Sustainability Appraisal

Scoping Report Update

December 2012

1 Introduction

Background

1.1 When drawing up new planning documents the effects they will have on the environment and people's quality of life, both now and in the future are some of the most important things to consider. To be sure that the plan does not cause environmental, social or economic problems at the heart of the plan production process there is a system of assessment known as Sustainability Appraisal. This approach is carried out to ensure that we achieve sustainable development.

What is Sustainable Development?

1.2 The Brundtland Report of 1987 established a commonly used definition of sustainable development as,

'Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

1.3 More recently, the 2005 UK Strategy for Sustainable Development, 'Securing the Future', set out a set of guiding principles and shared priorities for securing sustainable development.

Five Guiding Principles
• Living within environmental limits;
• Ensuring a strong, healthy, just society;
• Achieving a sustainable economy;
• Promoting good governance; and
• Using sound science responsibly.

1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework [the Framework, paragraph 6] reiterates these principles and sets out that 'the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development'. The Framework itself [namely paragraphs 18 to 219] constitute what the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system.

Sustainability Appraisal

1.5 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act of 2004 [section 19(5)] sets out the requirement to carry out sustainability appraisals of Local Plans. The aim of the sustainability appraisal process is to ensure that sustainability concerns are incorporated into the decision making process.

1.6 The requirement is that Local Planning authorities should develop a framework for carrying out a systematic appraisal of its Local Plan. The appraisal should act as an audit trail for why different options have been discarded or advanced and a means for testing how sustainable the preferred option will be. The sustainability appraisal will be an ongoing and iterative process and will be published alongside each version of the Local Plan that is made available for consultation. These documents will also be available for consultation and will help people see how decisions have been made.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.7 The need to carry out Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was introduced by a European Directive and brought into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. This sets a requirement to assess the environmental implications of certain types of plans and programmes and to determine whether an SEA is required. We have made a determination that SEA is required for the Local Plan. As part of carrying out a sustainability appraisal, we will ensure that the requirements of the SEA regulations are met.

1.8 To make it clear how we are meeting the requirements of the SEA Directive we will put 'signposts' at the beginning of each section of the Sustainability Appraisal process to show what section of the SEA directive is being met.

Additional Appraisal Requirements

1.9 In addition to the legal requirements of Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment there are a number of other assessments that should be undertaken. It is considered best practice that these be undertaken within the wider remit of the sustainability appraisal process. This reduces resources, allows the public to comment on a number of assessments in a single document, makes use of a common appraisal team and uses a similar evidence base.

Equalities Impact Assessment

1.10 This would meet the requirement of the Equalities Act [2010] to assess the impact of any decision of a strategic nature on a range of 'protected' groups who may be otherwise be discriminated against by the outcomes of the Local Plan. The equalities impact assessment would be undertaken separately but would inform the Sustainability Appraisal.

Health Impact Assessment

1.11 The need to carry out a Health Impact Assessment is not a statutory requirement but is considered good practice given the clear links between spatial planning and health. It is planned that a separate Health Impact Assessment will be undertaken on the Local Plan, including emerging options, with the help of our Public Health colleagues. This will inform the Sustainability Appraisal.

Appropriate Assessment

1.12 A further requirement, introduced by the EU Habitats Directive, is the need to carry out an Appropriate (Habitats Regulations) Assessment. This is a requirement to consider the impact of planning policies and plans on nature sites of European Importance and to ensure that they are not adversely affected.

1.13 We are currently assessing the potential issues in Sefton which our Local Plan may have in terms of habitats. It is likely that we will need to carry out an Appropriate Assessment on certain aspects of our Local Plan. This will be consulted on separately to the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Appraisal Process

1.14 The process for undertaking this sustainability appraisal process will follow the tasks set out in national guidance. These tasks are set out in table 1.1 below. This initial Scoping Report sets out tasks A1 to A5 (highlighted in red below) with the result being a framework to use in the following stages.

Table 1.1   Stages in Sustainability Appraisal

Stage A   **Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope**
A1 Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives
A2 Collecting baseline information
A3 Identifying sustainability issues and problems
A4 Developing the SA framework
A5 Consulting on the scope of the SA
Stage B   **Developing and refining options and assessing effects**
B1 Testing the Core Strategy objectives against the SA framework
B2 Developing the Core Strategy options
B3 Predicting the effects of the Core Strategy
B4 Evaluating the effects of the Core Strategy
B5 Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects
B6 Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the Core Strategy
Stage C   **Preparing the sustainability appraisal report**
Stage D   **Consulting on the Core Strategy and sustainability report**
D1 Public participation on the draft Core Strategy and the SA report.
D2 (i) Appraising significant changes
D2 (ii) Appraising significant changes resulting from representations
D3 Making decisions and providing information
Stage E   **Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Core Strategy**
E1 Finalising aims and methods for monitoring
E2 Responding to adverse effects

1.15 This document is the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for Sefton's Local Plan and will set the framework for carrying out the sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

1.16 This scoping report was initially completed in 2009 and set the framework for appraising Sefton's emerging Local Development Framework, including the Core Strategy. However, for a number of reasons we didn't progress with the Core Strategy as quickly as originally planned. As a result the scoping report needed a refresh to take account of new information, data and guidance [notably the National Planning Policy Framework]. Additionally we also carried out a number of consultation events to inform the Core Strategy [in 2009 and 2011]. These events

provided a huge amount of information on the issues that are important to local people. This information has also been used to update the scoping report.

1.17 The updated scoping report is being consulted on with the three statutory environmental bodies. A schedule of changes from the 2009 Scoping Report has been included at Appendix A.

Sefton's Local Plan

1.18 The National Planning Policy Framework removed the need to produce a separate Core Strategy and individual Development Plan Documents and Site Allocations DPD. Sefton will therefore now produce a composite Local Plan that will include our strategic policies, local policies, development management policies and site allocations in a single document. It will be the Local Plan that will be appraised against the Sustainability Framework set out in this report. The Local Plan will cover the whole of Sefton and will run to 2030. The appraisal will consider the impact of the plan to this period and beyond.

1.19 A Waste Local Plan is being produced on behalf of the Merseyside authorities by the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service. This has been subjected to a separate Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal. Details can be viewed at www.wasteplanningmerseyside.gov.uk.

2 Review of Relevant Plans and Programmes

Information required for the Strategic Environmental Assessment
The 'relationship [of the plan or programme] with other relevant plans and programmes'. 'The environmental protection objectives, established at international, European Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation

Introduction

2.1 This stage consists of establishing the policy and sustainability context in which the Local Plan is being prepared through a review of all relevant Plans, Policies, Programmes, Strategies and Initiatives (PPPSIs). This task helps to identify objectives and targets that are relevant to the Local Plan and which it can help deliver.

2.2 Some points to consider when assessing the policy context are:
• No list of PPPSIs can claim to be exhaustive. Instead the review should look at those that are most relevant and draw on the key points.
• New policies emerge on a regular basis. As part of the monitoring of the Local Plan new policy guidance will be assessed.
• PPPSIs often exist in a hierarchy with International, National, Regional and Local guidance often informing each other. The normal rule is that the more local level policies provide the greater level of policy detail and therefore the review should concentrate on the lower level documents.

Methodology

2.3 A number of PPPSIs that were considered relevant to the scope of the Local Plan were reviewed. For the purposes of this section we have grouped these into broad topics. Table 2.1 on the following page sets out the list of documents reviewed.

2.4 The review consisted of assessing each relevant document and extracting the key information with regard to the Local Plan and sustainability. The key points are set out in the conclusions below. This task has informed the identification of the key sustainability issues set out in section 4 of this report. The list of documents reviewed has purposely been kept to a manageable level and where possible repetition has been avoided by restricting reviews of similar documents with similar messages.

Table 2.1 Summary of Document Review

Topic	Key Aims	Key documents
General/overarching	Development plans must promote sustainable development SA framework should include objectives relating to all three areas of sustainability [i.e. economic, social and environmental] Sustainability is an underlying principle of the planning system	The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development (2002) The European Spatial Development Perspective (1999) UK Sustainable Development Strategy (2005) Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning (2005) Localism Act 2011 National Planning Policy Framework 2011 RSS for the North West 2005 A Vision for Sefton – Sefton's Community Strategy (2007)
Climate Change	Minimise the risk to people and property from flooding Seek design measures to reduce flooding Manage the risks from flooding and coastal erosion Reduce Carbon dioxide emissions Ensure all development is energy efficient Development should be located in accessible locations to reduce reliance on cars Invest in renewable and low carbon technologies Provide green infrastructure and trees	Kyoto Protocol 1997 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2007) European Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings 2002/91/EC National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Climate Change Act 2008 National Climate Change Strategy 2007-12 Climate Change Adaptation By Design (2007) Allowable Solutions for Tomorrows New Homes (2011) Carbon Compliance: Finding and Recommendations (2011) UK Climate Change Programme (2006) Building a Greener Future: Towards Zero Carbon Development (2008) Code for Sustainable Homes (2008) Mersey Estuary Catchment Flood Management (2009) Alt Crossens Catchment Flood Management Plan (2008) Lower Alt with Crossens Flood Risk Management Strategy Sefton Surface Water Management Plan Sefton Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2013) North West River Basin Management Plan (2009)
Pollution	Minimise adverse impacts on water quality, the ecology of rivers, and ground water Safeguard mineral resources from sterilisation and encourage their efficient and appropriate use Prevent or reduce effects on the environment, in	EU Water Framework Directive (2000) EU Nitrates Directive (1991) EU Directive on Environmental Noise European Air Quality Framework Directive (2008/50/EC) The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010

Table 2.1 Summary of Document Review

Topic	Key Aims	Key documents
	particular the pollution of surface water, ground water, soil and air, and on the global environment, as well as any resulting risk to human health	The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland and Wales 2007 Growing Awareness: A Plan for Our Environment (2008) National Planning Policy Framework (2012) North West River Basin Management Plan (2009) The Bathing Waters Directive [76/160/EEC]
Waste and less use of resources	Promote recycling and provide for a sustainable pattern of waste management facilities Prevent or reduce the adverse effects of the landfill of waste on the environment Promote demand management and efficient use of water resources Address implications of scarce water resources Ensure development is energy efficient	EC Framework Directive for Waste 1975/442/EEC (as amended) EC Landfill Directive 1999/31/EC European Waste Framework Directive (2006/12/EC) National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Waste Strategy for England and Wales 2007
Countryside and Coast	Protect and enhance the landscape, including the countryside, coast and other green spaces Promote landscape protection, management and planning Conserve and, where possible, enhance the countryside and its resources, including the best and most versatile agricultural land Plan for coastal change	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (The Ramsar Convention 1971) European Landscape Convention 2006 National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) North West England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan 2 (2011) North West River Basin Management Plan Sefton Coast Partnership Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (ICZMP)
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity, natural habitats and wild fauna and flora, including international, national and local designated sites; and protected species and species and habitat types identified as priorities for biological conservation Local Plan will be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (The Ramsar Convention)(as amended) EC Directive 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive) EC Directive 1979/409/EEC (The Birds Directive) EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds: Directive 2009/147/EC National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

Table 2.1 Summary of Document Review

Topic	Key Aims	Key documents
		Working with the Grain of Nature: A Biodiversity Strategy for England (2002) The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (1994 and updates) Biodiversity 2020 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) Liverpool City Region Ecological Framework North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan North West River Basin Management Plan (2009)
Economic Development, shopping and tourism	Promote access to work, tackle low pay and improve conditions of work Enhance employment opportunities for all Plan positively for sustainable economic growth Secure accessible, efficient and competitive retail provision and support town centres Achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and growth Promote more sustainable patterns of growth including employment Increase work opportunities in rural areas Encourage better coordination of the way tourism is managed, developed and promoted Promote business support and skills development Sefton's economic assets [e.g. those related to the coast, proximity to Liverpool] should be maximised	National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Sustainable Development Action Plan, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills Good Practice Guide for Planning and Tourism (2006) The Northern Way Growth Strategy [Draft] Sefton Economic Strategy 2012
People and Housing	Provide for an adequate, available and continuous supply of land for development to meet the accommodation needs of current and future residents including Gypsy and Travellers Make sure there are enough high quality homes both affordable and market Ensure that the environmental implications of demographic change are assessed	National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Demographic Change and the Environment, The 29th Report of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (2011) Evaluating requirements for market and affordable housing; Housing Affordability: a fuller picture; Housing requirements and the impact of recent economic and demographic change (National Housing and Planning Advisory Unit, various dates) Building for Life: Delivering Great Places to Live, CABE (2008)

