

**LEWES DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK – CORE STRATEGY**

**SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (INCORPORATING A STRATEGIC
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT)
SCOPING REPORT**



May 2010

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Lewes District Council has commenced work on preparing a Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD), which will form the integral part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) once it has been adopted. In accordance with European and national legislation, documents prepared under the Local Development Framework (LDF) must be subject to the Sustainability Appraisal process and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Therefore, the Sustainability Appraisal and SEA requirements will need to apply to the development of the Core Strategy. This report sets out the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating a SEA, for consultation with the relevant environmental bodies and other relevant stakeholders.
- 1.2 The report is structured as follows;
- **Section 2** summarises the purpose of the Core Strategy and how Lewes District Council has progressed the LDF to date. This section also presents an introduction to the Sustainability Appraisal and SEA process.
 - **Section 3** sets out how the Core Strategy will be influenced by a number of other plans, programmes and objectives. This section is linked to Appendix A that contains a review of the plans, programmes and objectives.
 - **Section 4** presents the current baseline information, setting out the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the District. Any difficulties in collecting this information have been documented.
 - **Section 5** outlines the key sustainability issues the District faces.
 - **Section 6** sets out the sustainability objectives and indicators as a basis on which to measure the effectiveness of the emerging Core Strategy and options considered in its development.
 - **Section 7** presents a summary of the next stages of the Sustainability Appraisal process and the production of the Core Strategy. The structure and level of detail to be provided in subsequent Sustainability Appraisal reports is also identified.

How to comment on this report

- 1.3 This Scoping Report has been issued for consultation alongside the Core Strategy Issues and Emerging Options Topic Papers. In line with the consultation period on the Topic Papers comments on the Scoping Report can be made between the 21st May and 16th July 2010. At this stage we would welcome your views on the economic, social and environmental characteristics identified for the District, and the sustainability issues, objectives and indicators. We would also appreciate it if you are able to identify any additional plans, policies, programmes, strategies, guidance and initiatives that we have not identified in Appendix A of this report. Comments can be sent:

By e-mail: ldf@lewes.gov.uk
By post: Planning Policy
Lewes District Council
Planning and Environmental Services
Southover House
Southover Road
Lewes
BN7 1AB

2. Background

Lewes District Council Local Development Framework – Core Strategy

- 2.1 Following the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Lewes District Council began the process of preparing a Local Development Framework (LDF) for the district. The LDF consists of a number of Local Development Documents (LDDs) that would gradually replace the policies contained within the District Councils Local Plan.
- 2.2 The first part of the LDF that the District Council commenced work on was the Core Strategy. A Scoping Report for the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy was published in March 2006 (this followed earlier consultation on the emerging Scoping Report in February 2005). In September 2006 the District Council published the Core Strategy – Preferred Options, which was accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal report.
- 2.3 Following extensive consultation on the Preferred Options document a number of significant concerns were raised by certain key respondents. Subsequently, progression of this Core Strategy document stalled as the Council sought to address the concerns that had been raised. During this time, the regulations that the production of the Core Strategy would have to adhere to were amended, as were a number of key Planning Policy Statements (PPS), which included PPS12 (Local Spatial Planning) and PPS3 (Housing). With new regulations and policy to take on board, as well as a number of fundamental issues to address, the District Council sought legal advice over whether or not the Preferred Options document from 2006 could be progressed. The advice provided was to start ‘afresh’ on the production of the Core Strategy and amend the Local Development Scheme (LDS).
- 2.4 The District Council commenced the early engagement process on the Core Strategy in Autumn 2009. Alongside the publication, for consultation, of this Scoping Report the District Council has also published a set of Issues and Emerging Options Topic Papers. Comments received on these documents will help inform the preparation of a Preferred Strategy document, which should be issued for consultation towards the end of 2010.
- 2.5 As previously mentioned, a Scoping Report was prepared and consulted upon in the stages leading to the publication of the Core Strategy Preferred Options document in 2006. Due to the time that has elapsed since this Scoping Report was prepared, which has seen a number of significant changes to the baseline situation of the District, it has been decided to also start the Sustainability Appraisal process (incorporating SEA) ‘afresh’. This Scoping Report sets out the first few stages of the Sustainability Appraisal process, which incorporates the requirements of the European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment.

What is Sustainable Development?

- 2.6 Sustainable development is about ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come. It is about considering the long-term social,

- It is forecasted that the population of Lewes District will grow which will provide an additional strain on the current infrastructure.
- A high proportion of adults in Lewes District have no recognised qualifications, impacting on their ability to secure employment.
- Industry and business are suffering in parts of Lewes District, partly because of the recession, causing damage to local economies. This is particularly evident in areas along the coastal strip.
- Car ownership in the District is comparatively high and a number of key highway routes often suffer from congestion during peak hours including the A259, A27 and the A26.

