

Section B

The Sustainability Appraisal

4.0 The role of appraisal *(after Levett-Therivel Sustainability Consultants)*

4.1 Outcome objectives derived from sustainability principles may test and challenge policies in some areas, for example transport. This is right and proper. SA is not just a test of consistency with current Government policies: it should aim to help the “A Sustainable Future for Exmoor” plan work towards sustainability.

4.2 According to the internationally accepted ‘classic’ definitions, sustainable development is about reconciling a human aspiration – ‘meeting the needs of the present’, or ‘improving the quality of life’, or ‘maintaining and enhancing environmental qualities and assets’ – with a constraint: ‘not compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’, or ‘living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems.’ Appraisal needs to identify points where promoting one of these aims threatens another.

4.3 It should also always be remembered that SA is only a tool. It does not make decisions. Inclusion of an appraisal criterion (for example on reducing fossil-fuelled road travel) does not instantly veto all road travel. All it does is ensure that the full range of sustainability consequences of options or choices are made clear so that ultimately political choices about policies can take these into account.

5.0 The Appraisal Matrix explanation

5.1 Table 1 has five columns. The first gives the six high level objectives for the appraisal matrix, the second a total of 31 more detailed questions applying these objectives. The emerging 10 SW Regional Operating Principles are embedded within the six high level objectives.

5.2 The third column gives further explanation of the question, or the reason for asking it (where these are not obvious), and the fourth suggests the sorts of things the appraisal will be looking for in the Sustainable Future for Exmoor policies, objectives and targets to answer the detailed question. It must be stressed these are only indicative examples. They are not the only or necessarily the best ways to achieve the results, will not be appropriate or even possible in all circumstances, often need actions that go beyond the scope of a National Park Management Plan, and may be limited or sacrificed for the sake of policy objectives which may take precedence due to the Environment Act 1995. The fifth column lists the relevant plans, programmes and strategies that relate to the high level objectives.

The numbers before each objective or question are for convenience referring to them in this appraisal.

Coverage of SEA topics by SSA Framework

5.3 The SEA Directive requires a number of issues (SEA topics) to be covered when assessing the likely significant effects on the environment. The following SEA compliance check (undertaken for the SA of the SW RSS in June 2004 by Professor Riki Therivel of Oxford Brookes University and Levett-Therivel Sustainability Consultants), confirmed that the SEA topics have been covered by the objectives in the SA Framework set out in Table 1, as follows (numbers = SA objectives relevant to the SEA topic):

Biodiversity	2.1
Population	2.4, 4.1, 4.4, 5.1-5.3,
Human health	1.5, 5.1, 5.3, 6.1-6.3,
Fauna	2.1
Flora	2.1
Soil	2.2, 1.5
Water	1.5
Air	3.1-3.5, 1.5
Climate	1.1, 2.6, 3.1-3.5, 4.6,
Material assets	4.2, 4.4, 2.6, 1.1-1.4
Cultural heritage	1.5, 2.4, 2.5
Landscape	2.3, 2.4

Table 1 – The Detailed Definitions of the Appraisal Matrix

High level objective	Detailed questions: does the policy / proposal . . .	Explanation of the detailed question (where not obvious)	What appraisal will look for	Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies
1: Minimise consumption of natural resources (P9, 10.2)	1.1 Reduce non-renewable energy consumption and 'greenhouse' emissions	Renewable energy production and energy efficient technologies help. Best of all, look for ways to design out the need to use energy	Designing buildings to use natural lighting, ventilation and capture the sun's heat. Use of renewable energy where appropriate.	1. Regional Renewable Energy Strategy for the South West of England 2003-2010
	1.2 Keep water consumption within local carrying capacity limits (taking account of climate change)		Minimise water consumption, maximise use of rainwater / grey water.	2. Revision 2010: Empowering the Region – Renewable Energy Targets for the South West.
	1.3 Minimise consumption and extraction of minerals		Greatest possible reuse of old material in new construction; provision for reuse and recycling.	3. A Vision for Sustainable Waste Management in the South West
	1.4 Reduce waste not put to any use	The best way - top of the waste hierarchy - is to avoid creating waste at source. Reuse, recycling, digestion and composting are better than disposal.	Provision for composting, digestion, recycling in new development.	4. From Rubbish to Resource. The Regional Waste Strategy for the South West Consultation Document
	1.5 Minimise land, water, air, light, noise, and genetic pollution		Development that minimises diffuse as well as point source pollution. Approaches to transport that will reduce traffic emissions.	5. Water Resources for the Future – A Strategy for the South West Region 6. Minerals Strategy 7. The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Working Together for Clean Air, 2000