Table 2.1 Summary of Document Review

Topic	Key Aims	Key documents
	Give communities more power on decisions which affect them Improve the existing housing stock by making them more energy efficient Improve housing quality and design Promote the right mix of housing Ensure that everyone has access to education and training Plans should be produced with input from local people and reflect the wider aspirations of communities Consider the impacts of policies on rural communities	Sustainable Communities: Homes for All (2005) Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity (2005) Towards Lifetime Neighbourhoods: Designing Sustainable Communities for All (2007) Lifetime Homes: Quality, Flexibility and Choice Sefton Council Housing Strategy (2009) Rural Proofing Toolkit, DEFRA (2009) Planning for Rural Communities (2008)
Deprivation and Regeneration	Promote urban regeneration and the re-use of previously developed land Housing choice should be more diverse in areas of low demand Tackle poverty and reduce income inequalities Promote social inclusion and equality of opportunity Planning policies should help wider regeneration proposals be realised	National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Freedom of Information Act 2000 Human Rights Act 1998 Safer Places, the Planning System and Crime Prevention (2004) Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity (2005) A Vision for Sefton – Sefton's Community Strategy (2007) Sefton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2010) Sefton's Safer & Stronger Communities Partnership 2009-12
Services and Accessibility	Improve access to services Ensure that everyone has access to shopping, health, community, leisure and sports facilities Reduce the need to travel and achieve a switch to more sustainable modes of transport, particularly walking and cycling	National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Merseyside Local Transport Plan 3 (2011) A Vision for Sefton – Sefton's Community Strategy (2007) Sefton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2010)
Transport and Infrastructure	Improve the transport infrastructure; Create a transport system that is accessible and safe to all, including in rural areas Develop an integrated transport system Take a strategic approach to infrastructure in preparation of plans Encourage greater use of public transport, walking and cycling in preference to the car	National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Merseyside Local Transport Plan 3 (2011) Towards a Sustainable Transport System (2007) Supporting Economic Growth in a Low Carbon World (2007) Manual for Streets (2007) Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 Merseyside Cycling Strategy (2005) Pedestrian Strategy for Merseyside (2006)

Table 2.1 Summary of Document Review

Topic	Key Aims	Key documents
Heritage and Culture	Protect the historic environment and cultural heritage Maintain and enhance townscape character Recognise importance of archaeological heritage Realise the contribution of the historic environment to the economic, social and cultural life of neighbourhoods Involve local people and groups in protecting the heritage in their local areas Explore ways heritage can be used as part of regeneration	National Planning Policy Framework (2012) European Convention on the protection of Archaeological Heritage 1992 (Valetta Convention) European Landscape Convention, 2000 Planning(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 PPS5 Practice Guide 2010 The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England 2010 The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 Heritage Protection for the 21st Century (2007) Sefton Cultural Strategy
Health and Recreation	Improve health and well-being, and tackle poverty and health inequalities Increase participation in sport and physical activity Ensure that everyone has good access to facilities, including health, community facilities and open space and sports facilities Improve quality of life for residents Promote activity and reduce social exclusion of older people Restrict inappropriate uses [such as heavy industry] next to residential areas Protection and enhancement of green infrastructure	National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Equalities Act 2010 Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play (2008) Promoting and creating built or natural environments that encourage and support physical activity (2008) Sefton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2010)
Crime and Safety	Promote crime prevention and reduction of the fear of crime Developments should be located and designed to be safe by reducing potential for accidents, for example from traffic	National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Freedom of Information Act 2000 Human Rights Act 1998 Safer Places, the Planning System and Crime Prevention (2004) Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity (2005) The Respect Action Plan (2006) Sefton's Safer & Stronger Communities Partnership 2009-12

3 Developing the Baseline Information

> **Information required for the Strategic Environmental Assessment**
>
> *'Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment[1] and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan of programme' and 'the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected'.*

Introduction

3.1 The collection of baseline data is a requirement of the Sustainability Appraisal process. It is required to provide information on the characteristics of an area, including the current state of the environment, and identify trends that are likely to continue without the implementation of a plan or policy. This stage builds on the previous stage by adding detailed information for Sefton on many of the issues that the policy review identifies as needing addressing.

3.2 The collection of data is also used to identify sustainability problems and issues that can be addressed within the plan or policy. The data will also be used to suggest suitable indicators to monitor the effectiveness of the plan or policy in addressing the identified problems.

Methodology

3.3 We have looked at data across a range of different issues and topics to ensure that we get a full picture of the current state of Sefton. In all cases we have provided information for Sefton as a whole, but it is also useful to provide information for specific locations. This helps us to identify problems that occur in different parts of Sefton that may not be otherwise apparent. The data was collected from a number of sources and organisations. As such it is not always possible to be consistent in the presentation of data.

3.4 The collection of data is intended to be an ongoing process and it likely that the data in this document will be supplemented and updated. This will be done either by suggestions made during consultation, by further data collection and by undertaking primary research. Any additional information will be published as an addendum to this document or summarised in the sustainability report.

Summary of Baseline Information - A Portrait of Sefton

3.5 Sefton is a coastal borough which lies in the northern part of the Liverpool City Region with which it shares close economic, social, cultural and transport links. It also has important links to Preston and West Lancashire. Sefton adjoins the

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[1] For the purposes of Strategic Environmental Assessment, environment is defined as issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. We have indicated at each sub heading which of the SEA topics are being covered.

boroughs of Liverpool to the south, Knowsley to the east, and the largely rural West Lancashire to the east and north.

3.6 Sefton has a number of famous features that help make it distinctive, these include the 'classic' resort of Southport, an outstanding natural coast, the home of the Grand National at Aintree, England's 'golf coast' including Royal Birkdale and Antony Gormley's Iron Men on Crosby beach. Most of the Port of Liverpool and the Freeport are situated in the south of the Borough. Sefton is therefore an important gateway for trade with Ireland, America and the Far East.

3.7 Sefton is a borough of contrasts. In the south, Bootle, Litherland, Seaforth and Netherton share the metropolitan character of Liverpool. The other main settlements are Crosby, Maghull, Hightown and Formby in the centre of the Borough and the Victorian resort of Southport in the north. These built-up areas comprise about half of the area of the Borough and are where 95% of Sefton's residents live.

3.8 The other half of Sefton is rural, including a number of villages, and is covered by the Merseyside Green Belt. This is tightly drawn around Sefton's towns and villages and has helped channel regeneration and development into the built-up areas, notably Bootle and Southport.

South Sefton

3.9 The south of Sefton shares a boundary with north Liverpool and has many of the same characteristics. Bootle, Seaforth and Litherland form the older urban core of Sefton and are primarily characterised by high density terraced housing dating from the Victorian period. While benefiting from many regeneration initiatives in the past, the area remains one of the most deprived communities, not only in Sefton, but nationally. Netherton was developed in the 1960's as an overspill settlement for Bootle.

Southport

3.10 Southport is the one of North West's 'classic' coastal resorts - its seafront and quality shopping are crucial to the economic success of the town. Southport's traditional, quality image, which is reflected in much of its architecture, has enabled it to endure changing holiday patterns. There has been significant investment in the town centre and seafront in recent years, but both its leisure and retail areas continue to need to be revitalised.

Central Sefton

3.11 The central area of Sefton contains the free-standing towns of Crosby, Maghull and Formby. These are distinctive settlements in their own right, and all function as commuter settlements for the Liverpool City Region. There are Parish and Town Councils across much of the central part of Sefton. Central Sefton contains the bulk of Sefton's Green Belt. The area includes both larger settlements like Formby, Maghull, Thornton, Hightown and Aintree and smaller villages like Melling, Sefton, Lunt and Ince Blundell. Some of these areas face problems of infrequent and irregular public transport to services such as shops, schools and health care.

3.12 A summary of the key points identified through analysis of the baseline data is set out in this section. Much of the data is presented at ward level. Sefton has 22 wards and these are shown in the figure below.

Sefton Wards
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Population[2] (SEA Topic - Population)

3.13 The population of Sefton has decreased markedly over the previous several decades from 300,100 in 1981 to 273,800 in 2011, an 8.8% decrease. In recent years the rate of population loss has slowed and it is projected that it will increase in the future. The population change has been more marked in South Sefton, where some wards have seen population decreases of over 20% and the average decrease for the 6 wards in South Sefton (Linacre, Derby, Litherland, Netherton & Orrell, Ford and St Oswald) is over 13%. This contrasts markedly with wards in North Sefton (Cambridge, Meols, Dukes, Norwood, Kew, Birkdale and Ainsdale) which jointly have seen an increase in their population of almost 4%.

3.14 In terms of demographics Sefton has a population that is clearly older than the North West and national average. In 2011 almost 21% of Sefton's population is over 65, compared with 17.2% in Merseyside and 16.6% in the North West. This is projected to increase in coming years to an estimated 23.5% of over 65s by 2020. Particular parts of Sefton have a higher proportion of older people. In Southport the wards of Dukes and Cambridge respectively have 29.8% and 33.3% of people over 65, while in South Sefton some wards have fewer older people than the national average of 16.4% [Linacre 13.9%, Derby 14.7%, Litherland 14.9% and Netherton & Orrell 15.2%].

3.15 Despite the trend of population loss the number of households in Sefton has increased by 8.8% since 1981 [to 2001]. This is a result of a reduction in average household sizes from 2.86 persons per household in 1981 to 2.32 persons in 2011. This downward trend reflects the drive seen nationally towards smaller household sizes and is primarily driven by the increased number of single person households and smaller family units.

