

Birmingham City Council

Shopping and Local Centres Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

**Sustainability Appraisal
March 2012**

Birmingham City Council

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Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report

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2. Methodology

3. Key Sustainability Issues and SA Objectives and Themes

3.1 The Issues

The SA Scoping Report sets out the background to the Sustainability Appraisal process. It:

considers links to other plans and programmes, and outlines the current baseline situation.

These are summarised in Appendix 1 and Appendix 5 of this SA (see pages 20 and 28).

The Scoping Report identified 14 specific social, economic and environmental sustainability issues for the Shopping and Local Centres SPD, which are set out in Table 2 below and Appendix 4.

These have been drawn from the 28 sustainability issues and accompanying baseline information that has been comprehensively appraised in the Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report (November 2010) for the emerging Core Strategy. They also draw on information collected for the Core Strategy and this SPD (see Appendix 5 below).

These issues have informed the SA Objectives which are described in section 3.2, and these in turn have led to the identification of a number of appraisal questions which provide the basis for the assessment of the SPD in terms of how it contributes to sustainable development.

Table 2: Summary of Key Sustainability Issues for the Local Centres SPD

Key Sustainability Issues	
Efficient Use of Land	Good use is being made of previously developed land in Birmingham as a high proportion of new housing and office development has taken place on previously developed land. The city's scale of development over the next 20 years is intended to be managed in ways that should contribute to greater efficiency in the use of land through the regeneration of brownfield sites for example. There is an opportunity for Local Centres to contribute towards the achievement of this objective.
Air Quality	Air quality is an issue as the whole City is designated as an Air Quality Management Area; the main source pollutant being nitrogen dioxide as a result of pollution from vehicle emissions. There is a strong correlation between traffic congestion and poor air quality, particularly in some of Birmingham's Local Centres where there are high levels of traffic.
Managing Climate Change	Birmingham City Council has a good record of taking on board Environment Agency comments in terms of permitting development in flood risk areas. There is limited information on this objective although it is recognised by the City Council that measures will need to be put in place to manage the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Many Local Centres have been a focus for regeneration through environmental enhancement projects including tree planting which is considered to contribute positively to the local micro-climate and the aim is to continue to encourage these initiatives.
Sense of Place	Birmingham people are positive about their city; according to the Community Strategy, opinion polls show that three quarters of people think it is a good place to live. No public open space is currently being lost, and environmental improvements have been made and continue to be made to various parts of the City. Centres in Birmingham are important focal points of community life, and each has its own identity and range of shops and other facilities and services, all of which contribute to sense of place. Many of the Birmingham Local Centres have places such as public squares, and other community assets which also add to the sense of place. The City Council continues to invest in and support local centres through both a programme of public realm and environmental improvements and the promotion of town centre management.

Biodiversity	Although Birmingham's biodiversity is generally outside Centre boundaries, there are centres in close proximity to areas protected for their nature conservation value, including SSSI, SINC, SLINC, and LNRs.
Built and Historic Environment	

Table 3: SA Objectives and Appraisal Questions/Criteria

SA Objective	Appraisal guide questions for the SA. Will the Local Centres SPD help to.....	SA issues	Themes
SA1 Encourage land use and development that optimises the use of previously developed land and buildings	encourage the efficient use of land and minimise the loss of greenfield land?	Efficient use of land	1 Natural Resources and Waste
SA2 Minimise air pollution levels and create good quality air	improve air quality?	Air quality	2 CO2 emissions
SA3 Ensuring that the design and planning process takes into account predicted changes in Birmingham's climate including flood risk	<p>minimise the risk of flooding from rivers and watercourses to people and property?</p> <p>reduce the risk of damage to property from storm events?</p>	Managing climate change	3 Climate Change adaptation

development	recognising the value and contribution of unpaid work?		
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3.3 Appraisal Framework and Assessment of Strategic Options

4. SA Appraisal of the Shopping and Local Centres SPD

4.1 Testing the SPD Objectives and SA Objectives

The testing framework (Table 4) consists of 8 key SA Themes, 14 SA Issues and Objectives (as identified in section 3 above) and the 4 SPD Objectives. The purpose of this section is to identify any potential conflicts of interest between the SA Objectives and the SPD Objectives.

