

**BASILDON DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**Supplementary Planning Document**

**Wickford Town Centre Master Plan – Environmental Report (DRAFT)**

**July 2005**

**Prepared for Basildon District Council**

**By**

**Essex County Council**



**Essex County Council**

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2. Basildon Community Strategy
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5. A Draft Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (OPDM) : July 2004
6. Essex Traffic Monitoring Report: 2004
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8. Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks, Consultation Paper: OPDM: 2004
9. Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks Consultation Paper: September 2004
10. [www.sustainable-development.gov.uk](http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk) (accessed 28<sup>th</sup> July 2005)
11. Wickford Town Centre Master Plan: May 2005
12. Integrating Biodiversity into development: Guidance for developers and planners in Essex Southend and Thurrock (EWT) 2005

## **List of Abbreviations**

BDC = Basildon District council  
CABE = Commission for Architecture and the built Environment  
DoE = Department of the Environment  
DPD = Development Plan Document  
EC = European Commission  
ECC = Essex County Council  
IMD = Index of Multiple Deprivation  
ODPM = Office of the Deputy Prime Minister  
ONS = Office of National Statistics  
PPG = Planning Policy Guidance  
PPS = Planning Policy Statement  
PSG = Planning Strategy Guidance  
SA = Sustainability Appraisal  
SEA = Strategic Environmental Assessment  
SOA = Super Output Area  
SPD = Supplementary Planning Document  
SPG = Supplementary Planning Guidance

## 1.0 Non-technical summary

The Environmental Report for the Wickford Town Centre Master Plan was prepared for Basildon District Council by Essex County Council's Environmental Strategy Team. The purpose of this appraisal is to promote sustainable development through better integration of sustainability considerations into the preparation and adoption of land use plans. The government defines sustainability as:

- Social progress which meets the needs of everyone;
- Effective protection of the environment;
- Prudent use of natural resources; and
- Maintenance of high and stable level of economic growth and employment

The definition of Sustainable Development for the purpose of this Report is, "*to balance economic progress with social and environmental needs.*" (<http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk>, accessed 10.08.05)

### Wickford Town Centre Master Plan Background

In May 2005, Basildon District Council (BDC) produced a Masterplan for Wickford town centre, within which key issues and pressures facing Wickford were identified. These were predominantly its tired urban form and poor local environment – particularly for pedestrians. The main areas of concern have been simplified into the 7 issues featured below;

1. image and identity
2. access and movement
3. urban form-an introverted Town
4. public realm
5. mix uses
6. townscape; and
7. development opportunities

Notwithstanding these issues, the market and site analyses undertaken by DTZ and their reception through stakeholder consultations suggest a clear potential for regeneration of the town centre area.

Basildon District Council proposes to convert the final version of the 2005 Masterplan into a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). In compliance with national requirements, a sustainability assessment must be undertaken on the plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

### Sustainability Appraisal Process

As specified in the commissioning brief the SA was required to conform to the European Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC. This Directive as with SA is a mandatory process required to be undertaken by local authorities in the preparation of land use plans and their supporting documents. The Wickford Town Centre Master Plan falls within both the SA and SEA remit.

The requirement for SEA/SA emanates from a high level of international and national commitment to sustainable development and is enforced through national legislation. The principle difference between SA and SEA is that SEA is focused primarily on environmental effects and is a baseline led process whereas SA goes further, examining social, environmental or economic aspects and is objectives led. Despite these differences it is possible to meet both requirements through a single appraisal process. In order to minimise duplication and time, Essex County Council has applied this approach and will refer to the dual requirements as SA. Government guidance sets out a clear process for undertaking the SA. The primary stages include:

- Establishing a list of relevant plans and programmes
- A baseline study of the environment
- Identify sustainability Issues related to the focus and scale of the plan
- Setting of sustainability objectives
- Identifying options and alternatives
- Assessing the options
- Detailed assessment of preferred option
- Establishing a monitoring framework

These stages are inter reliant and need to be undertaken in a specific order to ensure the outcomes and recommendations that stem from them are valid and sound in terms of the legislative requirements of SA.

### **Outcomes from the SA Process**

The Masterplan performed well in terms of sustainability criteria and the plans objectives, including enhancing Wickford's image and identity, improving access and movement within the area, improving the public realm by creating meeting points and public spaces. The Masterplan will also create new development opportunities through the introduction of new facilities and services, aimed at enhancing the town character and local environment.

It also acknowledges the importance of the efficient use of natural resources and sustainable construction. However, while the Masterplan acknowledges these issues, due to the strategic nature of the document, care must be taken to ensure that the importance of water and energy conservation, flood risk and sustainable construction as a whole are not lost at the implementation stage. Equally the plan did raise additional issues which were highlighted through this SA process. These included the need to place greater consideration on protecting and enhancing biodiversity within the Masterplan, through the incorporation of green spaces/mitigation measures and corridors between them to accommodate and enhance existing biodiversity within the Town centre. Furthermore the SA process has highlighted the need to link Masterplan proposals in relation to permeability and specifically make the link to footpaths and cycle routes in the town centre with the surrounding suburbs and countryside beyond. The purpose being, to promote sustainable transport, improved accessibility, recreational opportunities and wider quality of life benefits for the area.