3.16 Sefton has a fairly small number of people from a black or ethnic minority groups (about 6,600 or 2.4% of Sefton's population in 2005). This number has grown from 4,600 people in 2001. Sefton is becoming more diverse as we have welcomed a small number (about 2,800) of European workers and their families who work in Sefton and its surrounding areas.
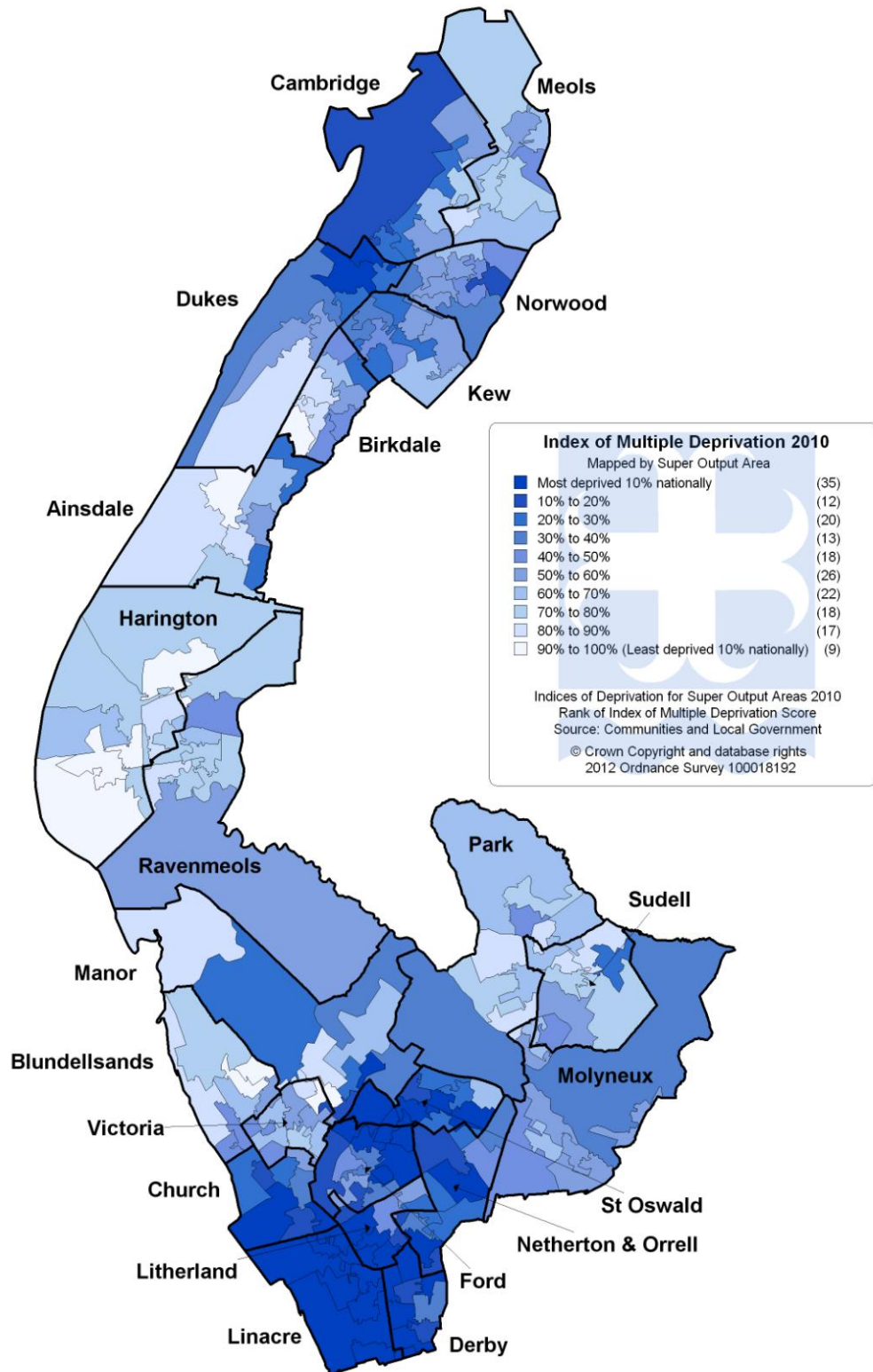
Deprivation (SEA topic - population)

3.17 The Index of Multiple Deprivation combines a number of indicators, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for each small area in England. This allows each area to be ranked relative to one another according to their level of deprivation.

3.18 The map shows the results for the whole of Sefton. In 2010 much of South Sefton is ranked within the 20% most deprived in the country. Linacre ward is entirely made up of areas that are within the 10% most deprived. Other wards, such as Derby, Litherland, Ford, Netherton & Orrell, Church and St Oswald, also show particular clusters of deprivation. Southport also has some small pockets of areas

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2 For the purposes of this section south Sefton comprises Linacre, Derby, Litherland, Netherton and Orrell, Ford, and St Oswalds wards. Central Sefton comprises Harington, Ravenmeols, Blundellsands, Church, Victoria, Manor, Park, Sudell and Molyneux. North Sefton comprises Cambridge, Meols, Dukes, Norwood, Kew, Birkdale and Ainsdale.

within the 20% most deprived. Conversely there are areas in Sefton that are ranked within the least deprived areas in England, these are primarily based around the central wards of Birkdale, Ainsdale, Harington and Ravenmeols.

Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010
Mapped by Super Output Area

Most deprived 10% nationally	(35)	
10% to 20%	(12)	
20% to 30%	(20)	
30% to 40%	(13)	
40% to 50%	(18)	
50% to 60%	(26)	
60% to 70%	(22)	
70% to 80%	(18)	
80% to 90%	(17)	
90% to 100% (Least deprived 10% nationally)	(9)	

Indices of Deprivation for Super Output Areas 2010
Rank of Index of Multiple Deprivation Score
Source: Communities and Local Government

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Housing (SEA topics - population, material assets)

3.19 Although Sefton as a whole has above national and regional average levels of owner-occupiers this masks areas of low home ownership in parts of the borough. In many wards in South Sefton the level of owner-occupier households is around 55 to 60%, with one ward, Linacre having just 35% of owner-occupiers.

3.20 Currently about 4.1% of Sefton's housing stock is vacant, about 5100 units, and about 2200 are classed as long term vacant (i.e. over 6 months). However, some of the increase has been created as a result of positive intervention in the Housing Market Renewal Area. Almost 4000 dwellings in Sefton are classed as being unfit which whilst over 3% of the total stock, is much lower than in 2001 and the rates in the North West and England.

3.21 In Sefton there is currently one site for gypsies and travellers, Broad Lane Formby, which has current provision for 16 pitches. The Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment identified a further requirement for 16 pitches in Sefton to 2016 and for the improvement of the existing site.

Access and Transport (SEA topics - human health, air, climatic factors)

3.22 In Sefton almost a third of households (31.1%) have no car, although much of Sefton has excellent public transport links. Much of the urban area, including Bootle, Southport, Maghull and Crosby has good coverage by frequent bus services. Merseyrail runs a frequent rail service between Liverpool and Southport, which include 13 stations in Sefton, and between Liverpool and Ormskirk, including 3 stations in Sefton. However, access to health facilities is poor by public transport, an issue for many people in Sefton, especially at night or weekends.

3.23 By far the most popular choice of travel to work is by car with over 63% either driving or being a passenger. Although Sefton has slightly higher public transport usage than the North West average, only around 14% of people use public transport as their primary mode of travelling to work. Another statistic shows that while over 1 in 5 people have to travel less than 2 km to work, less than 10% of the total working population choose to walk. Less than 3% of the working population cycle to work.

3.24 Of the 115,000 Sefton resident's who are in employment almost 70,000 (60%) work in Sefton. A further 25,000 (22%) travel into Liverpool City Council, about 4,000 to each of Knowsley and West Lancashire. Of the 95,000 people employed **in** Sefton over 73% live in the borough, almost 10,000 (over 10%) travel in from Liverpool, over 5,000 (over 5%) from West Lancashire and 2,500 from Knowsley. There are other less significant travel flows between Sefton and the other Merseyside, Lancashire and Cheshire authorities.

3.25 One 'domain' of the index of multiple deprivation looks at barriers to accessing housing and services. This shows that only one small area of Sefton [the rural area around Lydiate] is classed as being in the most 20% deprived, and half of the areas

are with the top 10%. The areas that show some signs of deprivation for this domain are the rural areas surrounding Formby and Maghull and south Southport, which is partly indicative of the high cost of housing in these areas, but also shows these areas are more remote and have less public transport.

Education and Training (SEA topics - population, material assets)

3.25 Sefton has been placed joint third in the country in a league table ranking local authorities according to inspectors' ratings of schools. The Ofsted Annual Report 2012 shows that 90% of pupils in the borough attend primary schools that are currently ranked 'good' or 'outstanding' by Government inspectors.

3.26 The percentage of Sefton's pupils achieving 5 A*-C GCSE grades has increased in recent years, to 83% in 2010 from 64% in 2007. However, there are disparities within Sefton with generally the schools in the more affluent north and east generally achieving higher scores than those in the south.

3.27 In terms of NVQ qualifications Sefton's data is comparable with the North West average with over 83% of the working age population at level 1 or above and over 27% at level 4. However, unlike with GCSEs this is below the national average.

3.28 The Index of Multiple Deprivation (education, skills and training domain) for 2010 show that many wards, particularly in the south of the borough are classed as being deprived. Seven wards in South Sefton compared to just one in the north (Norwood) contain Super Output Areas (SOAs) that are ranked in the 20% most deprived for education, skills and training.

Economy & Employment (SEA topics - population, material assets)

3.29 Sefton has significantly fewer jobs per head of population (0.59) than both the North West (0.74) and National (0.77) average. This situation is also reflected in the number of job seekers allowance (JSA) claimants where Sefton (5.2% of the working age population in May 2012) is above the North West (4.5%) and national (3.9%) averages. This figure has increased in recent years due to the economic difficulties. There are generally higher claimant rates in the south of the borough, with Linacre ward having a rate of 13.4% [May 2012]. Claimant rates are also higher for younger people. In Sefton, of those aged 18 to 24, the claimant rate is 10.8% [May 2012] compared to just 2.6% for those aged 50 to 64. This is also above the regional and national levels.

3.30 Sefton relies much more on the service sector, particularly in public administration, education and health, in which about 40% of jobs are provided. This is a significant rise from 33% in 1995, an increase of 14,000 jobs. This makes Sefton particularly vulnerable to the anticipated cuts to the public sector. The tourism industry is also important, particularly in the 'classic resort' of Southport, and the number of visitors is on the increase, over 15% since 2003. Other visitor attractions in Sefton include the Sefton coast, Aintree racecourse and the 'golf coast'.

3.31 One of key economic assets in Sefton is the Port of Liverpool at Seaforth. The Port of Liverpool is ranked among Britain's and Northern Europe's major container

ports and the Seaforth Container handles nearly 700,000 teus (20ft container units) a year. A second container terminal is planned for development on the River Mersey, adding another 600,000 teus of capacity to the port's existing container terminal operations and enabling it to accommodate the new generation of post-Panamax size container ships.

Health (SEA topics - population, human health)

3.32 Overall people in Sefton have good health and improving levels of health. Approxiamately two-thirds of Sefton's residents describe their health as good or very good. Life expectancy had been increasing in Sefton. For males this has increased from 75.1 years to 76.6 between 2001/3 and 2004/7, and females from 77.9 years to 81.4 years. These figures are slightly lower than the national average. However in certain areas the average life expectancy is much lower than the borough average. For example in Linacre ward life expectancy for women is 75.7 years, and men just 71.3 years, a significant 5years below the Sefton average and 6 years below the national average. The highest life expectancy in Sefton is generally in the Maghull, Formby and Southport areas.

3.33 The main causes of death in Sefton are due to circulatory diseases [31%], cancers [30%] and respiratory diseases [14%]. Over half [55%] of Sefton's residents are considered obese or overweight, slightly lower than the national average [61%]. The rates of obesity in children in year six are comparable to the national average [about 20%]. Nevertheless two thirds of Sefton residents claim to meet the Chief Medical Officer's recommendation is that people should be undertaking 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity at least 5 days per week. This is much higher the national figure of 34%.

3.34 In Sefton 29% of people have below average levels of mental health. Levels are generally higher in South Sefton than the rest of the borough.

Crime (SEA topic - population)

3.35 In 2011/12 the total number of recorded crimes in Sefton was 16,590. This is a 15.9% increase since 2006/7. Criminal damage accounted for the largest proportion of Sefton's recorded crime.

3.36 Particular wards in Sefton show concentrations of crime. Linacre Ward in Bootle (1952 total recorded crimes) and Dukes Ward in Southport (1783) had the highest number of recorded crime in Sefton in 20011/12. These are the wards that contain the main concentrations of shops, pubs and clubs in Bootle and Southport Town Centres respectively. Other wards have much lower levels of crime compared to the Sefton average of 754. Meols [294] and Harington [344] have less than a half of the amount of recorded crime compared to the Sefton average.

3.37 Generally South Sefton has higher proportions of violent crime than the Sefton average with the North and Central areas having a higher proportion of vehicle crime. This 'confirms' the findings of the 'perceptions of crime' survey and the crime that residents felt most susceptible. In the Southport, Crosby, Formby and Sefton East Area Committee areas the top fear was being a victim of burglary. In south Sefton, Linacre/Derby, Litherland/Ford and Netherton & Orrell/St Oswalds Area Committee areas, the top fear was of being assaulted or beaten up.

Culture, heritage and leisure (SEA topics - population, human health, material assets, cultural heritage)

3.38 In the Place Survey 2008 67% of Sefton's residents said they were very or fairly satisfied with parks and open spaces in Sefton. This is a comparable with the North West satisfaction rating with park and open spaces [65.2%]. The Place Survey reported that 50% of Sefton's residents were satisfied with sports and leisure facilities [compared to a North West average of 46.4%] and 76% were satisfied with libraries [71% in the North West].