High level objective	Detailed questions: does the policy / proposal . . .	Explanation of the detailed question (where not obvious)	What appraisal will look for	Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies
2: Maintain and improve environmental quality and assets (P10)	2.1 Protect and enhance habitats and species (taking account of climate change)		Protection not only of designated areas, but of wildlife interest everywhere. Especially strengthening of links between 'wild' areas to increase adaptation to climate change	1. Local Sustainability Group for the South West (2000). <i>Promoting Sustainable Tourism in the South West, A discussion paper by the local sustainability group for the South West.</i>
	2.2 Promote the conservation and wise use of land	Soils are a non-renewable resource. They should be conserved where possible and appropriate to do so for future generations. Much of the region's valuable cultural and natural resources are a product of a rural way of life and require rural skills and farming/stewardship to maintain them.	Avoiding development that leads to the permanent loss of bio-productive soils, taking into account their contribution to sustainable food production, biodiversity, flood storage, groundwater recharge, etc. Encourage development that strengthens links between urban and rural lives, and supports farmers' sustainable stewardship of rural land.	2. South West Regional Assembly and South West Regional Environmental Network (2003). <i>Our Environment: Our Future Towards the Regional Strategy for the South West Environment, Draft for Consultation.</i>
	2.3 Protect and enhance landscape and townscape	The diversity of the region is one of its major strengths, perhaps best expressed in its landscapes and townscapes, although much new build pays little respect to this (e.g. modern housing estates)	Location and design of development to respect and improve character and settlement setting.	3. English Heritage (undated). <i>English Heritage in the South West 2003-005</i>
	2.4 Value and protect diversity and local distinctiveness including rural ways of life	The South West's diversity, cultural as well as environmental, is a good in itself and increases resilience to external change.	Policies should avoid 'suburbanising' the countryside. Farmers and other land workers should be enabled to live in the countryside.	4. Defra (2003). Draft, <i>The First Soil Action Plan For England 2004-06</i>

High level objective	Detailed questions: does the policy / proposal . . .	Explanation of the detailed question (where not obvious)	What appraisal will look for	Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies
	2.5 Maintain and enhance cultural and historical assets		Protection of culturally and historically significant assets and qualities. Not just designated sites and buildings, but also non-designated such as locally valued features and landmarks	
	2.6 Reduce vulnerability to flooding, sea level rise (taking account of climate change)	Existing settlements need to plan for increased risk.	New development and infrastructure should not be built in areas at risk. Relocation and managed retreat may be the best option.	
3: Provide access to meet people's needs with least damage to communities and the environment (9)	3.1 Reduce the need/desire to travel by car	Road traffic is the only major terrestrial source of greenhouse emissions still increasing, the main source of local air pollution, and identified in countless surveys as one of the main threats to local quality of life through danger, noise, vibration and community severance. Car dependence deepens social exclusion and adds to pressures for unsustainable land use patterns.	Development patterns that reduce the need to travel, such as ensuring that people can live closer to their work. Avoid developments that generate further road traffic. Improvement of alternatives to the car. Promotion of 'non car' options for tourism. Policies that progressively reduce parking provision and road space. Policies that encourage more efficient use of car travel (e.g. car sharing, fuel efficient cars, etc.).	<p>1. Developing the Regional Transport Strategy in the South West, Consultation Draft <i>South West Area Multi Modal Study, SWARMMS Final Report</i></p> <p>2. Development of an Air Transport (2003) <i>Strategy for the Far South West of England, A Report for the South West Regional Development Agency, South West Regional Assembly Government Office South West and Department for Transport.</i></p>