The Masterplan also needs to take into consideration the impact of development on the historic environment. Ensuring the protection of the historic features/deposits is an

important statutory requirement, due to little excavation work being undertaken in the town centre in recent times, this would warrant further investigation and reference within the Masterplan.

## 2.0 Introduction

In April 2005 the Essex County Council (ECC) was commissioned by Basildon District Council (BDC) to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating the requirements of the SEA directive) for the Wickford Town Centre Masterplan.

### 2.1 Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment

The requirements for a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporate the dual statutory requirement of both Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The purpose of SEA/SA is to promote environmental protection and sustainable development through better integration of sustainability considerations into the adoption of plans and programmes.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) guidance:

- 'A Draft Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (July 2004)
- 'Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks, Consultation Paper' (2004)

The requirement for SEA/SA emanates from a high level of international and national commitment to sustainable development and this has been incorporated into EC Directives, laws, guidance, advice and policy.

The purpose of this sustainability appraisal is to promote sustainable development through better integration of sustainability considerations into the preparation and adoption of the Wickford Town Centre Masterplan. For the purpose of this development brief, sustainable development will be defined as the following 'to balance economic progress with social and environmental needs'. This definition is consistent with the government's definition which is set out below ([www.sustainable-development.gov.uk](http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk): 28<sup>th</sup> July 2005):

- Social progress which meets the needs of everyone;
- Effective protection of the environment;
- Prudent use of natural resources
- Maintenance of high and stable level of economic growth and employment.

The requirements to undertake a SA and SEA are distinct. The principle difference between SEA and SA is that SEA is baseline led, focusing primarily on environmental effects, whereas SA is objectives led. The SEA directive defines the environment in a broad context and includes:

- Population
- human health
- cultural heritage
- material assets
- biodiversity
- air
- water
- soil

SA goes further by examining all the sustainability-related effects of plans, whether they are social environmental or economic.

Despite these differences it is possible to meet both requirements through a single appraisal process. In order to minimise duplication and time, ECC has applied this approach. Throughout the remainder of this document where reference is made to sustainability appraisal (SA) it should be taken to include the requirements of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) as incorporated into English Law by virtue of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programme Regulations (2004).

This report and SA process has been led by Essex County Council's Environment Strategy Team. Diverse expertise has been drawn upon across its service areas as appropriate. This arrangement conforms to guidance recommendations in respect of a need for taking a balanced view; a good understanding of the local circumstances; understanding the issues, and drawing on good practice elsewhere to evaluate the full range of sustainability issues.

## **2.2 Sustainability Appraisal of Supplementary Planning Documents**

Pursuant to Chapter 5 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004, Basildon District Council proposes to convert the final version of the development brief into Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

In compliance with national requirements a sustainability assessment must be undertaken on certain plans and programmes, including SPD, which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

## **2.3 Wickford Town Centre Master Plan**

In May 2005 Basildon District Council produced a Master Plan for Wickford town Centre. Wickford is designated as a principal town centre in the Basildon District Local Plan (Policy BASTC3). As a result of the area proximity to the larger centres, namely Basildon, Chelmsford and Brentwood, it plays a relatively discreet role within the local shopping hierarchy. Furthermore, its retail performance has deteriorated in recent years in the face of changing shopping patterns and growing competition. However, the area retains important local services providing a range of convenience and some limited comparison good stores albeit a declining function.

Other key issues and pressures facing Wickford are its tired urban form and poor local environment – particularly for pedestrians. The main areas of concern have been simplified into 7 issues and identified as;

1. image and identity
2. access and movement
3. urban form-an introverted Town
4. public realm
5. mix uses
6. townscape; and
7. development opportunities

Notwithstanding these issues, the market and site analyses undertaken by DTZ and their reception through stakeholder consultations suggest a clear potential for regeneration of the town centre area. The core factors aiding its potential include:

- direct access by train to London Liverpool Street;
- the buoyant housing market; &
- a number of key development opportunities

During the preparation of the Masterplan a series of key trends have been identified which are likely to shape future development. Therefore the purpose of the Masterplan is to reposition Wickford to meet the challenges created by these trends. These include:

- Changing Shopping Patterns
- Growth in leisure/recreation
- Changing socio economic structure
- Changing focus of Urban Policy

### **3.0 Methodology**

The approach adopted in this Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report is based on the SA process set out in the OPDM guidance – Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks, Consultation Paper (September 2004). The methodology adopted, seeks to meet the requirements of both SA and SEA for the environmental assessment of plans.

The purpose of the Scoping stage is to:

- review relevant plans and programmes that will influence the appraisal criteria;
- Establish details of the baseline environment
- Identify key issues of significance
- Set a framework for the SA/SEA appraisal

The aim of the scoping stage is to ensure a focused yet comprehensive SA, which addresses all relevant significant issues and objectives and draws upon the widest possible input from consultation bodies at an early stage in the process. The succeeding sections and their compliance with the guidance at this scoping (pre-production phase) as well as the planned approach structure of the full environment report which it will culminate in are set out in the table below.