3.39 Sefton's designated heritage comprises the following asset types:
- Schedule Ancient Monuments;
- Conservation Areas;
- Historic Parks and Gardens; and
- Listed Buildings.

3.40 Scheduled Ancient Monuments are sites of outstanding national importance that are worthy of protection. The word "monument" covers the whole range of archaeological sites. Scheduled monuments are not always ancient, or visible above ground. There are over 200 "classes" of monuments on the schedule nationally and these range from prehistoric standing stones and burial mounds, through the many types of medieval site - castles, monasteries, abandoned farmsteads and villages - to the more recent results of human activity, such as collieries and wartime pillboxes.

3.41 Schedule Ancient Monuments with Sefton:

- Cunscough Hall, Melling;
- Maghull Manor Moated Site;
- Sefton Old Hall Moated site and Fishponds;
- Wayside Cross 100m North of Liverpool Lodge, Ince Blundell;
- Standing Cross at the Harkirke 8m NW of the Chapel, Ince Blundell;
- Standing Cross on the village green, Ince Blundell;
- Wayside Cross 150m NE of Ince Blundell Hall, Ince Blundell;
- Hightown Cross on Alt Road 60m SE of Hightown Station;
- Standing Cross at junction of Green Lane and Water Street, Thornton;
- Brooms Cross Wayside cross 150m NE of Orchard House, Thornton;
- Domestic Chapel of St Katharine and Burial Ground, Lydiate;
- Cross Base 25m South of the Tower of Parochial Chapel, Maghull; and
- Standing Cross 30m South of the Tower of Parochial Chapel, Maghull.

3.42 Listed buildings within Sefton are those on the national statutory list, compiled by DCMS. These are chosen on the basis of their special architectural or historic interest. These buildings are protected to preserve the best of our built heritage.

3.43 Listed buildings are graded as Grade I, II* or II according to their architectural quality or historical significance, with Grade I being of exceptional interest. 92% of listed buildings in the UK are Grade II listed.

3.44 There are over 550 list entries, comprising over 800 individual listed Buildings within Sefton.

3.45 Unlike the other national designations, Registered Parks and Gardens do not benefit from additional legal protections. Parks and Gardens of special historic interest are contained in the Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England compiled and maintained by English Heritage. These parks and gardens, which by reason of their historic layout, features and architectural ornaments, are of special interest and an essential part of the nation's heritage.

3.46 Historic parks and gardens in Sefton:
- Botanic Gardens, Churchtown (grade II);
- Hesketh Park, Southport (grade II);
- Ince Blundell Hall, Ince Blundell (grade II*);
- Kings Gardens and South Marine Gardens, Southport (grade II); and
- Derby Park, Bootle (grade II).

3.47 Conservation Areas are those declared by the Council as having special architectural or archaeological interest. Twenty-five Conservation Areas cover approximately 5% of the Borough. The Conservation Areas in Sefton are

- Birkdale Park
- Birkdale Village
- Blundellsands Park
- Carr Houses
- Christ Church, Waterloo
- Churchtown Village
- Crosby Hall, Little Crosby
- Damfield Lane, Maghull
- Derby Park, Bootle
- Gloucester Road, Southport
- Green Lane, Formby
- Hesketh Road, Southport
- Homer Green
- Ince Blundell Park
- Little Crosby Village
- Lord Street, Southport
- Lunt Village
- Lydiate Hall and Chapel, Lydiate
- Moor Park, Crosby
- North Meols, Southport
- Promenade, Southport
- Sefton Village
- Waterloo
- Waterloo Park, Waterloo
- West Birkdale, Southport

3.48 In addition to the above, Sefton contains sites of historic and cultural interest, which fall short of meeting the criteria for formal designation, but which nevertheless have a degree of interest which rises the above their pure functionality. The relative significance of these sites, which can range from landscapes to townscapes is recognized as being importance to local distinctiveness and diversity.

Community Involvement (SEA topic - population)

3.49 In the Place Survey of 2008 26% of Sefton's residents said they were well informed about how they could get involved in local decision-making. At the 2012 local elections the turnout ranged from 23% to 45% in wards in Sefton. There are 10 Parish Councils in Sefton that cover much of the central towns, villages and rural areas of the borough.

Centres and Shopping (SEA topic - material assets)

3.50 The national ranking of each of the local and district centres in Sefton has dropped in recent years. Of the two main centres, Southport has fallen from 44th in 2005 to 81st in 2011; Bootle from 247th in 2005 to 260th in 2011.

3.51 Many of Sefton's centres have a higher vacancy rate than the national average [9.8% in 2011]. Seaforth centre has almost 48% of its total floorspace vacant. The next highest is Waterloo at a 16.9% vacancy floorspace rate. Both of Sefton's two main centres have rates above the national average, Southport at 13.6% of total floorspace and Bootle at 11.9%. In Southport this is a reduction since 2009, whereas Bootle's has increased in the same period.

Air Quality (SEA topics - human health, air, climatic factors)

3.52 All local authorities are required to assess air quality in their areas. An Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) must be declared if pollutant concentrations are likely to exceed health based standards in any outdoor location where members of the public are likely to be present. Where an AQMA is declared an air quality action plan (AQAP) must be drawn up detailing how the local authority intends to improve air quality. Sefton have declared five Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA); two at Crosby Road North, Waterloo [at Waterloo Primary School and at the junction with South Road]; Millers Bridge, Bootle; the junction of Church Road and Hawthorne Road, Litherland; and Princess Way, Seaforth.

3.53 Nitrogen Dioxide is classed as a toxic chemical compound that is emitted most notably by cars and combustion processes such as industrial boilers and power generation. Nitrogen dioxide can cause respiratory and cardiovascular problems. The National Air Quality Strategy (NAQS) sets Objectives of 40 micrograms per metre3 (μg/m3) as a maximum annual average and 200 micrograms per metre cubed as a maximum hourly average not to be exceeded more than 18 times in any one year. Nitrogen dioxide is measured using electronic and passive techniques across the Borough. There are 4 locations where the NAQS annual average Objective for nitrogen dioxide has been exceeded: Miller's Bridge, Bootle, Princess Way, Seaforth, South Road Waterloo and around the Junction of Hawthorne Road with the A5036. These areas have been declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and Action Plans are being developed to try to improve air quality in these locations.

3.54 Another measure of air quality is the amount of particulate matter in the air. A number of stations measure the amount of particles smaller than 10 micrometers or less (PM10). These particles are often the result of human activity, such as industrial processes, burning fossil fuels or brake and tire wear and road degradation caused

by vehicles. PM10 can cause heart and lung disease. The NAQS sets Objectives of 40 micrograms per metre3 (µg/m3) as a maximum annual average and 50 micrograms per metre cubed as a maximum daily average not to be exceeded more than 35 times in any one year. There are 2 locations where there have been more than the maximum allowed number of exceedences of the daily Objective; Miller's Bridge, Bootle and Waterloo Primary School. These have been declared AQMAs and Action Plans are being developed to try to improve air quality in these locations.

Climate Change (SEA topic - climatic factors)

3.55 One of the main causes of climate change is the huge increase in the amount of carbon dioxide (CO_2) in the atmosphere. This has been caused by increased human activity during the twentieth century. In Sefton the amount of CO_2 emitted in 2009 was 1.43 million tones, including almost 606,000 tonnes in domestic use. This equates to 5.2 tonnes per person and 2.2 tonnes per person in domestic use. For domestic use Sefton is comparable with the North West and national averages, but 30% lower for total emissions, reflecting the prevalence of the service industries in the borough (see above). Overall CO_2 emissions in Sefton are falling, from a total of 1.5 million tonnes emitted in 2009. Domestic electricity and gas usage in Sefton has also decreased in recent years.
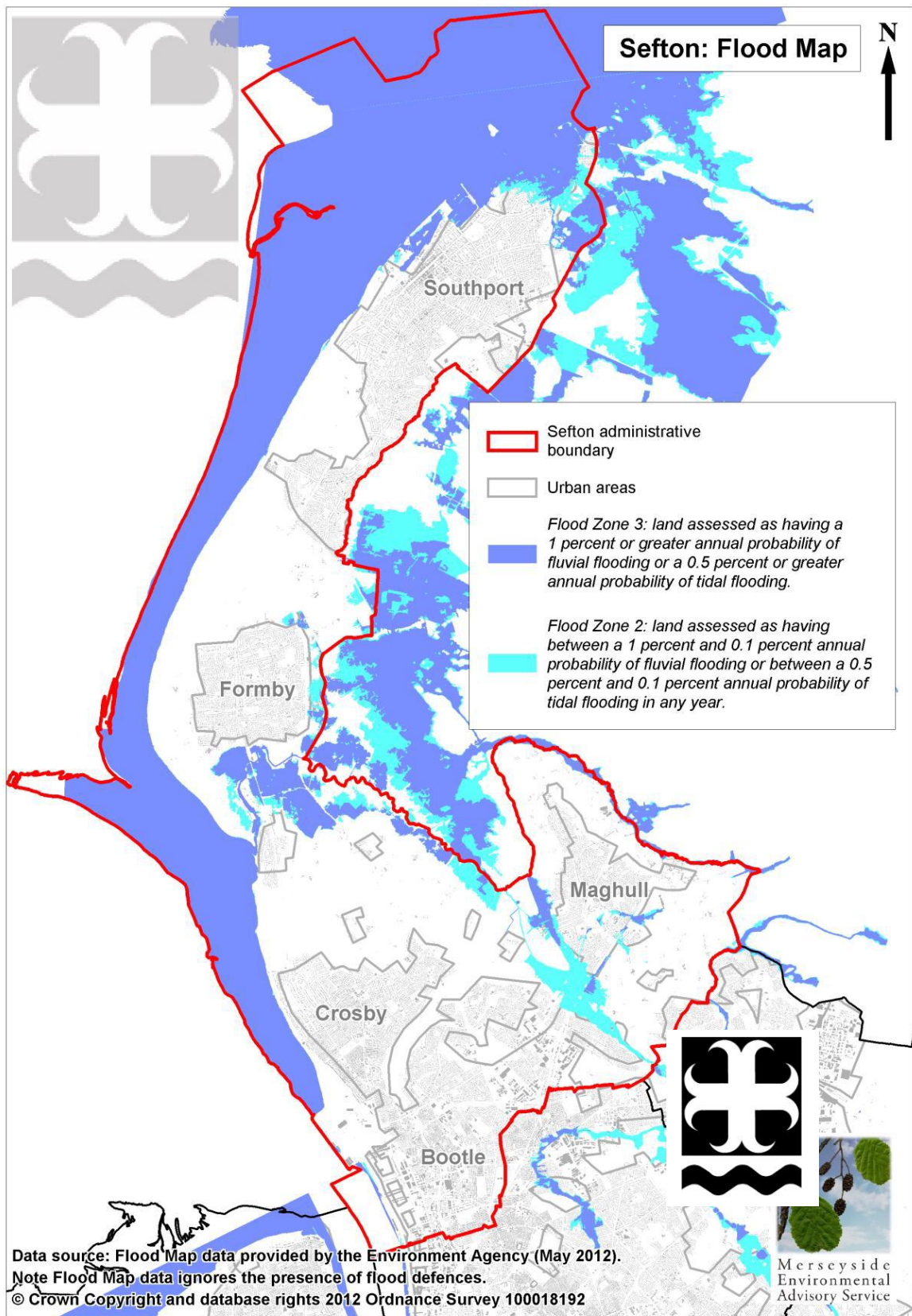
3.56 One of the most noticeable consequences of climate change is the increased instances and threat of flooding. According to the Environmental Agency over 4000 homes in Sefton are in flood zone 3 (i.e. 1 in 100 chance or greater of river flooding or 1 in 200 chance of sea flooding) and a further 2,800 plus homes are in flood zone 2 (i.e. 1 in 1000 chance of flooding from river or sea). 2798 hectares of land in Sefton are at risk of flooding (18.38% of Sefton's total area) of which 2222 hectares are within the highest risk category (flood zone 3), however this ignores existing flood defences. The flood risk map for Sefton is provided below.

