employment uses but restrict the use of some sites to specific employment types, for example offices or knowledge based industries (Option TH2.2); and
 - allow other uses, such as housing, on some sites which are currently designated as employment land (Option TH2.3).
- 4.9 Options TH2.2 will have the most positive effect on the SA's social and economic objectives. Option TH2.3 will have the most positive effect of the SA's environmental objectives. This is, in the main, because residential development will be built to a higher standard.
- 4.10 Option TH2.2 will therefore be the most sustainable option but good design will be needed to mitigate negative environmental effects.
- 4.11 **Issue TH 3** considered food supply and use of agricultural land. It asked whether:
- the "best and most versatile" agricultural land should primarily be reserved for use in production of food and only permit other uses in exceptional circumstances (Option TH3.1); or
 - a broader mix of rural uses should be encouraged on all agricultural land, including high quality agricultural land, even if this results in irreversible loss of the farm land (Option TH3.2). Under this option areas of poorer quality grade land would be selected in preference to higher quality land.
- 4.12 Option TH3.2 has the most positive effect on the SA's social objectives with the options ability to provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing being unknown. This is unknown because of the uncertainty over whether 'rural land uses would include residential use. It will also have the most beneficial effect on the SA's economic objectives. Option TH3.1 will, however, have mainly negative effects on the SA's environmental objectives.
- 4.13 Overall, Option TH3.2 would obtain most positive sustainable outcomes, however, once development takes place any high quality agricultural land affected would potentially be sterilised and permanently lost. To mitigate any potential adverse impact to agricultural land, developers could be required to demonstrate that the proposal is located on the lowest practicable grade of agricultural land. Planning application affecting agricultural land could be supported by information setting out how soil resources will be protected from irreversible damage and sterilisation.
- 4.14 **Issue TH 4** considered the future role of Knowsley's district and local shopping parades. It asked what steps should be taken to more

effectively manage Knowsley's network of district and local shopping areas.

- 4.15 The viability of the centres could be improved by encouraging more non-shopping uses such as small scale community uses or offices (Option TH4.1). The size of some shopping centres / parades could be reduced so that the retail functions are more concentrated with uses such as housing being encouraged in the de-designated areas (Option TH4.2).
- 4.16 Options TH4.1 and TH4.2 give similar outcomes for the SA's social and environmental objectives with, in many cases, both options unlikely to lead to any significant effect on the objectives. For the SA's economic objectives, however, option TH4.1 has the most positive effect. Option TH4.1 would therefore be the most sustainable option.
- 4.17 **Issue TH 5** looked at how the Core Strategy should tackle the issue of affordable housing. An overall minimum affordable housing target could be applied to all private sector developments irrespective of where they are in the Borough (Option TH5.1). An overall affordable housing target could be set for all suitable private sector developments but tailored to meet localised need; the amount required would vary between townships (Option TH5.2). Under both options, the requirement would be subject to site viability and minimum site size threshold.
- 4.18 The Issues and Options Paper contained a third option that asked for an alternative option if Options TH5.1 and TH5.2 were not considered to be suitable (Option TH5.3). This option was not evaluated because of the uncertainty of potential alternatives.
- 4.19 Both options TH5.1 and TH5.2 are unlikely to have any significant effects on the SA's environmental and economic objectives. For the SA's social objectives, however, option TH5.2 has the most positive effect.
- 4.20 **Issue TH 6** looked at tackling areas of housing that are in low demand and renewing the existing housing stock. Under Option TH6.1 housing renewal initiatives would be targeted into existing priority areas (primarily North Huyton). Outside of these areas housing renewal would be restricted to individual dwellings, blocks of flats and / or small groups of dwellings which require treatment. Under Option TH6.2, in addition to targeting housing renewal initiatives in existing priority areas, localised deprived areas such as Stockbridge Village would be targeted for comprehensive regeneration.
- 4.21 The Issues and Options Paper contained a third option that asked for an alternative option if Options TH6.1 and TH6.2 were considered not to be suitable (Option TH6.3). This option was not evaluated because of the uncertainty of potential alternatives.
- 4.22 Options TH6.1 and TH6.2 would give similar outcomes for the SA's environmental and economic objectives. Both options are unlikely to

lead to any significant effect on the environment objectives. For the SA's social objectives, however, option TH6.2 has the most positive effect. Option TH6.2 would therefore be the most sustainable option.