**Table 1. Summary of the succeeding sections**

<b>Succeeding Sections</b>	<b>SA Stages</b>	<b>SPD Stages</b>
<b>Baseline Information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans and Programmes</li> <li>• Significant sustainability issues</li> <li>• Difficulties and limitations of data collection</li> <li>• SA framework</li> <li>• Sustainability objectives and criteria</li> <li>• Consultation reports – scoping reports</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<b>Stage A – Scoping Stage:</b> Setting the context and objectives, establishing baseline and deciding on scope	<b>Pre-Production</b> 
<b>Strategic Options</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternatives Assessment</li> <li>• Compatibility Assessment</li> </ul>	<b>Stage B -</b> Developing and refining options	<b>Production</b> 
<b>Predicting impacts of preferred option</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed policy assessments</li> <li>• Cumulative, Synergistic and Secondary Effects and their causes</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<b>Stage C -</b> Appraising the effects of the draft SPD	
<i>To be undertaken</i>	<b>Stage D -</b> Consultation on the SA Report and draft SPD	
<b>Implementation and Monitoring</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documenting the monitoring data</li> <li>• Managing the monitoring process</li> </ul>	<b>Stage E -</b> Monitoring the implementation of the SPD	<b>Adoption and Monitoring</b> 

This appraisal process, as illustrated in table 1, follows a three stage assessment process of pre-production (Scoping Stage), production (including a 4-6 week consultation period) and post adoption, following the consideration of consultation responses, as set out in the ODPM's consultation paper (September 2004). A breakdown of the components of each of the stages is detailed below;

### **3.0 i) Pre Production**

This is the scoping stage of the report, corresponding with stage A of the Sustainability Appraisal stages. It involves setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope of the SA. The collation of background information underpins the entire SA process. The following Plans and Programmes section will determine the context and sustainability objectives of this appraisal from an international to a local level.

### **3.0 ii) Production**

This phase corresponds with Stages B, C and D of the SA process and refers to developing and refining options, appraising the effects of the draft SPD and providing consultation on the SA Report and draft SPD respectively. This phase of the SPD process provides a quality assurance check, revision and final publication for consultation.

### **3.0 iii) Adoption and monitoring**

This stage relates to Stage E of the SA process. Prior to Adoption, a statement identifying changes and amendments made to the SPD that have occurred as a result of the appraisal and the way in which consultation responses have been taken into account will be made. The monitoring framework contained within this SA report will specify which predicted effects should be monitored and will propose monitoring indicators and sources and timelines for the information collation.

## **3.1 Recommendations:**

Recommendations which emerged from the SA of the Masterplan identified issues to improve the positive effects. It is considered that the Masterplan would be more sustainable if future iterations took on board the follow recommendations below.

1. The Masterplan should consider and place greater emphasis on greening/ green space provision in order to protect and enhance biodiversity. It is suggested that an initial starting point should be to conduct a survey to ascertain existing wildlife present within the area. This will enable suitable habitat protection and mitigation measures to be incorporated within the scheme, i.e. bat roosts etc. This could be developed further by the incorporation of green corridors within the built environment.
2. While the Masterplan specifically addresses permeability within the Town centre, it is important that sustainable modes of transport (cycling and walking) connections between the Town Centre and surrounding suburbs and countryside beyond are also addressed. This is in order to maximise quality of life including recreational opportunities, for those living, working and visiting the area.
3. The Wickford Town centre Masterplan needs to consider the impact of the development on the Historic Environment within the Plan area. It is suggested that an initial starting point should be to evaluate the impact of the development on the Historic Environment in the town centre in order to record any surviving

archaeological deposits. Ensuring the protection of the historic environment is a statutory requirement and should be considered in the Masterplan.

### **3.2 Conclusions:**

The Masterplan performed well in terms of sustainability criteria and the plans objectives, including enhancing Wickford's image and identity, improving access and movement within the area, improving the public realm by creating meeting points and public spaces. The Masterplan will also create new development opportunities through the introduction of new facilities and services, aimed at enhancing the town character and local environment.

It also acknowledges the importance of the efficient use of natural resources and sustainable construction. However, while the Masterplan acknowledges these issues, due to the strategic nature of the document, care must be taken to ensure that the importance of water and energy conservation, flood risk and sustainable construction as a whole are not lost at the implementation stage. Equally the plan did raise additional issues which were highlighted through this SA process. These included the need to place greater consideration on protecting and enhancing biodiversity within the Masterplan, through the incorporation of green spaces/mitigation measures and corridors between them to accommodate and enhance existing biodiversity within the Town centre. Furthermore the SA process has highlighted the need to link Masterplan proposals in relation to permeability and specifically make the link to footpaths and cycle routes in the town centre with the surrounding suburbs and countryside beyond. The purpose being, to promote sustainable transport, improved accessibility, recreational opportunities and wider quality of life benefits for the area.

The Masterplan also needs to take into consideration the impact of development on the historic environment. Ensuring the protection of the historic features/deposits is an important statutory requirement, due to little excavation work being undertaken in the town centre in recent times, this would warrant further investigation and reference within the Masterplan.