3.57 There have been a number of recorded past flooding events in Sefton. Records show that flooding may come from a single source or interactions between different sources. In total, records show 13 surface water flooding events, including the Leeds and Liverpool Canal failure in 1994, which have been identified as having significant local consequences.

3.58 A recent example of these events was in July 2010 when a total of 77 surface water flooding incidents affected properties in Aintree, Birkdale, Bootle, Brighton-le-Sands, Crosby, Formby, Litherland, Maghull, Melling, Netherton, Seaforth, Sefton, Southport, Thornton and Waterloo. The July 2010 Hydrological Summary for the United Kingdom indicates that the rainfall recorded in the North West in July 2010 was more than double the 1971-2000 average. The month was noted as the wettest month of the year and the sixth wettest July since 1914.

3.59 In addition to the July 2010 event, surface water flooding in October 2009 (9 reports of flooding), January 2008 (98 reports of flooding), July 2007 (75 reports of flooding), August and November 2004 (10 and 55 reports of flooding respectively) and April 2001 (59 reports of flooding), clearly indicate that surface water flooding is a frequent event with significant consequences across the borough. The recently developed Surface Water Management Plan has identified that 1 in 3 properties are

at risk from surface water flooding in Sefton for an event with a chance of occurrence of 1% in any year.

Soil and Water (SEA topics - soil, water)

3.60 Many stretches of Sefton's rivers are classified as poor or bad in terms of biology, i.e. they are only home to a limited number of species that are tolerant or very tolerant to pollution. Sefton's rivers are generally graded between C to E in terms of chemistry and many have high levels of nitrates and phosphates.

3.61 Parts of Sefton have a legacy of heavy industry and many sites are known to have issues with contamination. It is difficult to know the extent of contamination on particular sites unless site investigations are carried out, however Sefton has 8589 sites that require further inspection for potential contamination. Of these 1074 sites are potentially high risk.

3.62 Soils of grade 1, 2 and 3a are collectively known as best and most versatile agricultural land. About 30% of the Borough's area (roughly 60% of the rural area) comprises Grade 1 – 3a agricultural land. This includes most of the land to the east of Southport, Formby and Crosby, and much of the agricultural land in Sefton's eastern parishes around Maghull, Aintree and Waddicar. An assessment of the agricultural land quality and the rural economy has recently been undertaken to inform the Local Plan. Agriculture in Sefton is not typical of north west or of England due to the predominance of productive lowland soils and proximity to urban areas which traditionally provided a market for fresh produce. Farming is characterised by arable cropping (cereals, oilseeds and potatoes) and horticulture (fruit and vegetables) based on the availability of good quality soils, with limited livestock production. Specialisation of production and less reliance on local markets has reduced the number of horticultural units. However, they still represent a higher proportion of cropped land compared to North West and England
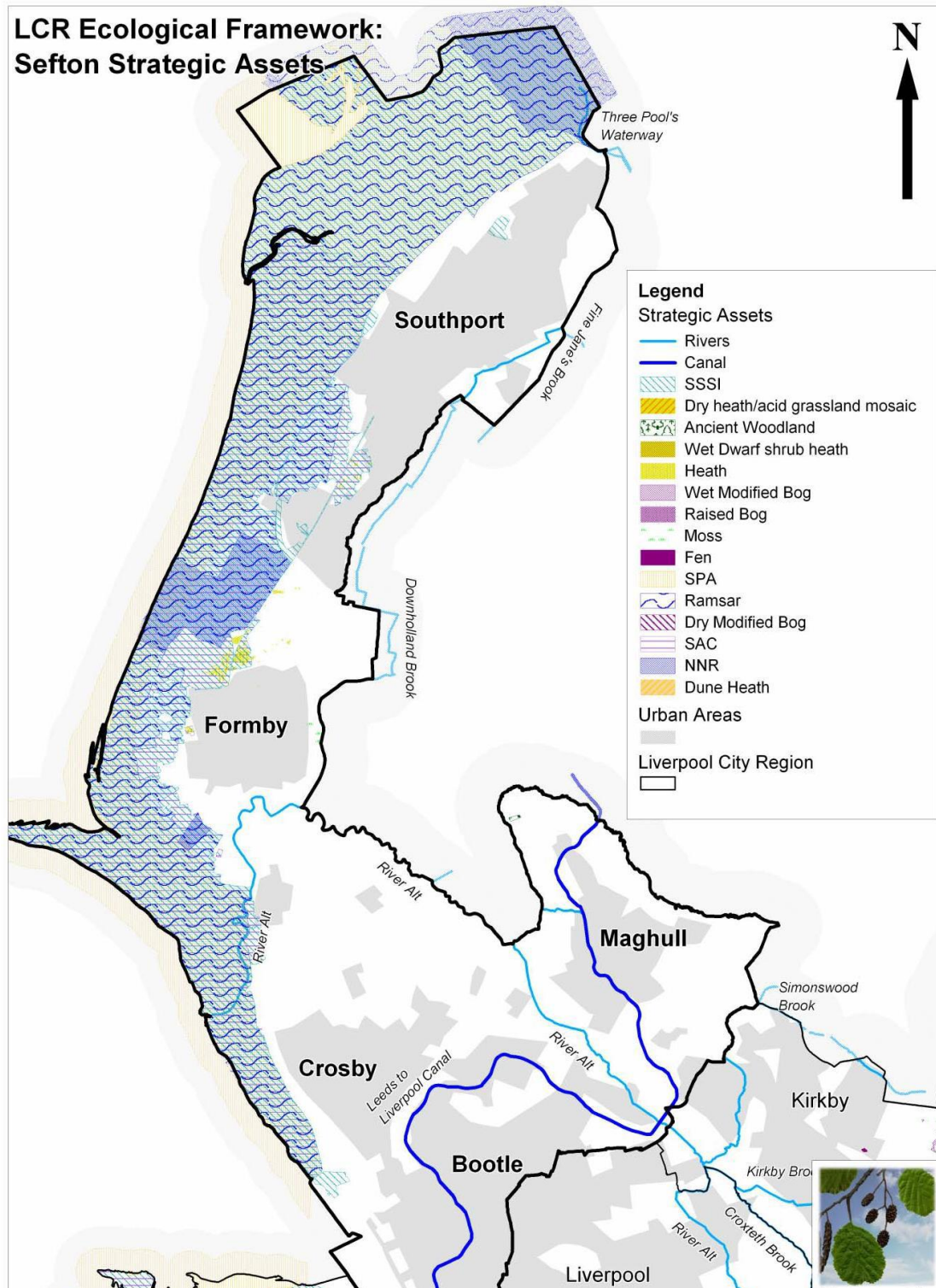
Habitats and Species (SEA topics - biodiversity, fauna, flora)

3.63 Within Sefton there are 56 Sites of Local Biological Interest (also known as Local Wildlife Sites) and 12 Local Geological Sites. Local Wildlife Sites have been designated by the Council due to the presence of important species and habitats. Several of the rare species of fauna and flora found within Sefton are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

3.64 Sefton's strategic ecological assets include all the international & national designations and a number of strategically important habitats that include the watercourses such as the River Alt, Downholland Brook, Three Pools Waterway, Fine Jane's Brook and Back Drain and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal.

3.65 Sefton's Coastal habitats are dominated by internationally important sand dune systems and salt marsh. There are also areas of Dune Heath, Dune Slacks and Grasslands. As well as these typical coastal habitats Sefton Coast has large areas of coniferous plantations. These habitats are covered by International, National & Local designations, which include; Ramsar, Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), National Nature Reserve (NNR), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and are home to large numbers of protected species, such as Natterjack Toads, Sand Lizards, Red Squirrels and internationally important numbers of wintering birds. These coastal

habitats cover approximately 7978 ha, and are of strategic importance within the Ecological Framework (see below).

LCR Ecological Framework: Sefton Strategic Assets

N

Three Pool's Waterway

Fine Jane's Brook

Southport

Downholland Brook

Legend

Strategic Assets
- ——— Rivers
- ——— Canal
- SSSI
- Dry heath/acid grassland mosaic
- Ancient Woodland
- Wet Dwarf shrub heath
- Heath
- Wet Modified Bog
- Raised Bog
- Moss
- Fen
- SPA
- Ramsar
- Dry Modified Bog
- SAC
- NNR
- Dune Heath

Urban Areas

Liverpool City Region

Formby

River Alt

Maghull

Simonswood Brook

River Alt

Leeds to Liverpool Canal

Crosby

Kirkby

Bootle

Kirkby Brook

River Alt

Croxteth Brook

Liverpool

3.66 The sand dunes on the Sefton Coast are one of the largest areas of dunes in Britain. They stretch for approximately 17km and cover 2100ha and are protected with local, national and European conservation designations. The dunes provide a vital coastal defence function and protect the towns of Formby and to a lesser degree Hightown. There are also smaller areas of dunes in front of and behind the

seawall at Crosby and running along the frontage to Hightown, though the majority of these dunes are set well back from the coastline. The Sefton Coast provides habitat for a number of protected species, such as Natterjack Toad, Sand Lizard, Great Crested Newt, and Red Squirrels along with the populations of the Sandhill Rustic Moth, a Red Data Book species.

3.67 Outside the coastal zone there are other important areas of ecological value in Sefton. Examples include:

- Approximately 955 hectares of grasslands – which include Southport Old Golf Links to the north of the borough and Rimrose Valley. These areas support a number of Priority species, such as Brown Hare, Skylark and Barn Owl.
- A number of broad-leaved and mixed woodlands found along the eastern boundary of the borough which cover approximately 748 hectare and include large blocks of woodland such as North Meols Estate and Ince Blundell and Little Crosby Estate. As with the coastal woodlands these woods are important for Red Squirrels. These woods are also important for a number of other species, such as Bats and large numbers of Breeding Birds.
- The strategically important wetlands across Sefton include the main rivers, the Alt, Maghull Brook and Fine Jane's Brook, and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. Other important wetland areas are the large number of drainage ditches across the farmland near Lunt and Ince Blundell. These farmland areas, along with the rest of the Alt & Crossens river catchment are potentially a national key site for Water Vole as they are home to a large population. More recently the river & canal system in Sefton have become associated with Otters that have begun to move back into these areas. The wetlands in Sefton cover approximately 584 ha.

Landscape and Coast (SEA topic - landscape)

3.68 Sefton is a coastal borough with an extensive countryside for a metropolitan borough - about 51% of the area of the Borough – all of which lies within the Merseyside green belt. The Sefton Coast lies between the estuaries of the Mersey and Ribble in north-west England and is an important visitor destination with popular bathing beaches, open countryside, and the seaside resort of Southport.

Data Limitations/Technical Difficulties

3.69 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 SA Scoping Report.

3.70 Some of the key limitations/difficulties at the time of undertaking the SA Scoping Report included:
• Data has emerged at different times so it has been difficult to provide a 'snapshot' of the borough at a given time
• Data is often difficult to find at the local level.

4 Identifying Sustainability Issues and Problems

Information required for the Strategic Environmental Assessment
'Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular those relating to any areas of a particular environmental performance.'

Introduction

4.1 The aim of this task is to identify issues and problems that may affect the sustainability of Sefton. It is these issues and problems that will need to be addressed in the sustainability objectives used to appraise the Local Plan.

Methodology

4.2 The conclusions from the previous two stages (policy review and baseline data) have been supplemented by comments made during the various consultation stages that have taken place on the Local Plan. A number of issues also are identified through the numerous studies that we undertake, such as to assess the housing and employment land requirements in Sefton, the health of our shopping areas and the areas at risk of flooding

Conclusions

4.3 Bringing together all this information we can now summarise the sustainability issues and problems faced in Sefton. These are listed in the table below. In each case a proposed implication for the sustainability framework is given, which are explored in the next section.

