Core Strategy Options
Sustainability Appraisal
Draft for Comments – May 2011

Sustainability Objective	Comment
1. Reduce unemployment and improve skills	The construction industry and ancillary businesses would benefit from a higher level of household growth. This increased activity could provide opportunities for training and apprenticeships particularly if a local labour policy is implemented. This would favour **Option Three** the most, followed by **Option Two** with **Option One** likely to provide the least benefits under this objective. The provision of more homes would help retain many of Sefton's residents who otherwise may decide to relocate elsewhere. This would be the case under **Option Three** which would seek to provide homes to retain population at current levels and to a lesser extent **Option Two,** which would meet needs under current trends (option two would still see a population loss). Residents who are able to relocate are usually those with easy to transfer skills and are economically active. Losing population would reduce the overall skill base of an area. This is would be the most likely scenario under **Option One**. An important proviso here for any option would be the need to provide a good mix of houses to attract and retain a range of social groups (see objective 9) and to ensure any new housing provides good access to employment areas for residents (see objective 10).
2. Encourage Economic Growth and Investment	A higher level of household growth, and therefore a move towards population retention, would help to support local businesses and services (see also objective 5) and help to retain the local labour supply. This would be most apparent under **Option Three** and to a lesser extent under **Option Two.** An important point is that under each option we will prioritise sites in the existing urban area for development. This will help support existing local businesses and services in these urban areas. Development at the edge of the urban area (as would be required under **Option Two and Three**) would possibly require new local shops and services and may provide some investment opportunities, although this should be carefully considered so that custom is not drawn away from existing businesses. A higher level of new homes **(Options Two and Three)** would boost the perception of Sefton as a growth

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	area and could attract investment.
3. Provide sufficient land for development	Sufficient land will be allocated for each option depending on which is progressed as the preferred option. **Option Three** would require a greater amount of development land and would therefore provide greater choice to developers. However, this would be the most challenging option for sufficient land to be identified given the constraints there are in the form of the Green Belt, Flood Zone areas, Nature Sites etc. **Option Two** would require less land that **Option Three** but will still meet the identified needs for the plan period.
4. Maximise Sefton's Regionally Important Employment Opportunities	There is no obvious link between maximising Sefton's key employment industries (i.e. the Port and tourism) and the level of household growth. The Port is located in a built-up area away from potential Green Belt sites in any case. The link to the tourist industry is most closely linked with the geographic distribution of new households rather than level of household growth.
5. Ensure town, local and village centres are vibrant and the focus for local neighbourhoods	Higher level household growth figures would be more likely to support a wider range of services and facilities, but this would be more dependant on the where the areas of household growth would be located. Each option would prioritise sites in the existing built up area and these are more likely to be close to Sefton's network of town, local and village centres. The impact of **Options Two and Three** would depend on the locations that are chosen for new homes required outside the existing urban area. If sites are chosen on the edge of existing settlements with good links to centres then this could help support them. However, if the sites that are chosen are remote from existing town or local centres then it is more likely residents will not use them. Residents will more likely drive to shops and services in more easily accessible locations (e.g. out of centre locations).
6. Reduce inequalities and help eliminate social deprivation	One important factor of deprivation is the standard of living accommodation and whether this is affordable. Option Two, and to a greater extent Option Three, should result in more affordable homes being built. This is because the provision of affordable housing is linked to the building of market homes. As mentioned under objectives one and two. **Options Two and Three** could provide a greater basis for

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	economic growth. Greater economic prosperity helps lift people out of deprivation. Other issues related to deprivation, such as health, crime etc, could be tackled through specific policies in the Core Strategy regardless of the option.
7. Reduce crime and improve safety	No explicit link to the level of household growth and levels of crime and safety. However if an increased population loss leads to a polarisation of income levels and deprivation (as suggested under objectives one, two and six) then this likely result in higher crime levels, particular in the areas that experience the most population loss.
8. Foster civic pride and identity	No explicit link to the level of new development and to civic pride and identity, although inappropriate development, in terms of design, type and scale, could affect the identity of an settlement/neighbourhood with a particular character.
9. Meet Sefton's diverse housing needs	**Option Two** would be specifically linked to meeting the identified housing and employment land needs for Sefton during the plan period. **Option Three** would provide housing in addition to this identified need and would seek to maintain population at 2010 levels (which is reversing current trends). **Option One** would fail to meet Sefton's identified housing and future employment land requirements. As mentioned under objective six, **Options Two and Three** would present the best chance to meet some of Sefton's affordable housing need. It would be difficult to provide many affordable homes under **Option One,** due to the low levels of homes planned and nature of sites in the urban area that will compose the supply for this option (i.e. many small with a number of constraints).
10. Provide better access to services and facilities, particularly by cycling and public transport	**Options Two and Three** could provide more services and facilities linked to new development. However, the type and scale of these would be dependant on what facilities and services are needed locally and the economic viability of development in an area. Improving access to existing services and facilities would be an objective of all options although **Options Two and Three** could present more opportunity to make substantial improvements.