## 4.0 Plans & Programmes

The purpose of reviewing other plans and programmes and sustainability objectives as part of the SA is to ensure that the relationship with these other documents and requirements are explored in order to provide the criteria to test the sustainability of the guidance. This enables Basildon District Council to take advantage of any potential synergies and to deal with any inconsistencies and constraints. The plans, programmes and sustainability objectives that need to be considered include those at an international, national and regional and local scale.

The preparatory work for the Wickford town Centre Masterplan had already considered a number of planning policies and guidance documents, however to meet the SA's requirements a broader range were considered, in particular those with environmental protection and / or sustainability objectives.

Table 2 shows a summary list of plans and programmes that were reviewed as part of the SA. Appendix 2 contains the outcome of the review.

**Table 2. List of plans and programmes reviewed:**

PPS1 – delivering sustainable development (2005)

Basildon Adopted Local Plan (1998)

Community Strategy - Basildon District Local Strategic Partnership

PPG3 (Revised) - Housing (1992)

PPG6 (Revised) Town Centres and Retail Development (Jan 1998)

PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological conservation (Aug 2005)

Government circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological conservation (ODPM)

PPG15 Planning and the Historical Environment

PPG16 Archaeology and Planning

PPG25 Development and flood Risk

PPS22 Renewable energy

By Design (2000). Commission of Architecture & the Built Environment.

By Design Better Place to Live, A Companion Guide to PPG3 (2001). Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and Department for Transport Local Government and the Regions.

Protecting Design Quality in Planning (2003). Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994). DoE.

Circular 11/95 Use of Conditions in Planning Permission (1995). DoE.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 1: General Policy and Principles (1997). DoE.

Places, Streets and Movement, A companion guide to Design Bulletin 32, Residential road and footpaths (1998). DoE.

By Design, Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice (2000). DETR.

Planning Research Programme Planning and Development briefs: a guide to better Practice (1998). DETR.

Planning Policy guidance notes PPG 13 "Transport" (2001). DETR.

Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan Adopted April 2001 (2001). Essex County Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.

The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed-Use Areas (1997). Essex Planning Officers Association.

Urban Design Compendium (2000). Llewelyn-Davies.

From Design Policy to Design Quality (2003). The Royal Town Planning Institute.

Urban Design Guidance, Urban design frameworks, development briefs and master plans (2002). Urban design Group.

The plans and programmes reviewed provided the following:

- A basis for establishing sustainability objectives as part of the SA process.
- An influence over the development brief preparation and a higher level policy context.
- A basis for identifying potential cumulative effects of the development brief.

#### **4.1 Sustainability Objectives:**

The objectives to emerge from the plans and programmes are listed below and have been sub divided under Socio - economic and Environmental Sustainability themes. Social and Economic themes were incorporated into the same heading due to the inter-dependant relationship between the components and the repeatability of the objectives.

##### **4.1 i) Over- arching objectives:**

Facilitate and Promote Sustainable and inclusive patterns of Urban Development; and contribute to sustainable economic development (PPS 1).

#### **4.1 ii) Socio - economic:**

1. Create Mixed and inclusive communities (PPG 3).
2. Reduce the incidence of health and disability deprivation (Basildon community strategy – feeling safe).
3. Promote accessibility to Jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling (PPG 13).
4. Secure an appropriate mix of dwelling size, type and affordability (PPG 3).
5. Improve the well being of communities, improve facilities, promote high quality and safe development, and create new opportunities for the people living in the area (PPS1).
6. Reduce the fear of crime (Basildon Community Strategy).
7. The design, form, scales and materials used in the development should be sympathetic and appropriate to the area (Basildon Adopted Local Plan 1998).
8. Increase the proportion of people of working age in employment (Basildon Community Strategy – Life long learning and Jobs).
9. Reduce the quantity of vacant commercial units (PPG 3, PPS 6).

#### **4.1 iii) Environmental:**

10. Improve the level of pedestrian and vehicular permeability into the redevelopment site (CABE BY Design- better place to live: A companion guide)
11. Ensure that development is located where everyone can access services or facilities on foot, bicycle or public transport rather than having to rely on access by car (PPS1).
12. Promote traffic management schemes to enhance safety (PPG 13).
13. Maximise the use of previously developed land (PPS 1, PPG 3, and PPS 6).
14. Planning should seek to maintain and improve the local environment and help to mitigate the effects of declining environmental quality (PPS 1).
15. Enhance as well as protect biodiversity, natural habitats, the historic environment and landscape and townscape character (Paragraph 27 (ix) PPS1, PPG16).
16. Promote the sustainable use of water resources (PPS1).
17. Reduce flood risk to people, property and the environment (PPG25).
18. Promote the sustainable use of energy efficient resources (PPS22).

## 5.0 Baseline Information

The scoping stage of the SA process requires information to be gathered on “the relevant aspects of the current and future state of the environment relating to the plans implementation.” (Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks, *ODPM*).

Government guidance stresses that baseline information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring effects and helps to identify sustainability problems and alternative ways of dealing with them. The collection and assessment of broad information / data about the current and likely future state of the Wickford Town Centre is used within the SA to help predict the Masterplan’s effect.

Much data already existed for Wickford Town centre and the surrounding area. The detailed baseline information collected is documented below. The sources used included data already collected by Basildon District Council for monitoring purposes, other plans and programmes and established data sources, such as the Office of National Statistics and Index of Multiple Deprivation. The baseline data topics which were identified as being potentially significant are documented below.

