

# Sustainability Appraisal of Herefordshire's Local Development Framework: General Scoping Report

## Non-Technical Summary

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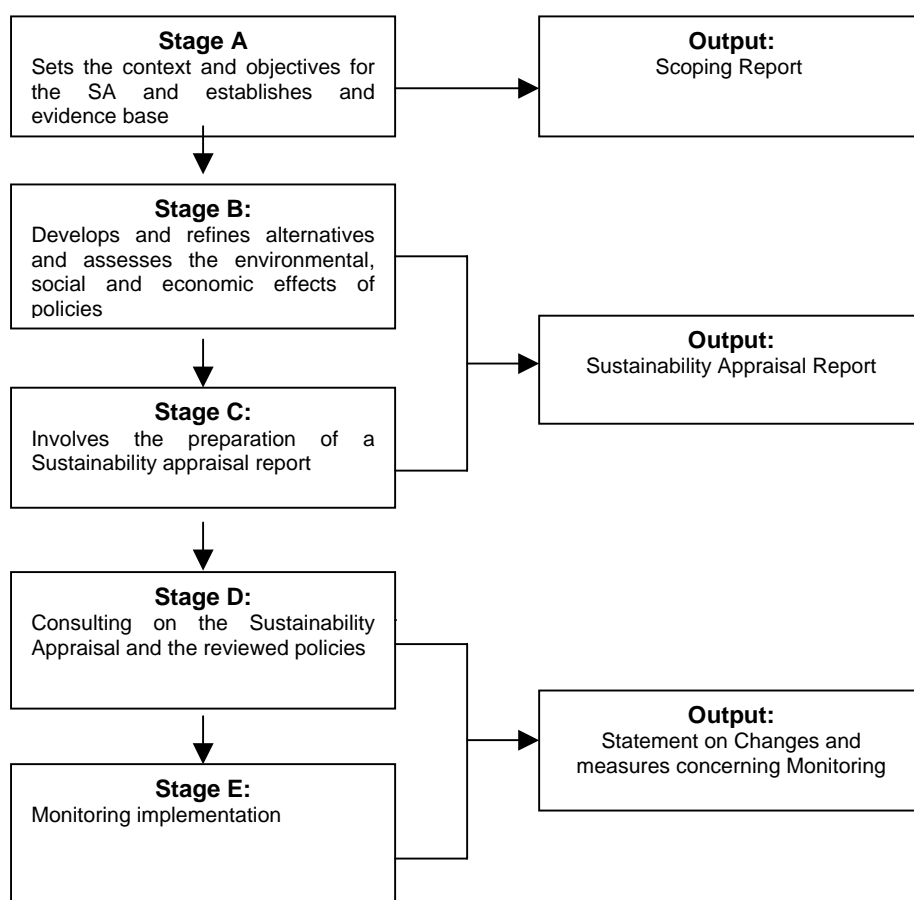
This document is the non-technical summary of the Scoping Report produced as part of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Herefordshire Local Development Framework (LDF). The Scoping Report identifies the key sustainability issues for Herefordshire and how the remaining stages of the appraisal will be carried out.

### Background

Herefordshire Council is required to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of its Local Development Framework (LDF). The SA will assess the likely social, economic and environmental effects of the Core Strategy and other Development Plan Documents (DPDs), which form part of the LDF.

Herefordshire Council is currently at the first stage (Stage A) of the SA. This stage involves the production of a Scoping Report, which includes a description of the existing key social, economic, and environmental issues for Herefordshire as well as the identification of the SA objectives that will be used to assess the policies produced within the LDF documents.

This diagram shows the stages of Sustainability Appraisal for the LDF.



## Why carry out a Sustainability Appraisal?

Sustainability appraisal is mandatory under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for the production of LDFs. In other words, the Act requires local planning authorities, when producing a plan for the future development of their area, to consider the wider social, environmental and economic effects that its implementation may have on the conditions that currently exist (otherwise known as the baseline).

In addition to this mandatory requirement to undertake SA, local planning authorities are also required under a European Directive, to provide a Strategic Environmental Appraisal (SEA). Whilst the requirement to produce an SA and SEA are covered under separate legislation, government guidance considers that it is possible to satisfy the two requirements through a single approach – called the Sustainability Appraisal of the LDF.

This summary sets out the findings of work undertaken by the Council to identify the key sustainability issues that affect the county. These issues are presented in more detail within the Scoping Report, which also explains how the 20 SA Objectives at the end of this summary (against which future plans and policies will be assessed) have been identified.

## What are the key sustainability issues for Herefordshire?

The current sustainability issues that will affect the County have been identified through an analysis of relevant plans and programmes, through the collection of data held by a wide range of agencies and organisations including the Council and consultation with national and local sustainability groups and organisations. A summary of these issues is provided below.