Where conflicts are identified, there is a risk that sustainability of the SPD could be compromised. In the case of uncertain relationships, it may be necessary to seek further information or monitor the outcome of policies, with the aim of minimising risk. In some cases, there may be no clear relationship.

4.2 Analysis

Table 4: Shopping & Local Centres SPD Objectives vs Sustainability Objectives

SA Theme	1 Natural Resources and Waste	2 CO2 emissions	3 Climate Change adaptation	4 Historic environment, landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity			5 Pollution		6 Economic Growth	7 Communities, healthy lifestyles and equality				8 Housing
SA Issues and Objectives for the Local Centres SPD (see Table 3 above)	SA1 Efficient Use of Land	SA2 Air Quality	SA3 Managing Climate Change	SA4 Sense of Place	SA5 Biodiversity	SA6 Built and Historic Environment	SA7 Water Quality	SA8 Soil Quality	SA9 Economy	SA10 Learning and Skills	SA11 Equality	SA12 Health	SA13 Crime	SA14 Population
SPD Objectives														
1. Explain how national and strategic policy will be interpreted in detail in Birmingham's Local Centres		N	?		N		?	?					?	?
2. Identify the boundary and extent of each Local Centre in the city		N	?		N		?	?			N		?	?
3. Identify Primary Shopping Areas within those centres		N	?		N		?	?					?	?
4. Focus the primary retail function in centres, whilst ensuring an appropriate balance of retail and non-retail uses		N	?		N		?	?					?	?

= positive relationship ? = uncertain relationship = potentially incompatible N = neutral relationship

4.3 Sustainability Appraisal of the Shopping & Local Centres SPD Policies

The purpose of table 5 is to identify any potential conflicts of interest between the SA Objectives and the SPD policies. Where conflicts are identified, there is a risk that sustainability of the SPD could be

Table 5: Appraisal of the Shopping & Local Centres SPD Policies

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6	SA7	SA8	SA9	SA10	SA11	SA12	SA13	SA14
Appraisal of Centre Boundaries and Primary Shopping Areas														
Centre Boundaries	++	0	?	++	0	+	0	0	+	+	+	?	0	0
Primary Shopping Areas	+	0	?	++	0	+	0	0	+	+	+	?	0	0
Appraisal of Draft SPD Policies														
Policy 1 Percentage of units in Local Centres to remain in Class A1 use.	+	0	?	+	0	?	0	0	+	?	+	?	0	?
Policy 2 Change of use from retail (Class A1) to non shopping uses in Primary Shopping Areas	+	0	?	+	0	+	0	0	+	?	+	?	0	0
Policy 3 Exceptional circumstances for applications for changes of use	+	0	?	+	0	?	0	0	+	?	+	?	0	0
Policy 4 Concentration and clustering of A5 uses within Centres	?	0	?	?	0	?	0	0	+	?	+	+	?	?
Policy 5 Concentration and clustering of A3, A4 and A5 uses within Centres	?	0	?	?	0	?	0	0	+	?	+	+	?	?
Policy 6 Concentration and clustering of A5 uses in other locations	?	0	?	?	0	?	0	0	+	?	+	+	?	?

4.4 Commentary on Appraisal

The SA appraisal in Table 5 is largely self-explanatory, and shows that the SPD policies perform relatively well against SA objectives. There are predicted to be positive effects in respect of a number of the social and economic objectives, in particular those relating to sustainable communities. Of particular note is the demonstration that the policies in the SPD are not expected to have any adverse impacts on sustainability or equalities.

In general terms, the policies seek to focus development in centres, where they are easily accessible to the local population, and creating a greater sense of place and community. Whilst the level and mix of retail and service provision will vary from centre to centre and will also vary over time and depend on general macro economic conditions, investing in centres which are best suited to retaining a service/retail function should help to create more robust neighbourhoods.