High level objective	Detailed questions: does the policy / proposal . . .	Explanation of the detailed question (where not obvious)	What appraisal will look for	Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies
	3.2 Reduce the need/desire to travel by air	Air travel is more damaging in terms of climate change even than driving the same distance. Projected increases in air travel threaten to undo the UK's 'Kyoto' achievements. This has led organisations including the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution and the Sustainable Development Commission to advocate demand management. Increasing air travel is unsustainable.	Develop alternatives, especially fast rail links and direct sea links to Eire, France and Spain. Any extra air capacity in the South West should be offset by reductions elsewhere eg Heathrow. Avoidance of development that encourages air travel.	3. Regional Transport Statistics 2003 (www.dft.gsi.gov.uk)
	3.3 Help everyone access basic services easily, safely and affordably	Enabling people to get access to what they want in life with less travel is a 'win-win', reducing costs and effort as well as environmental damage.	Distance to, and ease of accessing, schools, shops, places of work and recreation. Quality of local services: having a school within walking distance of housing is less use if all families who can, send their children elsewhere. Encourage greater use of ICT.	

High level objective	Detailed questions: does the policy / proposal . . .	Explanation of the detailed question (where not obvious)	What appraisal will look for	Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies
	3.4 Make public transport, cycling and walking easier and more attractive		Provision of bus routes and stops, and safe, attractive and direct routes for cyclists and walkers. Patterns of development that support their use, eg short distances to local services, concentration of amenities in town centres served by radial bus routes. Improvement of urban, inter-urban and rural public transport services.	
	3.5 Encourage a switch from transporting freight by road to rail or water		Encouragement of local goods and services. Provision of improved port and rail facilities, including inland waterways, and interchanges that will lead to reduced road freight traffic, not more.	
4: Develop the economy in ways that meet people's needs (P2, 5)	4.1 Give everyone in the region access to satisfying work opportunities, paid or unpaid	Work should provide satisfaction as well as income - consider whether jobs are ones people will WANT to do - rather than HAVE to do because there's nothing else.	Availability of employment that people find attractive; whether people can make a sufficient income without having to do unattractive work; whether people who want to work outside the cash economy can do so. Promotion of more sustainable year-round tourism, particularly in coastal and market towns.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regional Economic Strategy for the South West of England 2003-2012 2. South West Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA). 3. South West England (2004). <i>Towards 2015 - Shaping tomorrow's</i>

High level objective	Detailed questions: does the policy / proposal . . .	Explanation of the detailed question (where not obvious)	What appraisal will look for	Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies
	4.2 Help everyone afford a comfortable standard of living	Can be improved by reducing cash costs - eg need to travel. high fares, high housing costs, or by fostering community self help to meet needs - as well as by increasing income.	Whether lower incomes are enough to buy a reasonable standard of living - taking account of (eg) housing and travel costs. Avoidance of kinds of economic development that (eg) raise housing costs or make people on lower incomes have to spend more on (eg) car travel or buying services commercially that used to be public or mutual.	<i>tourism</i> (a consultation draft)
	4.3 Reduce poverty and income inequality	Levelling up cash incomes helps; so does reducing the disadvantage caused by (eg) not being able to afford a car or pay for commercialised services.		
	4.4 Meet local needs locally	Contributes to resilience and community strength as well as reducing the transport and energy intensity of the economy	Maintenance and enhancement of businesses meeting local needs. Encouragement for farmers' markets and farm shops.	
	4.5 Increase the circulation of wealth within the region	If businesses spend more of their income on goods and services within the region, this increases the benefits of business activities to the region and its economic security	Promotion of local and regional markets in goods and services. Development of greater integration within key economic sectors of the region. Encouragement to local businesses, especially micro and SMEs that adopt sustainable practices.	