- 4.23 **Issue TH 7** looked at how the right mix of dwelling sizes and types can be ensured. Option TH7.1 considered if housing needs could be met by prescribing, for developments over a certain size, the mix of dwelling sizes and types to be provided across the Borough. Under Option TH7.2 the prescription would be different for each area because it would be determined by localised need.
- 4.24 The Issues and Options Paper contained a third option that asked for an alternative option if Options TH7.1 and TH7.2 were considered not to be suitable (Option TH7.3). This option was not evaluated because of the uncertainty of potential alternatives.
- 4.25 Options TH7.1 and TH7.2 would give similar outcomes for the SA's environmental and economic objectives. In many cases, both options are unlikely to lead to any significant effect on the environmental objectives. For the SA's social objectives, however, option TH7.2 has the most positive effect. Option TH7.2 would therefore be the most sustainable option.
- 4.26 **Issue TH 8** considered how the accommodation needs of older people and other vulnerable groups can best be provided. Under Option TH8.1 provision would be led by the market. Under Option TH8.2 criteria, such as ensuring that sites are in accessible locations and close to health and other community facilities, would be identified. Under Option TH8.3 broad locations would be identified for the provision of the specialist accommodation.
- 4.27 The Issues and Options Paper contained a fourth option that asked for an alternative option if Options TH8.1, TH8.2 and TH8.3 were considered not to be suitable (Option TH8.4). This option was not evaluated because of the uncertainty of potential alternatives.
- 4.28 In many cases, the options are unlikely to lead to any significant effect on the objectives. There is however, some social benefit in Option TH8.2. Option TH8.2 would therefore bring greatest benefits if it was the preferred option.
- 4.29 **Issue TH 9** considered how best to provide sites to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and travelling showpeople. The Core Strategy could set broad locations for sites in with specific sites being identified in a subsequent Development Plan Document (Option TH9.1) or criteria could be set that would need to be satisfied when sites are being proposed for development (Option TH9.2).
- 4.30 The Issues and Options Paper contained a third option that asked for an alternative option if Options TH9.1 and TH9.2 were considered not to be suitable (Option TH9.3). This option was not evaluated because of the uncertainty of potential alternatives.

- 4.31 Option TH9.2 would bring most social and environmental benefit as it would allow criteria to be introduced that could meet those objectives. Any benefits that Option TH9.1 would bring may be reduced by the delay in production of a subsequent Development Plan Document. Neither option is likely to bring any significant economic benefits. Option TH9.2 would therefore bring greater benefits if it was the preferred option.
- 4.32 **Issue TH 10** considered whether the general guidelines contained within Table 2 of the Issues and Options Paper should be used to ensure that new development help to promote the quality of place and "offer" of Knowsley as a place to live, work and visit (Option TH10.1). The alternative was whether the guidelines could be supplemented with additional guidance for key regeneration and high profile locations (Option TH10.2).
- 4.33 Option TH10.2 would have the most positive effect on the SA's social, environmental, and economic objectives. It would therefore be the most sustainable option.
- 4.34 It is suggested that Table 2 of the Issues and Options Paper could be improved if item number 6 included the use of national benchmarks such as Building for Life, Code for Sustainable Homes and Lifetimes Homes. It is also suggested that the design principles could further be improved by requiring that new development be designed with the ability to adapt to the predicted future effects of climate change.
- 4.35 **Issue TH 11** considered how the Council can protect its heritage areas. This could be through continuing to protect and enhance the historic environment where there are already statutory designations in place such as Conservation Areas and the national listing system (Option TH11.1) or by developing a system of "local listing" to protect the character and setting of other important areas and historic buildings / structures (Option TH11.2).
- 4.36 In many cases, the options are unlikely to lead to any significant effect on the SA's objectives. Option TH11.2 would, however, better enhance Knowsley's rich diversity of cultural, historic and archaeological buildings and areas. It would therefore bring greater benefits if it was the preferred option.

