



Leicester
City Council

Appendix C

SUSTAINABILITY APPRISAL REPORT
FOR THE DRAFT TALL BUILDINGS
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING
DOCUMENT

JANUARY 2006

Tall Buildings Supplementary Planning Document

Sustainability Appraisal Report

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report is a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating the requirements for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), of Leicester City Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 'Tall Buildings'.

2.0 Context

2.1 The term sustainable development has been widely used since its inception by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 and refers to "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Following the Summit the UK government defined the themes of sustainable development in the strategy 'A Better Quality of Life, a Strategy for sustainable Development in the UK'. These include:

1. Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
2. Effective protection of the environment;
3. The prudent use of natural resources; and
4. Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

2.2 Sustainability Appraisal is now considered to be an integral part of producing planning documents. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 12 ensure the concept of sustainable development is integrated into all land-use plans. It requires such plans to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). Its purpose is to promote sustainable development by integrating sustainability considerations into plans. SA assesses and reports the likely significant effects of the plan and the opportunities for improving the social, environmental and economic conditions by implementing the plan.

2.3 At the same time as a Sustainability Appraisal the plan documents are also required to be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) pursuant to European Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans, and programs.

2.4 Whilst the SA examines all sustainability related effects the SEA is focused on its primarily on its environmental effects. SEA involves carefully assessing plans and programmes for the potential environmental impacts they may have. It also takes into consideration sustainability issues in the strategic decision-making.

2.5 The SA and SEA are distinct, however there is a large amount of overlap between the European requirements and the SA allowing these to be combined into one process for assessment. This document will be in accordance with the government guidance and in addition ensure that the requirements of the SEA Directive are met.

3.0 The Key SPD Criteria

3.1 The SPD sets out the criteria to be addressed in considering proposal for tall buildings in 9 key areas:

- 1) Relationship to context, including topography, built form and skyline
- 2) Effect on historic environment at a city wide and local level
- 3) Relationship to transport infrastructure particularly public transport provision
- 4) Architectural excellence of the building
- 5) Contribution to public spaces and facilities, including mix of uses
- 6) Effect on the local environment, including microclimate and general amenity
- 7) Contribution to permeability and legibility of the site and wider area
- 8) Adoption of best practice guidance related to the sustainability design and construction of buildings.
- 9) Effect on the long term regeneration of the locality and the City as a whole

4.0 Preparing the Report

4.1 The Tall Buildings Supplementary Planning Documentary will form part of the Leicester Local Development Framework (LDF). This Sustainability Report has been prepared in accordance with government guidance on how to carry out sustainability appraisal as an integral part of the process of preparing the Local Development Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. The report follows the stages within the guidance of the Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks, Consultation Paper 2004. (See Table 1).

Table 1: SEA/SA guidance taken from the sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks, Consultation Paper 2004, ODPM 2004.

STAGE A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the Scope

A1 Identifying other relevant plans, programmes, and sustainability objectives.

<p>A2 Develop relevant baseline information and characterise the area. A3 Identifying key sustainability. A4 Developing the SA Framework including objectives, indicators and targets. A5 Testing the plan objectives against the SA Framework. A6 Consulting on the scope of the SA</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Output: Scoping Report</p>
STAGE B: Developing and refining options (Reg 25)
<p>B1 Appraising issues and options B2 Consulting on the SA of emerging options</p>
STAGE C: Appraising the effects of the plan (SPD) (Reg 26 & Submission)
<p>C1 Predicting the effects of the plan, including plan options C2 Assessing the effect of the plan C3 Mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects C4 Developing proposals for monitoring C5 Preparing the SA Report</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Output: Sustainability Report</p>
STAGE D: Consulting on the plan and SA Report
<p>D1 Consulting on the SA Report alongside the plan D2 Appraising significant changes D3 Decision making and providing information Consultation on the Sustainability Report</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Output: Sustainability Statement</p>
STAGE E: Monitoring implementation of the plan
<p>E1 Monitoring the significant effect of the plan and publishing report E2 Responding to adverse effects</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Output: section in the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)</p>

5.0 Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

5.1 Finally, as part of the “scoping report”, SA objectives incorporating the SEA Directive issues were devised. These are essentially a test of the emerging SDP’s sustainability and environmental soundness.

Table 2: SA/SEA Objectives

SOCIAL OBJECTIVES
<p>1.To ensure that the existing and future housing stock meets the housing needs of all communities 2. To improve health and reduce health inequalities by promoting healthy lifestyles, protecting health and providing health services 3. To provide better opportunities for people to value and enjoy the City’s heritage and participate in cultural and recreational activities.</p>
ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES
<p>4.To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the natural, cultural and built environmental and archaeological assets of the city 5. To enhance and conserve the environmental quality of the City by increasing</p>

the environmental infrastructure.