Key Issue	Summary
Population Change	Age profile of population increasing, with half population living in rural areas
Provide decent and affordable housing for all	Level of future housing growth High ratio of property price to household earnings Shortfall of provision of affordable dwellings / increase in number of people accepted as homeless Decline in average household size Lifetime homes needed and greater range of size and mix of tenure (disproportionate number of detached houses). Provision of gypsy sites
Reducing poverty and social exclusion	Reduce disparities and inequalities across county
Crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour	Reduce fear of crime and levels of anti-social behaviour
Health and well being	Support to live independently Improved access to health, sport and recreational facilities Improved public facilities Reduce health inequalities Promote healthy lifestyles
Economic activity/employment	Gross Value Added remains lower than regional and national figure per head – but need to increase GVA through sustainable consumption and production. Reduce and manage reliance on traditional employment sectors and ensure Herefordshire can attract business in technology and knowledge intensive sectors. Adaptation and diversification of farming, forestry employment. Lower weekly wages than region or nation. Supporting and promoting sustainable tourism and agriculture, balancing the essential roles they play in the local economy.
Education and Skills	Lack of skilled workforce in technology and knowledge intensive sector could affect investment potential and increase “commuting in” from other areas to bridge the skills gap. Improve environmental management skills. Improve educational attainment across all age groups Lack of university in county
Transport and Accessibility/Air quality	High reliance on the private car Traffic congestion in Hereford and strain on existing infrastructure Encourage walking and cycling Need to match any growth with service provision and viable public transport alternatives.
Regeneration	Strengthen vitality and viability of centres. Strengthen role they play as a focus for community activity
Land use and stewardship	Promoting development of previously developed land and buildings as opposed to greenfield sites How the countryside can continue to be managed in an economically, socially and environmentally beneficial way in the face of continuing pressures on traditional farming
Climate change and flood risk	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through planning, design and build and consider the impact of climate change on land use and manage the risk of flooding
Biodiversity	Protect, conserve and enhance habitats and species of national, regional and local importance and

	minimise loss of biodiversity and expand opportunities for wildlife everywhere
Reduction in waste/increase in recycling	Increase in amount of waste production over recent years, with too much still going to landfill.
Water usage and quality	Issues relating to availability of resources, foul drainage, pollution, and abstraction in a county which supports water dependent biodiversity of international and national importance, given the predicted climate change consequences for water availability and demanding projections for new housing.
Energy Efficiency	Minimise energy waste through reduced energy consumption and maximum efficiency. Promote zero carbon development and locally appropriate renewable generation capacity.
Environmental assets and resources	Protect and enhance high quality rural and urban environment, landscape and townscape character, quality, tranquillity and biodiversity (environmental capital) as a resource for economic activity and in its own right

## Next Steps

The next stage of the SA process (Stage B) involves predicting and evaluating the effects of the policies of the LDF documents prepared. The effects will be assessed against the 20 Sustainability Objectives shown below. The objectives were derived from the West Midlands Regional Sustainable Development Framework, July 2006 (developed by the West Midlands Regional Assembly), the Herefordshire Community Strategy, June 2006 and through consultation with stakeholders. The appraisal will seek to demonstrate the sustainability strengths and weaknesses of the policies and will consider ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial ones. The appraisal process will be reported within the sustainability appraisal report that will accompany the consultation draft DPD being prepared.

## Sustainability Objectives

01 To support, maintain or enhance the provision of high quality, local or easily accessible employment opportunities, suited to the changing needs of the local workforce	11 Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing of the right type and tenure, in clean, safe and pleasant local environments
02 Secure a more adaptable and higher skilled workforce	12 Reduce the amount of waste requiring disposal and minimise the use of non-reusable materials and encourage recycling
03 Maintain or enhance conditions that enable a sustainable economy and continued investment	13 Value, maintain, restore and expand county biodiversity
04 Reduce road traffic and congestion, pollution and accidents and improve health through physical activity by increasing the proportion of journeys made by public transport, cycling and walking	14 Use natural resources and energy more efficiently.
05 Improve the health of the people of Herefordshire, reduce disparities in health geographically and demographically and encourage healthy living for all	15 Value, protect, enhance and restore the landscape quality of Herefordshire, including its rural areas and open spaces
06 Improve equality of access to and engagement in quality cultural, educational, leisure, sporting, recreational and community activities for all	16 Reduce Herefordshire's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change as well as its contribution to the problem
07 Sustainable regeneration	17 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting detriment to public well-being, the economy and the environment
08 Raise educational achievement levels across the county	18 Minimise local and global pollution and protect or enhance environmental resources.
09 Reduce and prevent crime/fear of crime and antisocial behaviour in the county	19 Ensure integrated, efficient and balanced land use
10 Reduce poverty and promote equality and social inclusion by closing the gap between the most deprived areas in the county and the rest of the county	20 Value, protect and enhance the character and built quality of settlements and neighbourhoods and the county's historic environment and cultural heritage