- 4.37 **Issue TH 12** considered how the Core Strategy could best manage the Borough's urban and strategic greenspaces. This could be through continuing to use the current set of standards for quality, quantity and accessibility of different types of greenspace supplemented by additional protection for sites of local nature conservation interest (Option TH12.1). It could also be through reducing some quantity standards therefore allowing more emphasis on releasing funds to improve quality of greenspaces (Option TH12.2). Option TH12.3 considered whether, in addition to option TH12.1 or TH12.2 being chosen, whether some greenspaces should be identified being strategic, providing linkages for habitats and offer wider socio-economic and environmental benefits.
- 4.38 Option TH12.2 has the most positive effect on the SA's social objectives. Option 12.1, however, would bring the most beneficial effect on the SA's environmental objectives. Lowering the greenspace's quantity standards (Option 12.2) would allow the continuation of the sites' maintenance and would therefore be the most sustainable option but they may not fully reflect local need. Releasing land to meet other local development needs will reduce reliance upon Green Belt release.
- 4.39 In addition to either Option TH12.1 or 12.2 being chosen, if Option TH12.3 was implemented it would give additional protection to sites and improve flood mitigation measures.
- 4.40 **Issue TH 13** considered locations for new renewable energy installations. This could be through criteria based policies (Option TH13.1) or specifying preferred broad areas supplemented by a criterion based policy for determining proposals as they come forward (Option TH13.2).
- 4.41 With the exception of health benefits, both options are unlikely to have any significant effects on the SA's social objectives. Specifying broad areas of search (Option 13.2) will give greater protection for environmentally sensitive areas. It is also likely to provide certainty to the market and improve delivery of renewable energy schemes. Option TH13.2 would therefore bring greater benefits if it was the preferred option.
- 4.42 **Issue TH 14** considered how the environmental performance of new development should be managed. Option TH14.1 relied on building regulations. Option TH14.2 would set standards for new development that exceed building regulations in specific areas, such as water efficiency, recycling and waste collection. Any targets would take into account reduction in carbon emissions discussed in Issue TH15. Under Option TH14.3 an established assessment method such as Code for Sustainable Homes (residential development) and / or BREEAM (commercial / industrial development and public buildings) would be used. This would be in addition to building regulations requirements.

- 4.43 Option 14.3 has the most positive effect on all types of the SA's objectives, although the positive economic benefit is slight. It is therefore the most sustainable option.
- 4.44 **Issue TH 15** considered how new developments should be required to contribute towards carbon reduction. The target percentage for carbon reduction being determined at a later stage and may increase over the 15 year plan period. Under Option TH15.1 industrial developments above a threshold of 1,000m² and all residential developments comprising 10 or more units would be required to secure at least 10% of their predicted energy requirements from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not feasible or viable. Under Option TH15.2 a Borough-wide percentage for carbon reduction in new development would be set. This would be above the 10% required by the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West. If Options TH15.1 and TH15.2 are not viable or feasible to reduce predicted carbon emissions on site, Option TH15.3 would require developers to pay a fee into a 'Carbon Compensation' fund. This would be used to implement off-site energy efficiency and renewable energy schemes within the Borough's residential areas and / or public buildings such as schools.
- 4.45 Option TH15.3 will bring most social benefit with both options TH15.2 and 15.3 bringing most environmental benefit. None of the options are likely have any economic effects. Option TH15.3 would therefore bring the greatest benefits if it was the preferred option. It is considered, however, that it should only be used when Option TH15.2 is not viable or feasible. Money from the "Carbon Compensation Fund" could deliver additional programmes looking at energy efficiency, reducing fuel poverty etc. Care will need to be taken to ensure that payment, rather than producing a well-designed development, does not become a preferred mechanism because it is considered to be easier and more convenient.
- 4.46 **Issue TH 16** considered how the Core Strategy should encourage the effective use of mineral resources which occur within the Borough. This included creating a Minerals Safeguarding Areas (MSA) around Cronton clay pit (Option TH16.2) or not creating Minerals Safeguarding Areas (Option TH16.1). The Issues and Options Paper contained a third option that asked for suggestions for other areas to be safeguarded (Option TH16.3). This option was not evaluated because of the uncertainty of where these sites could be and even if they exist.
- 4.47 In most instances, the choosing of one option over another will have negligible impact. The creation of a Minerals Safeguarding Area around Cronton clay pit may protect future extraction from the pit and may contribute to flood alleviation combating flooding in the area, but it may also negatively impact on adjacent Local Wildlife sites. It should be noted that neither option includes the use of criteria based policies for minerals development. Coal bed methane, for example, could come forward whether or not MSAs have been defined.

- 4.48 **Issue TH 17** considered the approach to be used to obtain developer funding for new infrastructure provision. Under Option TH17.1 developers would be required to contribute towards new or improved social, physical and green infrastructure only where justified. This would be based on the impacts of the particular development proposed. Option TH17.2 would require contributions from all developers in the form of a standard financial contribution (for example through the new Community Infrastructure Levy) to help fund new social, physical and green infrastructure across the Borough. The Issues and Options Paper contained a third option that asked for an alternative option if Options TH17.1 and TH17.2 were considered not to be suitable (Option TH17.3). This option was not evaluated because of the uncertainty of potential alternatives.
- 4.49 The Sustainability Appraisal Framework shows that generally that introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will bring greater benefit. This is in the main because it will allow contributions to be targeted to areas of greatest need. The introduction of CIL may make it more difficult for the Council to address specific infrastructure needs associated with a particular development. It will also potentially enable more strategic infrastructure to be provided as a result of ability to pool contributions.