**Table 3: Summary list of baseline data topics, the themes and topics**

<b>Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Population</li><li>• Social Equity, Inclusiveness and Deprivation (including crime and health)</li><li>• Crime</li><li>• Community Facilities</li></ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commercial Activity</li><li>• Employment Deprivation</li></ul>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Housing Quality</li><li>• Air Quality</li><li>• Road Traffic and Access</li><li>• Landscape and Townscape</li><li>• Urban Morphology</li><li>• Land use</li><li>• Permeability</li><li>• Cultural Heritage and Material Assets</li><li>• Biodiversity Fauna and Flora</li></ul>

## 5.1 Significant sustainability issues

The collection of detailed baseline information aided in the identification of the significant sustainability issues related to the development brief and which are set out below. The identification of local sustainability issues is important as it provides a focus for the detailed assessment process.

The following elements were considered:

### 5.1 i) Social

- Social inclusiveness and deprivation
- Crime
- Community facility provision

### 5.1 ii) Economic

- Commercial activity
- Employment deprivation

### 5.1 iii) Environment

- The condition of the living environment
  - Indoor
  - Outdoor
- Air quality
- Road Traffic & Access
- Landscape and Townscape
- Flooding
- Water quality
- Water consumption
- Energy consumption
- Urban Morphology
- Cultural heritage and material assets

## 5.2 Difficulties and limitation of data collection

The baseline has been effective in providing a snapshot of current issues in the area, and sufficient data has been available to enable an informed and detailed appraisal of the draft SPD. It therefore provides the basis for establishing and informing the monitoring framework which is set out later in this report.

It is recommended that further consideration is given to how data could be made available for key indicators for which data is currently unavailable. If data becomes available they should be measured and assessed during the implementation and monitoring phases of the SPD.

## 6.0 The Sustainability Appraisal Framework

### 6.0 i) Sustainability objectives and criteria

Establishing sustainability objectives and local targets provide the foundation for the SA process. Their purpose is to provide a benchmark against which the sustainability effects of the development brief can be identified, described, measured and proposed mitigation methods established.

The establishment of SA objectives and indicators for development brief have drawn from the key sustainability objectives/aspirations identified through the review of plans and programmes at international, national, regional, county and local level.

They have been selected and devised in terms of their relevance to the subject matter and objectives that the development brief seeks to achieve. The objectives and indicators for the development brief are set out below in Table 18:

**Table 4. Objective and Indicators**

<b>Socio- economic Objective</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Indicator/Target</b>
<b>Facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban development &amp; contribute to sustainable economic development (PPS 1).</b>		
<b>By creating mixed and inclusive communities (PPG 3).</b>	Census Data (ONS)	Ensure the population composition reflects that of Basildon district – targets to be achieved.
<b>Promoting accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling (PPG13).</b>	Pedestrian Flows (View Essex)	Increase the quantity of commercial floor space activity
	Traffic Flows and Composition (View Essex)	Increase the quantity of public transport and cycling
<b>Secure an appropriate mix of dwelling size, type and affordability (PPG3 ).</b>	30-50 housing density per hectare: (PPG3)	Ensure that the population density conforms with the 2004 housing density figures (See PPG 3 in Appendix 2)
	Ward level data calculating room occupancy (Census Data)	
<b>Reducing the incidence of health and disability deprivation (Basildon Community Strategy).</b>	Health and disability deprivation (IMD 2004)	Reduce the quantity of persons suffering from health deprivation (Based on IMD 2004)

<b>The design, form, scales and materials used in the development should be sympathetic and appropriate to the area (Basildon Adopted Local Plan 1998).</b>	(Basildon district local plan) build using vernacular materials.	Increase the quantity of planning applications with conditions seeking similar materials to the appearance of the traditional materials.
<b>Reduce the fear of Crime (Basildon Community Strategy).</b>	Crime data (IMD 2004 and national statistics)	Reduce the crime domain of the IMD base rate. (Based on IMD 2004 – see Appendix 3 page 73 )  Continually reduce the fear of crime from the 2004 base rate level.
<b>Increase the proportion of people of working age in employment (Basildon Community Strategy – Life Long learning and Jobs).</b>	Employment Deprivation (IMD 2004)	Decrease the number of persons inflicted by employment deprivation (Based on IMD 2004)
<b>Reduce the quantity of vacant commercial units (PPG3, PPS6).</b>	Floor space (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)	Promote Intensive development and higher density commercial and mixed use development making use of existing vacant units. (Masterplan)