6. To manage prudently the natural resources of the City including water, air quality, soil and minerals.

7. To minimise energy usage and to develop renewable energy resource, reducing dependency on non-renewable resources.

8. To protect and enhance the unique townscape and urban character of the city.

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES

9. To create high quality employment opportunities and to develop a culture of on going engagement and excellence in learning and skills.

10. To provide the physical conditions for a modern economic structure, including infrastructure to support the use of new technologies

SPATIAL OBJECTIVES

11. To ensure that the location of development makes efficient use of the existing physical infrastructure

12. To promote and ensure high standards of sustainable design and construction, optimising the use of previously developed land and buildings

13. To minimise waste and to increase the re-use and recycling of waste materials

14. To improve accessibility to jobs and services by increasing the use of public transport, cycling and walking, and reduced traffic growth and congestion.

15. To limit impacts associated with expected climate change, including flooding and drought.

6.0 Appraisal Methodology

6.1 The Appraisal was undertaken by officers of Leicester City Council. There has been some input to the Supplementary Planning Document from the 'Leicester Better Buildings Projects Office' on the specific issues relating to sustainable energy design.

6.2 The Supplementary Planning Document supplements policies UD02a 'Building Layout form and position' of the adopted City of Leicester Local Plan. This policy has been appraised as part of the sustainability appraisal for the adopted Local Plan. The appraisal process therefore, has been undertaken as an iterative and continuous process commencing from the Local Plan policy development stages up to this report on the SPD.

6.3 These policy appraisals were then developed further into detailed guidance during the preparation of the new Supplementary Planning Guidance Document on 'Tall Buildings'. The SA objectives set out as part of the scoping report were assessed to see how the new SPD document could meet these objectives. The findings are shown in table 3.

6.4 The Scoping Report includes the baseline information. This will need to be updated and monitored.

7.0 Appraisal of Local Plan Policies

7.1 Policy UD02a of the adopted Local Plan was appraised as part of a matrix of factors relating to the Quality of Life and Local Environment, Natural Resources, and Global Sustainability. The outcomes are set out in the appraisal documents, which supplement the Local Plan.

8.0 Responses to the Four Consultation Bodies

8.1 The comments of the four statutory environmental bodies – The Environment Agency, The Countryside Agency, English Nature and English Heritage who were consulted on the Scoping Report as part of the preparation of the SPD have been incorporated onto this report.

English Heritage

English Heritage suggested minor amendments to the report, offering updated sources for some of the referenced information, as well as tailoring some of the SA objectives so there are more focused towards the goals of the SPD, and this has been addressed in the Sustainability Appraisal.

English Nature

English Nature wished to make no formal comments.

Environment Agency

Data sources were provided to help complete base line data, and the suggestions regarding section 4.2 “The downside of Tall buildings” and 5.6.1 regarding emissions from processes in the locality, have been addressed in the revision of the SPD after this consultation stage.

The Countryside Agency

The countryside agency found the scoping report very comprehensive but due to its urban nature of the report wanted to make no formal comments.

None of the four bodies had any comments on the screening statement.

9.0 Policy, Environmental, Social and Economic Context

Stage A of the SA/SEA process considered the policy and ‘sustainability’ context in which the SPD is being prepared. The main findings of the Stage A “Scoping Report” were as follows.

Six key implications underpinning the SPD were identified on the themes of:

- Housing
- Resources and Waste
- Transport and Access
- Pollution and Contamination
- Visual Amenity
- Climate change and Energy

- Open Space and Recreation
- Regeneration and Employment
- Use
- Heritage and Archaeology

Housing:

Implication

1. The SPD may assist towards the reuse of previously developed land and by encouraging sustainable building design to help meet the 60% target for new homes to be built on previously developed land by 2016.

Resources and Waste:

Implication

2. The SPD should help and encourage efficient use of resources, encourage provision of facilities within new developments to reduce waste production, increase reuse, recycling and recovery of energy from waste.

Transport and Access

Implication

3. The SPD will address the environmental impacts of transport, particularly on air quality and access through encouraging a modal switch away from road based transport.
4. The SPD will assist with future transport needs of the community and ensure that development is in sustainable locations.

Regeneration and Employment

Implication

5. The SPD should assist with proposals for redevelopment of land that favours a sustainable approach to job creation and the local economy.

Pollution and Contamination

Implications

6. The SPD should assist with the aim to protect and improve the quality of natural resources air, freshwater resources, soil resources by reducing loss of resources and the spread of pollutants and providing remediation where necessary.
7. The SPD considers the various environmental effects of tall buildings and issues relating to sustainable design.

Climate Change and Energy Use

Implication

8. The SPD looks at the development and construction implications of energy usage and other resources in contributing towards sustainable development

Open Space and Recreation Implication

9. The SPD promotes attractive and safe public spaces and how proposal provide for open space and the development of the public realm.