Difference the Sustainability Appraisal Process has Made

- 4.50 The Sustainability Appraisal process concluded that the Core Strategy has the potential to deliver a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits. It also identified, however, instances where options have the potential to have a negative impact on sustainability objectives, together with a number of uncertain impacts. It suggests that the Core Strategy can be improved by:
- including the use of national benchmarks such as Building for Life, Code for Sustainable Homes and Lifetimes Homes in it's design and accessibility principles;
 - requiring that new development be designed with the ability adapt to the predicted future effects of climate change; and
 - if Option TH15.3 becomes a preferred option, take steps to ensure that payment, rather than producing a well-designed development, does not become a preferred mechanism because it is considered to be easier and more convenient.

5. MONITORING

The Annual Monitoring Report

- 5.1 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 and 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; and
 - assessment of the performance of mitigation measures

Monitoring Indicators

- 5.2 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)
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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
To conserve and enhance the natural environment, including species and habitat diversity.	Number of Sites of Biological Interest
	Progress against Biodiversity Action Plan targets
	Number of local sites in 'active conservation management' (NI 197)

Objective: To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity, the viability of protected and endangered species, habitats, geodiversity and sites of geological importance.	
	Number of Local Nature Reserves
	Number of Sites of Local Geological Interest

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 SuDS
	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 CO2 emissions.	Per capita CO2 emissions (NI 186)
	Renewable energy generation in megawatts

Objective: To provide, conserve, maintain and enhance green infrastructure.	
Sub Objectives	Indicator
To improve size of the green infrastructure network	Percentage change in the green infrastructure network

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 condition.	Percentage of rivers in "Good" or "Fair" biological 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.	
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.

Next Steps

- 5.3 The next steps in the SA process are to:
- produce a Preferred Options Paper taking into account response to consultation on the Issues and Options, the Sustainability Appraisal of the Strategic Options¹³, and this document;
 - appraise the Preferred Options Core Strategy paper when it has been produced in Summer 2010 taking into account the comments raised at the Issues and Options stage;
 - appraise any significant changes made to the Core Strategy as a result of public consultation on the Preferred Options paper;
 - publish a sustainability statement showing how the SA process has influenced the content of the Core Strategy; and
 - Monitor the significant effects of the Core Strategy.

¹³ Core Strategy Consultation on Issues and Options Paper Sustainability Appraisal Report, Urban Vision, 2009

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The purpose of this Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is to promote sustainable development into every stage of the production of the Knowsley MBC Core Strategy. It has been informed by national guidance, best practice and the methodology proposed in the Core Strategy's Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report¹⁴. Sustainable development will be achieved through the integration of sustainability considerations into the Core Strategy's preparation, adoption and implementation.
- 6.2 The SA considers the potential implications of the Core Strategy by assessing the plan against a series of social, environmental and economic objectives. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a separate requirement to assess the effects that certain plans and programmes will have on the environment. The Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper has been the subject of a SEA in addition to an SA. The requirement to carry out an SA and an SEA are distinct but it is possible to satisfy both through a single appraisal process. This is the approach that is being taken with the appraisal of the Issues and Options Paper.
- 6.3 A previous SA¹⁵ considered the potential implications of the Core Strategy by assessing the Strategic Spatial Options, Scale of Future Growth and Development Options and Township Priorities against available baseline data and sustainability objectives.
- 6.4 This SA applies the 22 strategic objectives identified in the Scoping Report to the 17 topic issues in the Core Strategy's Issues and Options paper in order to assess each option in the "Supporting a diverse and prosperous economy", "Balancing the housing market", "Promoting quality of place", "Caring for Knowsley", and "Infrastructure Delivery and Funding" topic area sections.
- 6.5 Appendix 1 contains the full sustainability appraisal matrices. The following section gives a brief summary of the outcomes of the SA of each of these Topic Areas.

Assessment of the options that seek to support a diverse and prosperous economy

Issue TH 1: Release of land for employment development

- 6.6 Green Belt locations should only be considered for employment purposes after land within the current urban area has been developed. When development commences in the Green Belt, some negative environmental impacts could be mitigated against.

¹⁴ Core Strategy Development Plan Document Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report, KMBC, 2009 (amended 2010)

¹⁵ Core Strategy Consultation on Issues and Options Paper Sustainability Appraisal Report, Urban Vision, 2009

Issue TH 2: Safeguarding of employment land

- 6.7 Employment land should continue to be reserved for employment uses. Uses on some sites, however, should be restricted to specific employment types for example offices or knowledge based industries. Good design will be needed to mitigate negative environmental effects.