Table 4.1 Identification of Sustainability Issues

Sustainability Issue	How this will be addressed in the Sustainability Framework
High levels of unemployment in Sefton, particularly in wards in South Sefton and amongst younger people. Lack of suitable skills and a need to match skills to jobs.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider impact of the plan to reduce unemployment and improve skills.
Over reliance on the public sector for jobs making Sefton susceptible to cuts in public sector spending. Fewer jobs per population than many other areas. Lack of land for employment development.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider impact of the plan in encouraging economic growth and investment.
Many parts of Sefton's countryside is considered grade best and most versatile agricultural land.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider impact of plan on the rural economy.
Many of Sefton's local and district centres are currently struggling with high vacancy rates and a poor range of services and shops.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider impact of the plan in maintaining Sefton's town, local and village centres as vibrant places.
The perception with many residents is that infrastructure provision has not kept up with past development and that this has caused	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider impact of the plan on providing the required infrastructure that supports growth.

problems with drains, roads, power supply etc. Many types of existing infrastructure are at capacity, need upgrading and would struggle with additional development.	
There are inequalities between many parts of Sefton, with many areas, particularly in south Sefton, identified as areas of deprivation. Many areas are in need of regeneration, in terms of the physical environment but also social and economical too.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider impact of the plan on reducing inequalities and eliminating social deprivation.
Crime and the fear of crime are major obstacles in the regeneration of local neighbourhoods. Crime in some wards is much higher than in others.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider impact of the plan on reducing crime and improving safety.
There is a high affordable housing need in many parts of the borough. Many areas of Sefton have a lack of choice in the variety of homes, in terms of size, tenure and quality.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider the impact of the plan on meeting Seton's diverse housing needs.
There are some areas, communities and groups of people that have restricted access to services and facilities. Sefton's population has decreased over the past 30 to 40 years, resulting in many services being closed or put under pressure. Sefton has an older population than many other parts of the region putting pressure on services. Despite good public transport links, many people still choose to travel by car for commuting. This adds to congestion on many of Sefton's roads.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider the impact of the plan in providing better access to services and facilities, particularly by walking, cycling and public transport.
There are inequalities in health [including mental health] between different parts of the borough. Sefton has high levels of obesity and many people lead inactive lifestyles.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider the impact of the plan in providing environments that improve health and social care.
There is a lot of scope to improve the way people engage with the plan making process and become more involved with the decision making process overall.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider the impact of the plan in strengthening communities and help people to be involved in local-decision making.
Climate change action should be taken at the local level. Although carbon dioxide emissions have been decreasing in recent years, more work is needed to meet the government's commitments.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider the impact of the plan to help Sefton adapt and mitigate to climate change.
Large areas of Sefton are at risk from flooding. Surface water flooding is also an issue in many parts of Sefton.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider the impact of the plan of reducing the risk from flooding.
There is legacy of heavy industry in Sefton with many areas having suspected high levels of contamination. There are a number of Air Quality Management Areas in Sefton. The water quality of Sefton's rivers needs improving.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider the impact of the plan on reducing pollution.
The amount of waste recycled in Sefton has increased significantly in recent years. However, Councils must continue to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill. Energy use has decreased in recent times and should	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider the impact of the plan on reducing waste and the use of natural resources.

continue to do so in the future.	
Sefton has large areas of coast and countryside that provide many benefits. Many of these sites are under pressure from development and increased visitor numbers.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider the impact of the plan in protecting Sefton's valued landscape, coast and countryside.
Planning should encourage effective use of land by using land that has been previously developed. There are high levels of vacant homes in some areas.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider the impact of the plan in bringing back derelict and underused land and buildings.
Sefton has many areas with biodiversity and habitat value.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider the impact of the plan in protecting and enhancing biodiversity in Sefton.
Sefton has many heritage assets. Local heritage and culture help give people a sense of pride in their neighbourhood, helps to define the unique character of distinctive places and can play a big role in regenerating an area. In some instances there is a lack of information on the location and importance of our heritage assets.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider the impact of the plan in protecting and enhancing Sefton's culture and heritage, and taking account of the positive cultural and economic benefits that heritage and cultural assets can bring.
Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.	Include a Sustainability Objective that will consider the impact of the plan in providing a quality living environment.

5 Developing the Sustainability Appraisal Framework

5.1 The purpose of this task is to provide a means by which the environmental performance of the plan or programme and alternatives can be assessed.

5.2 The Sustainability Appraisal framework is a key component in the Sustainability Appraisal process. It is a recognised way for allowing the social, economic and environmental effects of Local Plan and alternatives to be tested. In developing the SA objectives regard needs to be had to the topics listed in the SEA Regulations, but they should be informed by the previous tasks [sections 2 to 4 of this report] and focus on the key issues in the local area.

5.3 The SA framework will be used for appraising the objectives, overall strategy and strategic policies of the Local Plan as well as the site specific and development management policies. The result of this exercise is that we have identified 20 sustainability objectives in our Sustainability Framework. These have been grouped into three broad groups, however there is a lot of overlap between these groups. These SA objectives are are:

Economic (5)
- Encourage economic growth and investment
- Reduce unemployment and improve skills
- Support the rural economy
- Maintain vibrant town, local and village centres
- Provide the required infrastructure to support growth

Social (6)
- Reduce inequalities and help eliminate social deprivation
- Reduce crime and improve safety
- Meet Sefton's diverse housing needs
- Provide better access to services and facilities, particularly by walking cycling and public transport
- Provide environments that improve health and social care
- Strengthen communities and help people to be involved in local decision-making

Environment (9)
- Adapt and mitigate to climate change
- Reduce the risk from flooding
- Reduce pollution
- Reduce waste and the use of natural resources
- Protect Sefton's valued landscape, coast and countryside
- Bring back into use derelict and underused land and buildings
- Protect and enhance biodiversity
- Protect and enhance Sefton's culture and heritage
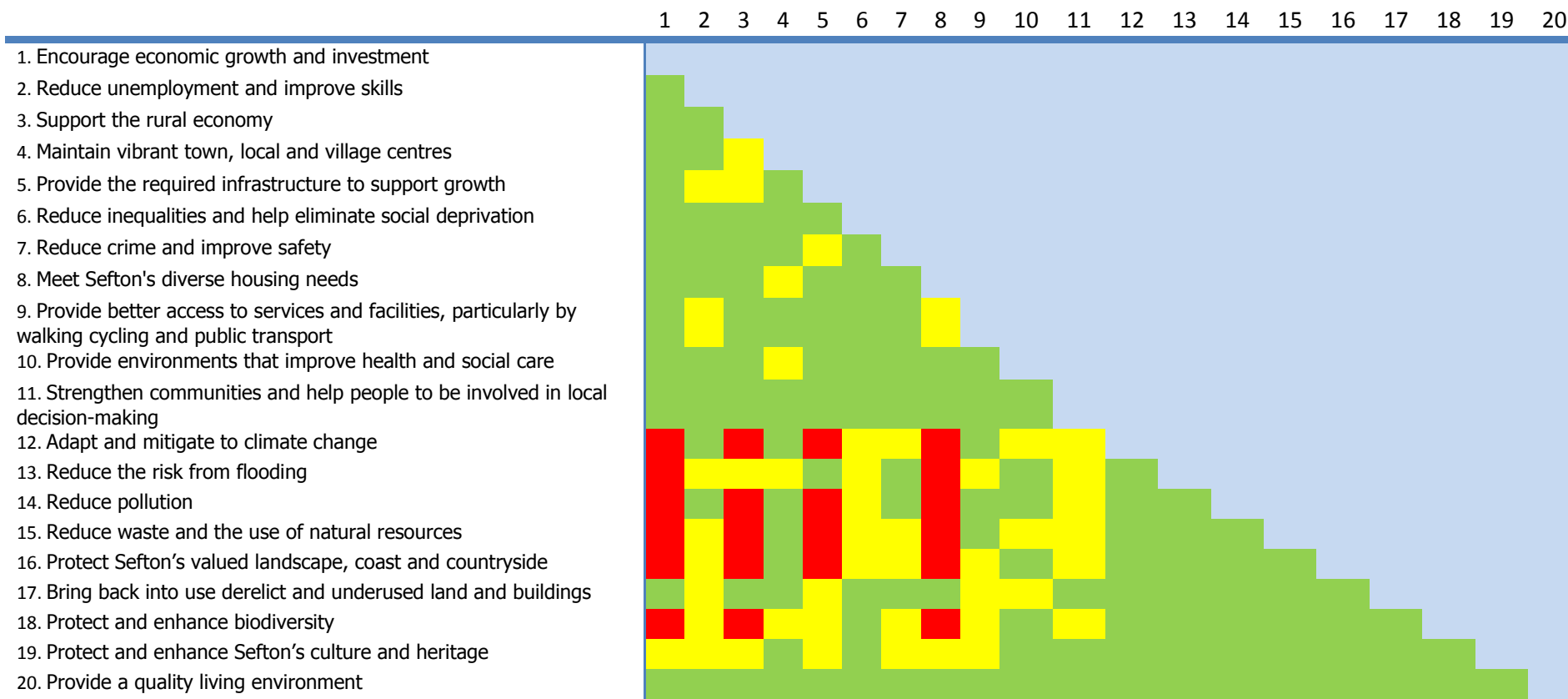- Provide a quality living environment

1. Encourage economic growth and investment

2. Reduce unemployment and improve skills

3. Support the rural economy

4. Maintain vibrant town, local and village centres

5. Provide the required infrastructure to support growth

6. Reduce inequalities and help eliminate social deprivation

7. Reduce crime and improve safety

8. Meet Sefton's diverse housing needs

9. Provide better access to services and facilities, particularly by walking cycling and public transport

10. Provide environments that improve health and social care

11. Strengthen communities and help people to be involved in local decision-making

12. Adapt and mitigate to climate change

13. Reduce the risk from flooding

14. Reduce pollution

15. Reduce waste and the use of natural resources

16. Protect Sefton's valued landscape, coast and countryside

17. Bring back into use derelict and underused land and buildings

18. Protect and enhance biodiversity

19. Protect and enhance Sefton's culture and heritage

20. Provide a quality living environment
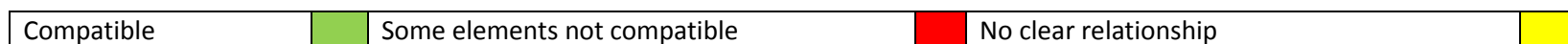
Table 5.1 Testing the SA Objectives against each other

Compatible		Some elements not compatible		No clear relationship	

Table 5.2 Sustainability Framework

Sustainability Objective	Key Questions for the Local Plan	Key Questions for Site Assessments	Direct Impact Indicators	Contextual Indicators
1. Encourage economic growth and investment **SEA Topics: Population, Material Assets**	Will the plan provide sufficient land for business development? Will the plan support Sefton's key employment sectors [e.g. Port, tourism]? Will the plan help to diversify the local economy? Will the plan help encourage investment within Sefton?	Is the site suitable for the location of employment uses? [taking into account site, conditions, relation to urban area, access, size, whether its in an identified area of need]	Area of land made available for employment uses Land developed for employment purposes	Number of jobs in Sefton in port and tourism sectors Number [/%] of people employed in the public sector Number [/%] of people employed in the construction industry
2. Reduce unemployment and improve skills **SEA Topics: Population**	Will the plan help reduce the number of people out of work? Will the plan improve access to education and training? Will the plan help retain and improve employment opportunities? Will the plan help match skills to employment opportunities?	If the site provided job opportunities, would they be accessible [by walking, cycling or public transport] particularly to areas of deprivation?	Jobs created as a result of new development	% of population claiming JSA (by borough and wards) Number and location of SOAs in most 5%/10% most deprived in Employment and Education, Skills and Training domains. % of residents [by borough and ward] educated to NVQ levels 1 to 4 Number of jobs in Sefton
3. Support the rural economy **SEA Topics: Population, Material Assets**	Will the plan protect farming and other established rural businesses? Will the plan help diversify the rural economy? Will the plan help rural residents to access employment?	Does the site include land considered BMV agricultural land? Would development of the site result in a loss of an existing agricultural and rural based business?	Area of land in agricultural use [including by land quality] lost to none agricultural development.	The number of people employed in the rural based economy % of population in non-urban SOAs claiming JSA
4. Maintain vibrant town, local and village centres **SEA Topics: Population, Material Assets, Cultural Assets**	Will the plan prioritise retail, leisure or office development in and around to existing town and local centres? Will the plan encourage more people to use existing centres?	Is the site within easy access of existing local, district or village centres?	Amount and % of new retail, leisure and office development that is in, on the edge and outside of local and district centres.	Retail rankings of local and district centres Vacancy rates in local and district centres Vacancy rates of shopping parades in villages.