<b>Environmental Objective</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Indicator/Target</b>
<b>Improve the level of pedestrian and vehicular permeability into the redevelopment site. (CABE By Design – Better Places to live, a companion guide – See Appendix 2 page 56).</b>	Pedestrian Flows  Essex Traffic Flow Monitoring Report	Increase the quantity of pedestrians utilising the site
<b>Ensure that new development is located where everyone can access services or facilities on foot, bike or public transport rather than by car (PPS 1). Promote traffic management schemes to enhance safety (PPG13).</b>	Pedestrian Flows (View Essex)  Traffic Flows and Composition (View Essex)  (View Essex) Highways Speed data. Road accidents/fatalities	Increase the quantity of public transport and cycling methods of transportation (Refer to Essex traffic flow monitoring report)  Decrease the vehicular speed in the ward (Refer to Essex Traffic Monitoring

		report 2004)
<b>Planning should seek to maintain and improve the local environment and help to mitigate the effects of declining environmental quality (PPS1).</b>	DTZ (Street Surveys)	Enhance environmental quality through improved street and townscapes (DTZ Masterplan)
<b>Maximise the use of previously developed land (PPS1/PPG3/PPS6).</b>	Numbers of underused/ vacant buildings (DTZ)	The number of underused and vacant buildings and underused car parking spaces used in the development
	Surveys of existing wildlife species within previously developed land (To be undertaken)	If wildlife exists – create green space.
<b>Enhance as well as protect biodiversity, natural habitats, the historic environment and landscape and townscape character (PPS1, PPG16).</b>	Air quality (AQMA's)	Reduce air & water pollution levels by improving sustainable transport linkages and facilities. Protect the historic environment assets by evaluating and recording surviving archaeological deposits as part of the planning process.
	Water quality (Environment agency)	
	Historic environment & townscape (Essex County Council/ English Heritage).	
<b>Promote the sustainable use of water resources (PPS1).</b>	The number of water efficient developments at application stage. (Environment agency)	Reduce water use, via Water saving initiatives established within developments.
	Current water consumption (Suffolk and Essex water)	Aim to reduce water use by 25% from current levels
<b>Reduce flood risk to people, property and the environment (PPG25).</b>	Flood risk (environment agency)	Number of applications approved against the environment agency advice on flood risk grounds.
<b>Promote the sustainable use of energy efficient resources (PPS22).</b>	Number of energy efficient developments at application stage (DTI)	Aim to increase use of renewable resources

## **6.1 Compatibility Assessment of Sustainability Objectives against the Sustainability objectives.**

In order to evaluate and predict over time effects of the chosen sustainability objectives, it is important to assess their compatibility against each other, highlighting areas where negative effects are identified. The purpose of this exercise is to ensure that every effort is made to remove or reduce incompatibilities between the socio-economic and environmental sustainability objectives (see Appendix 5a for matrix of compatibility).

### **6.1 i) Summary**

The sustainability matrix can be viewed in Appendix 5a. When comparing the sustainability objectives against each other, a potentially negative impact was identified with respects to '*Maximise the use of previously developed land (PPS1/PPG3/PPS6)*' vs '*Enhance as well as protect biodiversity, natural habitats, the historic environment and landscape and townscape character (PPS1, PPG16)*'.

This has been identified in respects to ensuring the protection of the historic features/deposits as an important statutory requirement, due to little excavation work being undertaken in the town centre in recent times, this would warrant further investigation.

However overall the objectives performed well in terms of sustainability, either providing a positive impact, potentially positive impact or no impact.

## Pre-Production Stage

### 7.0 Consultation Responses – Scoping Report

Conforming to the SA statutory requirement for consultation the scoping report was prepared and comments were invited from the four statutory consultation bodies specified in government guidance. These include:

- Countryside Agency
- English Heritage
- English Nature
- Environment Agency

Copies of the detailed responses are documented in appendix 4. The responses are summarised in table 5 together with subsequent alterations made to the SA in response to them.

**Table 5. Comments Arising from Formal Consultation of SA Scoping Report**

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Consultee</b>	<b>Change to SA / Action</b>
Add 3 SA objectives:  <i>'Promote the sustainable use of water resources (PPS1).'</i>  <i>'Reduce flood risk to people, property and the environment (PPG25).'</i>  <i>'Promote sustainable use of energy efficient resources (PPS1).'</i>	Environment Agency	Objectives added; The Masterplan does refer to these areas however they need to be followed through into the implementation stage.
Previously developed land may be better allocated as open space, to meet accessible green space and biodiversity targets. There is no consideration of the accessibility to green space for the community, as an element of the quality of life.	English Nature	Add to recommendations
Improvements to footpath and cycle links from the Town to the countryside should be considered.	Countryside Agency	Add to recommendations
Awaiting response	English Heritage	

## **Production Stage**

### **8.0 Strategic options**

The next stage from developing the scope of the SA is to establish reasonable options /alternatives in order to assess their performance both in terms of sustainability and in achieving the objectives of the Wickford Town Centre Masterplan.

Two options were considered these were 'business as usual' or 'implementing the Wickford Town centre Masterplan'. The appraisal of options provides the means through which recommendations for mitigating negative impacts can be made and which are detailed in Appendix 4.

### **8.1 Alternatives Assessment**

A summary of the assessment of both these options is set out below. Full details of the assessment can be found in Appendix 4.

#### **8.1 i) Business as usual options**

This option involves the continuation of existing policies, land uses and development trends. This option performs poorly against nearly all sustainability objectives. While the guidance emphasises the consideration of reasonable alternatives, the outcomes from the assessment clearly indicates that the "business as usual" option was not deemed realistic as a viable alternative. This was primarily a result of the area suffering from a lack of identity, poor street environment and inefficient land use and the deteriorating environmental quality.