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11. Provide environments that improve health and social care	**Options Two and Three** would require land in the Green Belt for future development. For those who live at the urban edge this may have a negative affect on their health if they currently use this for informal exercise. Another point of view is that the development of more homes and more development sites presents the opportunity to create more parks and other recreational facilities that help improve health.
12. Strengthen communities and help people be involved in local decisions	**Option One** would result in a continued [sharp] decrease in population and some communities would be weakened by the loss of residents.
13. Adapt and mitigate to climate change	**Options Two and Three** would require land in the Green Belt to be released (Option Three significantly more). In simple terms this could contribute to climate change as there would be less 'green land' (see objective 14 also) to absorb carbon. However, **Options Two and Three** could provide benefits, such as additional open space and trees, potentially some element of on site renewable energy and access to sustainable transport, which could offset any impact Green Belt release would have.
14. Reduce the risk from flooding	**Option Three**, and to a lesser degree **Option Two**, will require more undeveloped (i.e. Green Belt) land for development purposes and this may increase the amount of homes at risk of localised flooding due to less permeable surfaces and increased pressure on the existing drainage system. **Option Three** would require a significant amount of Green Belt land and some land in flood zone 2 may have to be considered. Under any option measures can be implemented to reduce the risk of flooding, such as Sustainable Drainage Systems.
15. Reduce pollution	The change in pollution levels would be negligible for the differences in household growth that are proposed between the three different options. The only difference would be **Options Two and Three** would most likely see a small increase in car use as a small part of the population will be dispersed slightly to the edge of the urban area. However, measures could be implemented, such as improved access to public transport, to help offset this.
16. Reduce waste and use of natural resources	**Option Three**, and to a lesser extent **Option Two**, will inevitably use more natural resources both in the construction phase of homes and once they are occupied. Modern building techniques and resource

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	efficiency measures should ensure that use of natural resources is kept to a minimum and that the difference between the alternative household growth levels should be minimal.
17. Manage the undeveloped coast	It is unlikely that any option would have any significant impacts on Sefton's coast. No option is proposing to increase Sefton's population so visitor numbers would not be expected to increase from current levels. **Options Two and Three** would require land in the Green Belt to be realised, however the coastal areas of Sefton have clearly defined protection and would not under any circumstances be considered for development.
18. Protect Sefton's valued landscape and countryside	**Option Two**, and more significantly **Option Three**, will require land for development purposes from Sefton's Green Belt. Although measures will be put in place to protect the most valued landscapes, parts of the Green Belt, including agricultural land, will be lost to development. **Option One** would not propose any land outside the urban area for future development.
19. Bring back into use derelict and underused land and buildings	Regardless of the option that is sought the Core Strategy will prioritise the use of land and buildings in the urban area in the first instance. However, given the level of new homes to be provided, particularly under **Option Three,** we would have to release Green Belt before a lot of urban sites are developed. This may make it less likely that some of the more difficult urban sites will be developed. It is likely that some of the more difficult urban sites (that have issues with contamination and demolition etc) may difficult to develop without public subsidy, even if Option One is favoured.
20. Protect and enhance biodiversity	Similar to the objective on protecting the coast (see objective 17) measures will be implemented that would seek to protect the areas valued for their biodiversity value. None of the options are proposing an increase in population so there is likely to be little increase in visitor numbers to areas with natural habitat value. **Options Two and Three** would provide greater opportunities to meet biodiversity targets (e.g. for new habitat creation), and to provide new and enhance existing green space and environmental assets.
21. Provide a quality living environment	This objective will be influenced more so by detailed policies regardless of which of the options is progressed.