4.4.1 Principal effects of the SPD

The outcome of the appraisal of Centre Boundaries and Primary Shopping Areas is similar, with positive effects identified in respect of Objectives SA1¹, 4, 6, 9, 10 and 11. The remaining objectives are unlikely to be affected by the detailed identification of these areas.

Appraisal of Policies 1-3 reveal similar outcomes, with positive benefits identified in respect of Objectives SA1, 4, 9, and 11 and a mix of positive and uncertain relationships for Objective 6. Uncertain relationships are revealed for Objectives SA3, 10 and 12, with limited uncertainties for Objectives SA6 and 14. Otherwise, neutral effects are envisaged.

Policies 4-6 reveal a family group of similar outcomes. This is perhaps unsurprising as the policy areas are closely related. Positive effects are identified in respect of Objectives SA9, 11 and 12, neutral effects identified for Objectives SA1,3,4,6,10,13 and 14, with the remainder being uncertain. The uncertainties are unlikely to be resolved by any alteration to policies, and are more a matter for consideration when specific detailed proposals are considered during the planning application process.

In summary, the principal specific positive effects of the SPD are:

- Ensuring the efficient use of land in centres;
- A sustainable economy and economic prosperity in centres;
- Good access to services, facilities and opportunities, including jobs and learning;
- Promoting local distinctiveness and sense of place;
- Improving the health and well being of the city's population;

4.4.2 Secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects

The cumulative, secondary and synergistic impacts of the SPD are generally positive. For example, safeguarding the vitality and viability of the City's town, district and neighbourhood centres; by ensuring that they retain their predominantly retail function; and that excessive numbers of non retail uses and concentrations of hot food takeaways are also avoided, should improve the attractiveness of the centres as places to visit and invest.

In view of the outcome of the appraisal, no specific mitigation measures are required at this stage.

¹ SA1: Efficient Use of Land, SA2: Air Quality, SA3: Managing Climate Change, SA4: Sense of Place, SA5: Biodiversity, SA6: Built & Historic Environment, SA7: Water Quality, SA8: Soil Quality, SA9: Economy, SA10: Learning & Skills, SA11: Equality, SA12: Health, SA13: Crime, SA14: Population

5. Implementation and Monitoring

The SPD and this SA have been subject to a statutory 6 week period of consultation, from 7th November – 19th

local biodiversity	possible? conserve and enhance natural/semi-natural habitats and conserve and enhance species diversity?	Condition of SSSIs Biological quality of rivers Net loss/gain in area of SINC/SLINC/1RIGs (Local Sites) Net loss/gain in area of environmental/green infrastructure Number of LNRs designated Net loss/gain in amount of Local Biodiversity Action Plan habitat Positive/ negative impact on Local Biodiversity Action Plan species	other priority habitats Specific River Quality Objective Targets (Environment Agency) Net gain Net gain 5yr target Net gain Positive impact
SA6 Value, protect, enhance and restore the built and historic environment and landscape	protect and enhance features of built and historic environment and landscape?	Number of planning applications requiring a Heritage Assessment	None identified
SA7 Minimise water pollution levels and create good quality water	improve water quality?	Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality Biological quality of rivers	None identified Specific River Quality Objective Targets (Environment Agency)
SA8 Minimise ground pollution levels and create good quality soil	improve ground quality?	Area of contaminated land	None identified
SA9 Achieve a strong, stable and sustainable economy and economic prosperity	encourage and support a culture of enterprise and innovation, including social enterprise? improve business development and enhance competitiveness? promote growth in key sectors?	Amount of land developed for employment Loss of employment and retail land to other uses Number of new businesses created and demonstrating growth after 12 months	None identified

6. Summary

The Shopping and Local Centres SPD aims to achieve the following 4 objectives:

- Explain how national and strategic policy will be interpreted in detail in Birmingham's Local Centres.
- Identify the boundary and extent of each Local Centre in the city's hierarchy of centres.
- Identify Primary Shopping Areas within those centres.
- Support the primary retail function in centres, whilst ensuring an appropriate balance of retail and non-retail uses.