However, for the purpose of SA requirements the 'business as usual' option is recognised as a credible and plausible option. It is therefore deemed essential that the SA analyses all the possible approaches.

#### **8.1 ii) Wickford Town Centre Masterplan**

Option two involves the adoption of the Wickford Town centre Masterplan. The implementation of the Masterplan will have an overall positive affect upon the area These include enhancing Wickford's image and identity, improving access and movement within the area, improving the public realm by creating meeting points and public spaces. The Masterplan will also create new development opportunities through the introduction of new facilities and services, aimed at enhancing the town character and local environment.

However greater consideration should be made to protecting and enhancing biodiversity within the Masterplan, through the incorporation of green spaces/mitigation measures and corridors between them to accommodate and enhance existing biodiversity within the Town centre. Furthermore the SA process has highlighted the need to link Masterplan proposals in relation to permeability and specifically make the link to footpaths and cycle routes in the town centre with the surrounding suburbs and

countryside beyond. The purpose being to promote sustainable transport, improved accessibility, recreational opportunities and wider quality of life benefits.

The Masterplan also needs to take into consideration the impact of development on the historic environment. Ensuring the protection of the historic features/deposits is an important statutory requirement, due to little excavation work being undertaken in the town centre in recent times, this would warrant further investigation and reference within the Masterplan.

### **8.1 iii) Recommendation**

That the Masterplan is taken forward, as it has emerged through the assessment of alternatives as the preferred option, however more emphasis should be placed upon the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, by incorporating best practice methods within the urban design. This should then be developed further by establishing wildlife corridor linkages with the countryside.

While the Masterplan specifically addresses permeability within the Town centre, it is important that sustainable modes of transport (cycling and walking) connections between the Town Centre and surrounding suburbs and countryside beyond are also addressed. This is in order to maximise quality of life including recreational opportunities, for those living, working and visiting the area.

The Wickford Town centre Masterplan needs to consider the impact of the development on the Historic Environment within the Plan area. It is suggested that an initial starting point should be to evaluate the impact of the development on the Historic Environment in the town centre in order to record any surviving archaeological deposits. Ensuring the protection of the historic environment is a statutory requirement and should be considered in the Masterplan.

## **Production Stage**

### **9.0 Compatibility Assessment**

#### **9.0 i) Wickford Town centre Masterplan performance against Sustainability Objectives**

Assessing the effects of the preferred option is an important stage in the Sustainability Appraisal process. In order to assess and predict over time the detailed effects of the preferred option, it is important to assess in more detail the Masterplan's objectives against the SA objectives to highlight any areas where conflict arises. Appendix 5b sets out a matrix where compatibility has been assessed and reveals where objectives have positive or negative impacts upon each other. The purpose of this exercise is to ensure that every effort is made to remove or reduce incompatibility between sustainability objectives and those of the development brief (see Appendix 5b for matrix).

The Masterplan has been assessed and its detailed objectives extracted. For the purpose of the SA report they have been subdivided into the three components of sustainability, social, economic and environment and are set out below:

## 9.1 Objectives of the Wickford Town centre Masterplan

### Social

1. Redesign the station and improve integration with the town centre and the surrounding retail and residential areas (see pages 20 and 21 of the Masterplan)
2. Make public transport more attractive to potential users by improving interchange facilities between bus and rail services, improving bus links and improving availability of bus information along the High Street (see page 22 of the Masterplan)
3. Improve permeability of the site for pedestrians and cyclists and improve cycle parking provision throughout the town centre (see pages 21 and 22 of the Masterplan)
4. Create a pleasant and safe public realm on and around the High Street which is accessible to all including disabled and elderly people, and improve linkages with surrounding neighbourhoods (see pages 21 and 25 of the Masterplan)
5. Locate public buildings around public spaces to strengthen their identity and mark them as a focus for civic life (see page 24 of the Masterplan)
6. Bring more residents into the centre through key development providing a combination of high value and affordable new homes (see page 19 of the Masterplan)
7. Encourage natural surveillance of the area (see page 25 of the Masterplan)
8. Promote and maximise Wickford's regeneration potential with ideas derived from stakeholder consultations (see page 19 of the Masterplan)

### Economic

9. Provide development of compatible mixed uses to maximise opportunities for higher densities and intensive activity and improve the town's image (see pages 20 and 26 of the Masterplan)
10. Promote higher density commercial and mixed-use developments, civic buildings and developments located within close walking distance of public transport (see page 21 of the Masterplan)
11. Make public transport more attractive to potential users by improving interchange facilities between bus and rail services, improving bus links and improving availability of bus information along the High Street (see page 22 of the Masterplan)
12. Concentrate the most active uses on main routes and around focal points which will contribute to the vitality of the place (see page 24 of the Masterplan)
13. Locate buildings on busy street corners that are designed to accommodate shops, restaurants and other similar activities thus contributing to local economic activity (see page 25 of the Masterplan)
14. Reinvent Wickford as a 'lifestyle' centre, with a high quality, vibrant urban environment which embraces the growth of 'urban living' (see page 19 of the Masterplan)
15. Build confidence amongst prospective investors and the community through use of good urban design (see page 20 of the Masterplan)
16. Paying attention to the detailing and the quality of signage of shop fronts and building entrances.