Issue TH 3: Food supply and use of agricultural land

- 6.8 Although a broader mix of rural uses on all agricultural land would obtain most positive sustainable outcomes, once development takes place, any high quality agricultural land used will be lost forever.

Issue TH 4: Future role of Knowsley's district and local shopping parades

- 6.9 The future of some shopping centres / parades would be sustainably more secure if their retail function was concentrated into a smaller area with other uses such as housing being encouraged in de-designated areas.

Assessment of the options that seek to provide a balanced Housing Market

Issue TH 5: Affordable housing

- 6.10 Affordable housing would best be provided by setting an overall affordable housing target for all suitable private sector developments but the amount required for each township would vary dependant on localised need.

Issue TH 6: Tackling low demand areas and renewing the existing housing stock

- 6.11 From a sustainability perspective, housing renewal initiatives would be targeted into existing priority areas and also localised deprived areas such as Stockbridge Village.

Issue TH 7: Dwelling sizes and types

- 6.12 For larger residential developments, the mix of dwelling sizes and types should be prescribed in each of the townships.

Issue TH 8: Accommodation for older people and other vulnerable groups

- 6.13 Accommodation for older people and other vulnerable groups would best be provided by the Core Strategy setting criteria such as ensuring that sites are in accessible locations and close to health and other community facilities.

Issue TH 9: Sites for Gypsies and Travellers and / or travelling showpeople

- 6.14 Any benefits that setting broad locations would bring may be reduced by the delay in production of a subsequent Development Plan

Document. The setting of criteria would bring most benefit as it would allow criteria to be introduced that could meet those objectives.

Assessment of the options that seek to promote quality of place

Issue TH 10: Promoting quality of place

- 6.15 The quality of place would best be improved by, in addition to the design and accessibility principles contained in Table 2, providing additional guidance for key regeneration and high profile locations. It is suggested that Table 2 of the could be improved if item number 6 included the use of national benchmarks such as Building for Life, Code for Sustainable Homes and Lifetimes Homes. It is also suggested that the design principles could further be improved by requiring that new development be designed with the ability adapt to the predicted future effects of climate change.

Issue TH 11: Heritage management

- 6.16 Knowsley's rich diversity of cultural, historic and archaeological buildings and areas could be better protected if a "local listing" was developed in addition to the statutory designations such as Conservation Areas and the national listing system.

Issue TH 12: Urban and strategic greenspace

- 6.17 Lowering the greenspace's quantity standards would allow the continuation of the sites' maintenance and would therefore be the most sustainable option. Reductions may not, however, fully reflect local need. Lowering quantity standards should release land to meet other local development needs therefore reducing reliance upon Green Belt release. Selecting strategic areas of greenspace will give extra protection to those sites and may improve flood mitigation measures.

Assessment of the options that seek to Care for Knowsley

Issue TH 13: Locations for new renewable energy installations

- 6.18 Specifying broad areas of search will give greater protection for sensitive areas. Specifying criteria for determining proposals together with specifying broad areas of search would bring the most sustainable benefits.

Issue TH 14: Environmental performance of new development

- 6.19 In addition to building regulations requirements, the use of an established assessment method such as Code for Sustainable Homes (residential development) and / or BREEAM (commercial / industrial development and public buildings) would provide the most energy efficient buildings.

Issue TH 15: Carbon reduction in new developments

- 6.20 The setting of a Borough-wide percentage for carbon reduction in new development would be most effective. If this is not feasible or viable then developers should be required to pay a fee into a 'Carbon Compensation' fund. Care will need to be taken to ensure that payment, rather than producing a well-designed development, does not become a preferred mechanism because it is considered to be easier and more convenient.

Issue TH 16: Management of mineral resources

- 6.21 The creation of a Minerals Safeguarding Area around Cronton clay pit may protect future extraction from the pit, but it may also negatively impact on adjacent Local Wildlife sites.
- 6.22 It should be noted that the options included in the Issues and Options Paper did not include the use of criteria based policies for minerals development. Coal bed methane, for example, could come forward whether or not MSAs have been defined.

Assessment of the option that considered Infrastructure Delivery and Funding

Issue TH 17: Developer funding for new infrastructure provision

- 4.51 The Sustainability Appraisal Framework shows that generally that introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will bring greater benefit. This is in the main because it will allow contributions to be targeted to areas of greatest need. The introduction of CIL may make it more difficult for the Council to address specific infrastructure needs associated with a particular development. It will also potentially enable more strategic infrastructure to be provided as a result of ability to pool contributions.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Appendix 1 - Sustainability Appraisal of the Topic Issues