It is considered prudent to prepare Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to accompany the SPD, to ensure that the SPD is robust, and that sustainability considerations are properly taken into account. The SA ensures that the potential social, economic and environmental impacts associated with the Shopping and Local Centres SPD are identified, and that measures are taken to mitigate any potentially detrimental effects.

The Appraisal sets out a framework to provide the context in which the potential effects of the SPD are assessed. There are 4 main elements to the framework:

- Identification of the SA Issues, Objectives and Appraisal considerations
- Assessing the strategic options

Appendix 1: List of other plans and programmes of relevance to the SPD

The purpose of reviewing plans and programmes as part of the SA is to ensure that the relationship with these other documents is fully explored and to ensure that the relevant environmental protection and sustainability objectives are taken on board throughout the SA and the plan-making process. Reviewing plans and programmes can also provide appropriate information on the baseline for the plan area and the key sustainability issues.

The plans and programmes considered to have a direct or indirect influence on the Shopping & Local Centres SPD at a local level are listed below. Other documents are referred to in the Core Strategy SA where they have city-wide relevance.

International:

EU (1992) Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC, Habitats Directive)
Air Quality Framework Directive (96/62/EC)
EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC, or WFD)

National:

Defra (2005) UK Sustainable Development Strategy
Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, and supplement Planning and Climate Change
Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing
Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Development
Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment
Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management
Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning
Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy
Planning Policy Statement 23: Planning and Pollution Control
Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk, and accompanying Practice Guide
Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport
Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
Planning Policy Guidance 19: Outdoor Advertisement Control
Planning Policy Guidance 24: Planning and Noise
ODPM (2003) Sustainable Communities Plan
Guidance on the Control of Odour and Noise from Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Systems – Department for Environment food and Rural affairs
Litter and Refuse - Guidance on Part 4 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 as amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 – (DEFRA)
Strong and Prosperous Communities - The Local Government White Paper (2006)
Waste Strategy for England 2007

The Coalition Government intends to replace the existing Planning Policy Statements and Guidance with a new National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) by 2012. A draft NPPF was published for consultation in July 2011.

Regional:

Sustainability West Midlands (2006) – Regional Sustainable Development Framework
The 7 Authorities of the West Midlands NSome3 Ri200

Birmingham Sustainable Community Strategy 2026
Birmingham City Council Heritage Strategy 2007-2012.
Level 1 and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
Surface Water Management Plan
Birmingham Climate Change Adaptation Plan
BUCCANEAR climate change modelling project
Birmingham Brooks Report

Appendix 2: Compliance with the SEA directive - quality assurance checklist

certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process to avoid duplication of the assessment (Art. 5.2)

Consultation:

- authorities with environmental responsibility, when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report (Art. 5.4)
- authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their

Appendix 3: Responses received in respect of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Environment Agency (Summary)

2) Links with other relevant Plans and Programmes

It is essential that the **EU Water Framework Directive (WFD)** is included within the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) as a vital piece of international legislation that your Authority has a legal duty to give regard to in its decision making.

River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) have been produced in order to help meet the objectives of the WFD, and provide a local approach to implementing the directive.

Birmingham City Council falls within the boundaries of the **Humber River Basin Management Plan**, and as such this is a Regional piece of evidence which needs to be considered within your plan-making as it will contain locally specific objectives, actions and targets for the area. The Evidence Base document currently being compiled in support of your Aston, Newtown and Lozells Area Action Plan summarises some of the issues flagged up within the Humber RBMP for your area, alongside the **Birmingham Brooks Report** which should form part of your Local evidence base for this plan.