Sustainability Objective	Key Questions for the Local Plan	Key Questions for Site Assessments	Direct Impact Indicators	Contextual Indicators
	Will the plan make centres more attractive to businesses, including shops, leisure and offices?			
5. Provide the required infrastructure to support growth **SEA Topics: Population, Material Assets**	Will the plan proposals be supported by existing or planned infrastructure?	Will the development of the site create or exacerbate problems with the local road network? Would development of the site help to secure improvements to existing infrastructural deficiencies in the locality?	Community Infrastructure Levy contributions as a result development Infrastructure provided as a result of section 106 agreements	
6. Reduce inequalities and social deprivation **SEA Topics: Population, Human Health**	Will the plan help improve the conditions and prospects of people living in the most deprived areas? Will the plan help support the regeneration priorities of the Council and its partners? Will the plan help reduce inequalities according to ethnicity, gender, age and others groups?	N/a	Number of affordable homes provided.	The number and location of SOAs in the most 10% deprived nationally Number of regeneration programmes [and amount of funding secured] that have land use requirements.
7. Reduce crime and improve safety **SEA Topics: Population, Human Health**	Will the plan help reduce crime and the fear of crime? Will the help plan protect personal safety and reduce accidents?	N/a		The total number of criminal incidents by borough and ward. The % of people by ward who see crime as a problem in their area. The number of accidents by type in Sefton.
8. Meet Sefton's diverse housing needs **SEA Topics: Population, Material Assets, Human Health**	Will the plan help to meet Sefton's housing needs? Will the plan help to meet Sefton's affordable and specialist housing need? Will the plan provide a diverse housing choice?	Is the site suitable for housing development? [taking into account site conditions, relation to urban area, access, size, whether its in an area of housing need etc]	The number of homes [including by type] built annually The five year housing supply figure The number of affordable homes built annually The number of G&T pitches provided	Social housing waiting lists House prices

Sustainability Objective	Key Questions for the Local Plan	Key Questions for Site Assessments	Direct Impact Indicators	Contextual Indicators
		Would the site help to meet identified local affordable housing needs? Would the site be suitable for any of Sefton's other housing needs [e.g. G&T]?	The number of 'extra care' and other specialist older peoples' homes provided	
9. Provide better access to services and facilities, particularly by walking, cycling and public transport **SEA Topics: Population, Human Health, Material Assets, Air, Climatic Factors**	Will the plan promote a wider range of local services and facilities? Will the plan increase accessibility of existing services and facilities? Will the plan encourage use of sustainable travel [walking, cycling and by public transport]? Will the plan improve links between areas?	Does the site have good access to a range of existing local services and facilities[3]? [includes schools, GPs, dentists, shops, Post office, bus and train stops, leisure facilities etc]	% of new homes, offices, shops and leisure built within 600m of a bus stop or 800m of a rail station. New local services provided	The number of residents who live within 10, 20 and 30 minute travel time of essential services [schools, GP, post offices, shops, park, public transport stop etc] Travel to work % by mode of transport
10. Provide environments that improve health and social care **SEA Topics: Population, Human Health, Material Assets**	Will the plan provide and protect areas that can be used for formal and informal recreation? Will the plan provide for environments that would help the mental health and wellbeing of residents?	Would development of the site result in a net change of accessible open space used for formal or informal recreation? Is the site within the recommended travel distance [1km] of an existing accessible nature space or park?	Net change in area of accessible open space by type	Obesity rates in adults and children Mental health rates
11. Strengthen communities and help people to be involved in local-decision making **SEA Topics: Population**	Will the plan help create and strengthen local communities that are diverse and stable? Will the plan encourage people to get involved in local decisions and become more active in their communities?	N/a	The number of Parish and Neighbourhood Plans in preparation/adopted	Local election turnout rate

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[3] Using the travel SPD distances

Sustainability Objective	Key Questions for the Local Plan	Key Questions for Site Assessments	Direct Impact Indicators	Contextual Indicators
12. Adapt and mitigate to climate change **SEA Topics: Climatic Factors, biodiversity, fauna, flora, soil, water, air**	Will the plan help reduce carbon emissions? Will the plan reduce car use? Will the plan promote energy efficiency? Will the plan promote renewable energy production? Will the plan promote an increase in trees, open space and other green infrastructure?	Will the site be accessible by public transport? Is the site suitable for renewable energy development, either as part of or separate from other development?	% of new homes, offices, shops and leisure built within 600m of a bus stop or 800m of a rail station. No. and capacity of renewable energy schemes approved Net change in open space No. of new trees as a result of development	Carbon emissions by source Travel to work % by mode of transport Average SAP rating of homes
13. Reduce the risk from flooding **SEA Topics: Climatic factors, Human Health, Material Assets, water**	Will the plan reduce the risk from flooding to existing homes and businesses? Will the plan ensure new development is built in areas with low flood risk? Will the plan help reduce surface water flooding?	Is the site [or part of the site] in flood zones 2 or 3? Does the site have a surface water or ground water flooding problem?	No. and type of new development built in flood zones 2 and 3 No. of sustainable drainage systems approved	No. of homes and businesses classed as at risk from flooding
14. Reduce pollution **SEA Topics: Biodiversity, Fauna, Flora, Human Health, soil, water, air**	Will the plan help reduce air pollution? Will the plan help reduce water pollution? Will the plan help reduce soil pollution? Will the plan help reduce noise pollution? Will the plan help reduce light pollution?	Does the site have known land contamination issues; Can these be resolved through development? Is the site next to a river that has known high pollution levels? Is the site close to a noise or light sensitive existing use?	Number of new homes built within 100m and 200m of AQMAs.	No. and area of AQMAs Air quality levels at monitoring stations River quality Beach quality No. of sites with potential contamination issues No. of complaints in regard to noise and light pollution
15. Reduce waste and the use of natural resources **SEA Topics: Climatic Factors, Material Assets**	Will the plan help reduce the amount of natural resources used [energy, water, minerals etc]? Will the plan help reduce waste and promote recycling?		Capacity of new waste management facilities	Energy used by type for domestic and commercial purposes Recycling rates
16. Protect Sefton's valued landscape, coast	Will the plan help protect and enhance areas valued for its	Is the site protected for its landscape or coastal value?	No. of inappropriate developments in the Green Belt and Coastal	

Sustainability Objective	Key Questions for the Local Plan	Key Questions for Site Assessments	Direct Impact Indicators	Contextual Indicators
and countryside **SEA Topics: Biodiversity Fauna, Flora, Material Assets, Cultural Heritage, Landscape**	landscape, including Sefton's coast and countryside? Will the plan restrict inappropriate development in areas valued for its landscape [including areas of coastal change]?	Is the site in an area of coastal change?	Planning Zone No. of inappropriate developments in areas identified as in coastal change	
17. Bring back into use derelict and underused land and buildings **SEA Topics: Material Assets**	Will the plan help bring back into use previously developed land? Will the plan help bring back into use vacant buildings? Will the plan encourage the remediation of contaminated land?	Is the site [or does part of the site] considered brownfield land? Does the site contain any redundant buildings?	The area of brownfield land developed Area of contaminated land brought back into use	Number of vacant homes brought back into use
18. Protect and enhance biodiversity **SEA Topics: Biodiversity, Fauna, Flora**	Will the plan help protect and enhance existing areas of biodiversity value? Will the plan create new areas of biodiversity value?	Is the site protected for its habitat and nature value? Does that site have any other habitat value?	No. of inappropriate developments in International or National [and local] designated nature sites New areas of biodiversity created	
19. Protect and enhance Sefton's culture and heritage **SEA Topics: Cultural Heritage, Material Assets**	Will the plan preserve or enhance Sefton's cultural and heritage assets? Does the local plan provide sufficient opportunity and encouragement for regeneration activity and improvements to cultural heritage?	Does the site contain any cultural or heritage assets? Does the site provide a setting for a cultural or heritage asset?	Number of listed buildings demolished No. of inappropriate developments in Conservation areas	Number of listed buildings at risk No of parks with green flag status Number of enforcement cases relating to heritage assets
20. Provide a quality living environment **SEA Topics: Population**	Will the plan ensure high levels of design? Will the plan help create places where people will choose to work and do business? Will the plan help create attractive local neighbourhoods? Will the plan help foster a sense of civic pride and identity?	N/a	Building for Life Scores achieved by new developments.	Satisfaction rating of place where people live

5.4 SA appraisals will use the following scoring system to identify what effects the option being appraised will have for each SA objective:

[insert new scoring system]

5.5 The assessment will also include secondary, cumulative, synergistic [i.e. acting together], short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative, geographic scale and likelihood of effects.

The following guide will be used

Timescale – **short term** < 5 years; **medium term** 5 to 15 years; **long term** beyond 15 years
Likelihood – **High** or **Low**
Geographic Scale – **Local** [i.e. neighbourhood or town], **borough** or **sub-regional**
Permanence – **Long-term** or **short term**

5.6 The framework includes a number of suggested questions that could be used to appraise both the Local Plan strategy and policies and also when assessing individual sites for inclusion in the plan. These should be used as a guide but are not intended to be exhaustive or rigid.

6 Consulting on the Scoping Report

Information required for the Strategic Environmental Assessment
'The authorities...which, by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programmes...shall be consulted when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report'.

The Scoping Report was originally made available for consultation from January to February 2009. This document was made available online and sent to each the 'statutory' environmental bodies. Comments received during that consultation were used to update the scoping report. A table of comments made at this stage is available at www.sefton.gov.uk/sustainabilityappraisal.

The Local Plan [Core Strategy] options consultation was held during the summer of 2011. The consultation documents available at this stage included an initial appraisal of the Local Plan options. Over 2500 individual comments were received during this consultation. Whilst many of these comments were made to the options paper rather than specifically the appraisal, many of the points raised were relevant to both. The full report setting out the range of comments received can be found at www.sefton.gov.uk/corestrategy. Some of the key issues that were made at this stage and how they have been reflected in the scoping report are:

- Need to protect the Green Belt/countryside
- Traffic and access issues
- Lack of infrastructure
- Need to protect agricultural land/food security
- Nature conservation
- Recreation and tourism
- The risk from flooding
- Impact of development on the quality of life
- Need to protect the environment
- Need to protect historic areas
- Climate change
- Social problems/anti-social behaviour

In line with the regulations the three statutory bodies with environmental responsibilities [Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England] were asked to comment on the updates to the scoping report as a result of the previous consultation comments. The comments received at this stage and how they have been incorporated in the scoping report are available in Appendix C.

Appendix A
Schedule of Changes

The following table provides a schedule of the key changes to the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report from that originally produced in 2009. This is not an exhaustive list of minor typographical or presentational changes but just those that change the broad content of the report.