High level objective	Detailed questions: does the policy / proposal . . .	Explanation of the detailed question (where not obvious)	What appraisal will look for	Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies
	4.6 Harness the economic potential of the coast in a sustainable way	The coastline of the South West is one of the region's greatest, but most vulnerable, assets, particularly in the light of climate change.	Integrated approaches to coastal management that provide for climate change to take its natural course where possible, careful planning of port and coastal town development, that delivers jobs that feed off but do not damage the environment, and by keeping the 'wild' stretches 'wild'.	
	4.7 Reduce vulnerability of the economy to climate change and harness opportunities arising	Extreme weather, crop failures, water shortages at home or abroad may disrupt trade, long distance transport and availability of energy and other resources, and increase insurance liabilities. South West may become more attractive to visitors and business.	Economic patterns that avoid unnecessary dependence on long distance trade and travel. Visitor and recreation developments that will encourage people to stay/visit the South West rather than go further afield.	
5: Support communities that meet people's needs (P6)	5.1 Help make suitable housing available and affordable for everyone		Match of housing to households; cost of appropriate housing relative to disposable incomes especially for less well off people; whether people are forced to move away from their chosen communities or workplaces to afford housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustaining Success – Sustainability Education in the South West 2. South West Regional Housing Strategy 2002-2005 3. Strategic Housing Priorities in the

High level objective	Detailed questions: does the policy / proposal . . .	Explanation of the detailed question (where not obvious)	What appraisal will look for	Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies
	5.2 Give everyone access to learning, training, skills and knowledge	Important both to equip people for economic success and for personal development. The skills levels of the South West is lower than the national average, particularly in the western part of the region, which can hold back people from accessing satisfying work opportunities. The shortage of affordable housing in rural areas can affect supply of rural skills, for example in farming and food workforce, building, and essential services.	Quality and accessibility of schools, colleges, libraries. Encouragement for a diversity of choice of employment, particularly in the more deprived parts of the region, and educational and other service provision (e.g. Centres of Excellence for Skills) as part of regeneration efforts. Affordable housing for key workers.	South West 4. Sustainable Communities in the South West – Building for the Future 5. South West Regional Assembly (2004). <i>Analysis of Community Strategies in the South West, Final Report</i> 6. Culture South West (2003). <i>In search of Chunky Dunsters - A Cultural Strategy for the South West</i> 7. Local Sustainability Group for the South West (2000). <i>Promoting Sustainable Tourism in the South West, A discussion paper by the local sustainability group for the South West</i>
	5.3 Reduce crime and fear of crime		Development that designs crime out, e.g. by providing passive surveillance, avoiding 'dead' spaces and times.	
	5.4 Promote stronger more vibrant communities	For example by fostering mutual trust, self help and reducing the amount people need to travel away from home to meet needs. Community involvement in local economies (2.4)	Patterns of development that allow people to meet more needs within local communities and reduce the need to travel. Support for local trading schemes.	
	5.5 Increase access to and participation in cultural activities		Cultural facilities integral with development. Development of 'environment-based' visitor attractions, that do not damage the resource they are based upon.	

High level objective	Detailed questions: does the policy / proposal . . .	Explanation of the detailed question (where not obvious)	What appraisal will look for	Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies
6: Improve health (1)	6.1 Improve health	Access to sickness treatment services contributes, but health is more than this.	Development that contributes to positive wellbeing, through (eg) pleasant surroundings and living conditions, freedom from noise and pollution, and enabling lifestyles free from stress, anxiety and exhaustion.	Various at South West Public Health Observatory (www.swpho.org.uk) See RSDF (http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/swra/downloads/ourwork/sustainabledevelopment/download_documents/Moving_in_the_Right_Direction.pdf) which contains data on infant mortality by deprivation category.
	6.2 Reduce health inequalities	Lower income (or other disadvantage) should not increase exposure to health risks or reduce access to a healthy lifestyle	Development that avoids exposing poorer people to (eg) more pollution or noise, and that give all access to leisure and recreation.	
	6.3 Promote healthy lifestyles, especially routine daily exercise	Sedentary lifestyles and lack of routine basic exercise are one of the main threats to health	Patterns of development that make walking and cycling easy and attractive as routine methods of transport	