Heritage and Archaeology:

Implication

10. The SPD outlines design criteria, which looks at the effects of tall buildings on the historic environment including conservation areas, historic buildings and archaeological remains.

Visual Amenity

Implication

11. The SPD seeks development that will make a positive contribution to and mitigate against impacts on visual amenity.

The overall impacts of the SPD when assessed against each SA objective are documented in table 3 below: -

Table 3: Overall Impact of the SPD

SA/SEA objective	Comments and overall assessments	Recommendations
1.To ensure that the existing and future housing stock meets the housing needs of all communities.	The SPD would help promote and reuse previously developed land, encourage sustainable building design and help achieve density targets. However although the SPD specifies that 106 contributions will be sort to improve the wider area, nothing is specified for what the contribution will be sort, nor whether affordable housing will be sort.	The SPD specify what contributions will be sort by the 106 agreements, and that a percentage of affordable housing will also be sort.

2. To improve health and reduce health inequalities by promoting healthy lifestyles, protecting health and providing health services

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The SPD would help to improve health through good design of tall building and only supported development with features such as good ventilation and use of natural sunlight.

3. To provide better opportunities for people to value and enjoy the City's heritage and participate in cultural and recreational activities.

++

The SPG will ensure that any proposed tall buildings will be of sympathetic designs, which will protect the heritage of Leicester, and that planning gain will be used to enhance local recreational facilities.

4. To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the natural, cultural and built environmental and archaeological assets of the city

+

The protections of assets are part of the development plan framework, which the SPD forms a part of. Any proposal that may potentially have an effect on these assets is subject to the relevant policies in the local plan.

5. To enhance and conserve the environmental quality of the City by increasing the environmental infrastructure.

+

The SPD will seek to protect open space, and will seek to improve increase open space provision through the process of planning gain.

6. To manage prudently the natural resources of the City including water, air quality, soil and minerals.

+

The SPD will promote only tall buildings which will have limited environmental impact to Leicester's Natural Resources, and will discourage development which will cause increased impact to air quality in areas in which problems currently exist, and developments which effect the microclimate.

7. To minimise energy usage and to develop

+

The SPD will only promote development that

renewable energy resource, reducing dependency on non-renewable resources. encourages the use of public transport, and promote mixed use schemes which will limited the extent that the car is used.

8. To protect and enhance the unique townscape and urban character of the city +
The SPD will encourage tall buildings of excellent architectural quality, and development, which does not impact the unique character of Leicester.

9. To create high quality employment opportunities and to develop a culture of on going engagement and excellence in learning and skills. +
The SPD will encourage tall buildings, which will be of excellent architectural quality, and will therefore encourage high quality business and therefore high quality employment.

10. To provide the physical conditions for a modern economic structure, including infrastructure to support the use of new technologies +
The SPD will assist in seeking to ensure that new technologies will be will be encouraged in the building of tall buildings

11. To ensure that the location of development makes efficient use of the existing physical infrastructure ++
The SPD will strongly promote development on Brownfield sites, importantly with good existing infrastructure links, and will discourage development, which causes disruption to the existing infrastructure.

12. To promote and ensure high standards of sustainable design and construction, optimising the use of previously developed land and buildings ++
The SPD will ensure that tall buildings are only built with to design and methods, which are sustainable. Only tall buildings, which are mixed use, and are easily convertible to other uses, will be acceptable. Tall buildings will be strongly encouraged to be developed on Brownfield sites.

13. To minimise waste and to increase the re-use and recycling of waste materials	+	It would be expected that tall buildings would help minimise the potential impact caused waste by using locally sourced materials, and using recycled materials in the construction process.
14. To improve accessibility to jobs and services by increasing the use of public transport, cycling and walking, and reduced traffic growth and congestion.	+	The SPD will ensure that tall buildings will be located with close proximity to public transport, and will discourage development, which will cause increased impact to the existing road network.
15. To limit impacts associated with expected climate change, including flooding and drought.	+	The SPD will discourage tall buildings which impact the microclimate of the area, and the SPD will encourage development will promote low emissions, in both the construction process and in the actual operation of the building.

Key to table 3

++	Likely to have a very positive impact
+	Likely to have a positive impact
0, +/-	Likely to have neutral impact, or positive impacts would be out balance out negative impacts
	Unlikely to have an impact
-	Likely to have a negative impact
--	Likely to have a very negative impact
I	Could have either a positive or negative impact depending on how it is implemented
*	Nothing specific to this character area – refer to generic policies

The SPD updates and revises existing guidance found within the City of Leicester local plan therefore inevitably the option of not having an SPD would mean that the City Council would not be able to offer important and detailed guidance regarding a subject as important in modern planning as Tall Buildings, and in turn limit the potential impact upon sustainability which tall buildings can have. The appraisal shows that the SPD cumulatively meets sustainability and environmental objectives.