Section	Change
1	Reference to Equalities Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment added. Reference to Local Plan being the produced rather than a Core Strategy.
2	For presentation purposes the summary of the review of relevant plans and strategies is provided in a table. The review of relevant plans and strategies has been updated to take account of those published since the previous scoping report was published.
3	The data used has been updated, if available, from that provided in the 2009 Scoping Report.
5	The identification of Sustainability Objectives has been updated following a review of the previous stages [plans/strategies review and data] and as a result of comments made during consultation. In particular the following changes have been made: • A new objective has been added to assess whether the plan would 'support the rural economy' • A new objective has been added to assess whether the plan would 'provide the required infrastructure to support growth' • A separate objective to assess if the plan would 'reduce the risk from flooding' was added. This was previously included as part of the climate change objective. • A separate objective has been included to assess whether the plan would 'reduce waste and natural resources'. This was previously part of the climate change and pollution objectives. • Landscape has been added to the coast and countryside objective. • A separate objective has been added to assess whether the plan would 'protect and enhance Sefton's culture and heritage'. This was previously included within a more general civic pride and identity objective, which has been deleted. Design has been included as part of the Quality Living Environment objective.
Table 5.1	The Sustainability Framework has been amended to take account of the changes to the list of sustainability objectives [see above]. It has also been amended to differentiate how the sustainability objective will be used to assess the Local Plan and site assessments. The indicators have been separated into 'direct impact' and 'contextual' so that it is clear that not all changes are as a result of the Local Plan.

Appendix B
Quality Assurance Checklist

Objectives and context	
The plan's or programme's purpose and objectives are made clear.	Set out in the SA Report and Local Plan
Environmental issues and constraints, including international and EC environmental protection objectives, are considered in developing objectives and targets.	Section two
SA objectives, where used, are clearly set out and linked to indicators and targets where appropriate.	Table 5.2
Links with other related plans, programmes and policies are identified and explained.	Section Two
Conflicts that exist between SA objectives, between SA and plan objectives and between SA objectives and other plan objectives are identified and described.	Table 5.1 SA Report
Scoping	
Consultation Bodies are consulted in appropriate ways and at appropriate times on the content and scope of the Environmental Report.	Consultation bodies were consulted on the scope of the report and will be consulted on the SA report.
The assessment focuses on significant issues.	Section 4
Technical, procedural and other difficulties encountered are discussed; assumptions and uncertainties are made explicit.	Section Three
Alternatives	
Realistic alternatives are considered for key issues, and the reasons for choosing them are documented.	SA Report
Alternatives include 'do minimum' and/or 'business as usual' scenarios wherever relevant.	SA Report
The environmental effects (both adverse and beneficial) of each alternative are identified and compared.	SA Report
Inconsistencies between the alternatives and other relevant plans, programmes or policies are identified and explained.	SA Report
Reasons are given for selection or elimination of alternatives.	SA Report
Baseline information	
Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and their likely evolution without the plan or programme are described.	Section Three
Environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected are described, including areas wider than the physical boundary of the plan area where it is likely to be affected by the plan.	Section Three
Difficulties such as deficiencies in information or methods are explained.	Section Three
Prediction and evaluation of likely significant environmental effects	
Effects identified include the types listed in	SA Report

the Directive (biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climate factors, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape), as relevant; other likely environmental effects are also covered, as appropriate.	
Both positive and negative effects are considered, and the duration of effects (short, medium or long-term) is addressed.	SA Report
Likely secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects are identified where practicable.	SA Report
Inter-relationships between effects are considered where practicable.	SA Report
The prediction and evaluation of effects makes use of relevant accepted standards, regulations, and thresholds.	SA Report
Methods used to evaluate the effects are described.	SA Report
Mitigation measures	SA Report
Measures envisaged preventing, reducing and offsetting any significant adverse effects of implementing the plan or programme are indicated.	SA Report
Issues to be taken into account in project consents are identified.	SA Report
The Environmental Report	
Is clear and concise in its layout and presentation.	The Environmental Report will be produced alongside the Local Plan publication document.
Uses simple, clear language and avoids or explains technical terms.	
Uses maps and other illustrations where appropriate.	
Explains the methodology used.	
Explains who was consulted and what methods of consultation were used.	
Identifies sources of information, including expert judgement and matters of opinion.	
Contains a non-technical summary covering the overall approach to the SEA, the objectives of the plan, the main options considered, and any changes to the plan resulting from the SEA.	
Consultation	
The SEA is consulted on as an integral part of the plan-making process.	The SEA has been made available alongside each stage of the Core Strategy/Local Plan consultation documents
Consultation Bodies and the public likely to be affected by, or having an interest in, the plan or programme are consulted in ways and at times which give them an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinions on the draft plan and Environmental Report.	
Decision-making and information on the decision	
The environmental report and the opinions of those consulted are taken into account in finalising and adopting the plan or programme.	The Local Plan has, and will continue to be, informed by the SEA process and comments made to that.
An explanation is given of how they have been taken into account.	Will be reported in the Environment Report that will accompany the final Local Plan

Reasons are given for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives considered.	Will be reported in the Environment Report that will accompany the final Local Plan
Monitoring measures	
Measures proposed for monitoring are clear, practicable and linked to the indicators and objectives used in the SEA.	SA Report
Monitoring is used, where appropriate, during implementation of the plan or programme to make good deficiencies in baseline information in the SEA.	Through the Council's Authority Monitoring Report
Monitoring enables unforeseen adverse effects to be identified at an early stage. (These effects may include predictions which prove to be incorrect.)	
Proposals are made for action in response to significant adverse effects.	

Appendix C
Comments received to the 2012 Scoping Report update

Comments received on the Scoping Report has, or will help, inform the appraisal process. This includes how we undertake the appraisal, the background data and how we monitor the sustainability of the Local Plan.

Organisation	Comment
Natural England	Overall Natural England considers that the 9 environmental SA Objectives and some of the social and economic objectives could be improved by considering the importance of Green Infrastructure (GI) and its multifunctional benefits, which would assist in the delivery of a range of SA topic areas, e.g. biodiversity, landscape, health and wellbeing and climate change. This would assist in ensuring that GI is an integral, cross-cutting theme. Good quality local accessible green space, ecosystems and actions to manage them sustainably offer a range of benefits, e.g: • Access to local greenspace can reduce health inequalities • Increased and improved accessibility to greenspace can help increase physical activity • Contact with greenspace can help improve health and wellbeing • Green space contributes to functioning ecosystem services that can have a positive influence on health. Ecosystem services can assist in adapting to the extremes of climate change, e.g. green areas have less heat-island effect than built up areas. • Greenspace can also help improve air quality and respiratory irritants. Function ecosystem services can also mitigate the risks associated with flooding from extreme rainfall events. The NPPF defines GI as "a network of multi-functional green space, **urban and rural**, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities". We welcome the focus on the need to improve and increase sustainable modes of transport, such as walking and cycling links as well as public transport. Improvement to such links would help to increase and promote access. The Local Planning Authority should provide the opportunities for sustainable modes of transport by ensuring new development is in the most sustainable locations and by securing improvements through the development process.

We are encouraged by this objective [biodiversity] with its specific reference to the protection of biodiversity, we suggest you add geodiversity to this objective. In order to maintain biodiversity and geodiversity and create opportunities for creation, there needs to be an appropriate policy context on protecting important nature conservation sites across Sefton.

Natural England has produced standing advice, which is available on our website Natural England Standing Advice to help the local planning authorities to better understand the impact of particular developments on protected or BAP species should they be identified as an issue. The standing advice also sets out when, following receipt of survey information, the local planning authority may need to undertake further consultation with Natural England.

The report area should ensure it has sufficient information to fully understand the impact of the potential proposals on any local wildlife sites, and the importance of this in relation to development plan policies.

This objective should be improved by including the need to protect and enhance important resources. We suggest soils are specifically referred to. Soils form the thin layer of our geodiversity, linking the underlying geology with the land surface and atmosphere. Therefore it is important to make the link between geodiversity, biodiversity and soil resources. Further guidance on soils, including links to important publications such as „Safeguarding our soils: A strategy for England" (Defra, 2009) can be found on Natural England website. Important soil resources should be protected (e.g. best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land) and appropriate management and handling of soils during the development process is essential. 'Safeguarding our soils' provides a clear vision in relation to development and soils – we should *'prevent further degradation of our soils, enhance, restore and ensure their resilience, and improve our understanding of the threats to soil and best practice in responding to them*."

Monitoring and Indicators
Given the abolishment of Local Area Agreements and national indicators, it is vital to look for alternative indicators to monitor the success of the SA objectives. Below are some suggested indicators which may be of use as the SA progresses:

Biodiversity/geodiversity/landscape
- Number of planning applications with conditions to ensure works to manage/enhance the condition of SSSI/SAC/SPA/Ramsar features of interest.
- Area of SSSIs in adverse condition as a result of development (available from Natural England website). Information on the condition of designated sites can be obtained at SSSI unit level by selecting condition of SSSI units from County downloadable data. Relevant

component SSSI Units for international nature conservation designations can be identified from the nature on the map website. There is Public Service Agreement (PSA) target for 95% of SSSIs to be in favourable or recovering condition. Development should not result in the loss/damage to features of interest, either indirectly or directly. Favourable condition should be maintained where appropriate or measures taken to enhance the units to achieve favourable condition. In relation to the PSA target the conditions are simplified into 2 categories: Favourable („Favourable" and „Unfavourable recovering") and „Adverse" (the remaining unfavourable and destroyed categories).

- Protected species – Quantified data might include numbers of applications where protected species are considered, numbers with conditions imposed to ensure working practices and works to protect/ enhance protected species, and numbers of planning applications which result in need for protected species licence in order to be carried out . This will indicate that protected species are being given appropriate consideration within the planning system and begin to build up information on their occurrence within the plan area. Updated information following the publication of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 is available from our website.

- BAP habitat - created/ managed as result of granting planning permission (monitored via planning obligations) and which meet Biodiversity Action Plan targets.

Green infrastructure/recreation/access

Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) provides a set of benchmarks for ensuring access to places near to where people live. ANGSt can be used as an indicator to monitor the quality of green space and is accessibility. There are also other national standards such as Green Flag for parks and open spaces and the County Park accreditation schemes.

ANGSt outlines the following:

- that no person should live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size;
- provision of at least 1ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 population;
- that there should be at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home;
- that there should be one accessible 100ha site within 5km;
- that there should be one accessible 500ha site within 10km.

Landscape Character and Quality

Indicators/targets could be established from assessing changes in landscape character for National Character Areas (as measured by Countryside Quality Counts data). The Local Authority should also consider the Sustainable Community Strategy and whether any indicators outlined in this report can be used in relation to the SA.

Review of policies, plans and programmes (PPP)

Any references to PPS are of course now out of date, and should be replaced by reference to the National Planning Policy Framework.

	Natural England welcomes the thorough list of international, national and local review of policies, plans and programmes. It appears to cover all relevant documents. It will be crucial to update this list during the next stage of the SA process to ensure emerging policies, plans and programmes are added to the baseline.
English Heritage	I see that sustainability objective 19 addresses the protection and enhancement of the historic environment, however the indicators all relate to negative impacts on the historic environment. I suggest that it is also appropriate to cover positive impacts in order to be able to understand impacts of the local plan in the round and the statutory duties required in relation the historic environment. You should there consider including an indicator relating to enhancement and dealing with heritage at risk.
Environment Agency	We note reference to the 'Sefton Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009' within table 2.1. For information, your Council is currently updating this document and the final revised report should be used to inform the Sustainability Appraisal, future spatial plans and site allocations.
	The Water Framework Directive (WFD) is identified as a key document under 'pollution'. While we welcome that the WFD has been highlighted, it is the North West River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) which should be utilised to inform the Sustainability Appraisal. Additionally the North West RBMP also falls as a key document under 'Biodiversity', and to some extent, 'Climate Change'.
	Positively contributing to WFD targets and objectives as set out in the North West RBMP goes further than just tackling poor water quality caused by urban, agricultural and industrial discharges, but also considers the hydromorphological quality of a watercourse. This includes considering the removal of redundant structures from watercourses, deculverting and restoration of watercourses and restoring floodplains, where appropriate.
	The Bathing Waters Directive (76/160/EEC) should be identified as a key document. The key aim of this directive is to protect public health and improve environmental quality. Please note the Directive is, in 2015, due to be repealed and the revised Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC) will come into force. Bathing waters in Sefton Borough include Southport, Ainsdale and Formby which should be considered in 'Developing the Baseline'.