Your recently updated **Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment** should form a vital part of this document, in addition to the **Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment** which we understand was recently commissioned in August 2011. We understand work for the **Surface Water Management Plan** is also underway and should feed into this plan, alongside the findings of your **modelling of the Hockley Brook**. The results of the **BUCCANEAR** climate change modelling project should be considered, alongside the draft **Birmingham Climate Change Adaptation Plan** undertaken by the Birmingham Climate Change Partnership.

3) Key Sustainability Issues and Baseline Data

It should be noted that Planning Policy Statement 25: *Development and flood Risk (PPS25)* requires that the Sequential Approach is applied when allocating sites for Development. This is something that the SA should address when your evidence base indicates that your proposed Local Centre

We note that the Indicator for both Flood Risk and Water Quality is the same, (number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence or water quality grounds). In order to provide an accurate indicator for the separate issue it may be useful to divide these two grounds for objection if possible. It may be appropriate to use the classification status information from the most recently published Humber RBMP as an indicator for water quality elements, and also whether WFD targets could be incorporated into the targets for the SA.

Natural England

Table 4: Monitoring Indicators and Targets

NE supports this SA objective:

Encourage land use and development that creates and sustains well-designed, high quality built environments that incorporate green space, encourage biodiversity, and promote local distinctiveness and sense of place

The indicators could be strengthened as follows:

Provision of open space:

(i) Net loss/gain in amount of public open space and public and private playing fields;

(ii) Percentage of new dwelling completions within reasonable

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i) Net loss/gain in amount of

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Appendix 4: Brief description of sustainability issues relevant to the SPD

a) Efficient Use of Land:

A very high proportion (80%) of employment development in Birmingham has taken place on previously developed land between 1991 and 2006. Retail and office development has been largely directed to existing centres in line with policy in the UDP and PPS4, unless exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated.

b) Air Quality:

The whole of Birmingham was declared as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in 2003. The main pollutant is nitrogen dioxide, the primary sources of which are transport and industrial combustion processes.

The transportation sector is a major contributor to the emissions of nitrogen oxides across the city, but there has been a slight decrease in the traffic contribution over the last few years according to the Air Quality Action Plan.

c) Managing Climate Change:

Many of Birmingham's rivers and streams are susceptible to flooding (whether due to climate change or otherwise), and the City Council is required to consult the Environment Agency on all planning applications within the floodplain zones defined by the Agency. The City Council is undertaking a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) in accordance with PPS25: Development and Flood Risk. The results of the SFRA should be incorporated into the SA process once they become available.

Flood zones in Birmingham are mapped based on the Environment Agency Indicative Flood Maps and some centres are within flood zones.

d) Sense of Place

Birmingham people are positive about their city; according to the Community Strategy, and opinion polls show that three quarters of people think it is a good place to live.

i) Economy:

Birmingham's economic prosperity was originally built on manufacturing, but changes in the 1970s and 80s led to a massive decline in this sector. Local centres provide an important source of local employment, particularly in the retail sector. Vital and viable centres are also important to a thriving economy.

j) Learning and skills:

Learning and skills is an issue in Birmingham, particularly with regard to poor educational achievement.

k) Equality:

A separate Equalities Impact Analysis is under preparation as integral part of the SPD process and as part of the duties set out in the Equality Act 2010, and within the guidance published by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission.

l) Health:

Birmingham's population suffers from a number of health problems. A key concern has been a sharp rise in obesity. Recent evidence places Birmingham firmly in

Appendix 5: Baseline information

Birmingham Core Strategy Equalities Impact Assessment (sections for local centres in appendix B and C provided at <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/corestrategy>)

Roger Tym and Partners undertook a retail capacity study which included an assessment of all Centres in Birmingham in 2009.

A summary of the reported health (Birmingham RETAIL NEEDS ASSESSMENT VOLUME 3 - FULL HEALTH CHECK REPORT) of these centres as well as detailed reports are provided under the evidence base at <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/corestrategy>

Birmingham Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal – reports available at <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/corestrategy>

Birmingham Shopping & Local Centres Retail Survey (2011)