## Environmental

17. Improve urban design and create attractive public spaces that allow for different uses, and different uses at different times (see pages 20 and 27 of the Masterplan)
18. Create usable, attractive spaces for pedestrians by setting buildings back from the common building line (see page 28 of the Masterplan)
19. New buildings should be in keeping with local character and enrich the townscape (see page 20 of the Masterplan)
20. Introduce a 'street' character with a mix of uses and active frontages (see page 21 of the Masterplan)
21. Design public transport as an integral part of the street layout and design streets as public spaces not just in response to vehicular requirements (see page 21 of the Masterplan)
22. Manage car parking facilities in the town centre, control traffic along the High Street and provide rear-servicing access wherever possible (see page 22 of the Masterplan)
23. Provide office premises close to new housing developments and integrate local services and facilities which will provide the civic focal point of the town (see page 19 of the Masterplan)
24. Create an improved pedestrian environment with improved safety, conviviality and improved connectivity to surrounding neighbourhoods (see page 20 of the Masterplan)
25. Enhance the pedestrian realm along the High Street and adopt 'pedestrian priority' by controlling traffic volume, speed and vehicle size along the High Street, widening the pavements and improving pedestrian crossings (see pages 22 of the Masterplan)
26. Support intensification around transport nodes and re-use of urban land to resist further urban dispersal (see page 20 of the Masterplan)
27. Control how parked vehicles are physically permitted to dominate space and limit the inconvenience they can cause to pedestrians and cyclists by means of landscape design (see page 21 of the Masterplan)
28. Make public transport more attractive to potential users by improving interchange facilities between bus and rail services, improving bus links and improving availability of bus information along the High Street (see page 22 of the Masterplan)

### 9.2 Summary:

The plans objectives overall performed well against the SA framework. The only potentially negative impact identified arose from SA objective 15 'Enhance as well as protect biodiversity, natural habitats, landscape and townscape character and the historic environment' and the Masterplan's objectives 6 (see Table 6 below). This identifies that overcrowding may have an adverse effect on the townscape and biodiversity. However this will be mitigated against through the application of public spaces. Table 6 below sets out incompatibilities identified through this exercise:

**Table 6. Wickford Town Centre Masterplan versus Sustainability Objectives**

Wickford Town Centre Masterplan	Sustainability Objectives
6) Bring more residents into the centre through key development providing a combination of high value and affordable new homes.	15) Enhance as well as protect biodiversity, natural habitats, the historic environment and landscape and townscape character.

### 9.3 Recommendation:

That the Masterplan be taken forward. However, it should give more attention to accommodating and enhancing biodiversity, habitats and maximising their connectivity within the development site. This could be achieved, initially through surveying the area in order to understand the composition of biodiversity already present. This would allow through design the incorporation of measures to accommodate existing wildlife/habitats i.e. bat roosts incorporated into new build.

The use of wildlife/green corridors to link green spaces, resident biodiversity and habitats in an urban context would also enrich the Masterplan in terms of ensuring it maximises the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

The Wickford Town centre Masterplan needs to consider the impact of the development on the Historic Environment within the Plan area. It is suggested that an initial starting point should be to evaluate the impact of the development on the Historic Environment in the town centre in order to record any surviving archaeological deposits. Ensuring the protection of the historic environment is a statutory requirement and should be considered in the Masterplan.

## Production Stage

### 10.0 Predicted impacts of preferred option

The next stage in the SA process is to assess and predict the detailed effects of the preferred option in more detail and over time. The potential effects have been quantified and where this was not possible a subjective judgement made. Prediction of the effects of the preferred option against the sustainability objectives incorporated the following aspects:

- Identifying the changes to the sustainability baseline which are predicted to arise from the Masterplan.
- Describing these changes where possible in terms of their:
  - magnitude,
  - geographical scale
  - time period over which they will occur,
  - permanence,
  - positive or negative,
  - probability

- frequency
- cumulative and/or synergistic effects.

Having identified the effects for each sustainability objective, an assessment of the significance of the effects was made. The effects could be positive, negative, neutral or uncertain, the timescale short-term, medium term or long-term and the significance of the effect major or minor. Where the Masterplan was considered likely to have a significant effect, measures and recommendations were made to prevent, reduce or offset any adverse effects and enhance those that are positive. The outcomes from this exercise are set out in Appendix 6.

## 10.1 Detailed Policy Assessments:

Set out below is the detailed assessment of the Masterplan's "preferred option". The summaries that follow, chart the Masterplan's performance set against the sustainability objectives. The objectives as elsewhere in this report have been sub divided to reflect specific social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability.

### 10.1 i) Socio-economic objectives

#### **Objective 1 - Create Mixed and inclusive communities. (PPG 3)**

The Masterplan aims to encourage mixed development within Wickford Town centre. Providing a combination of affordable new housing as well as developing a broad range of leisure and recreational activities. The Masterplan will provide the opportunity to co-locate services which will represent a sustainable urban form, as residents will be in close proximity to services and potential employment opportunities. Furthermore sustainable urban development encourages the use of vacant buildings, unused and underused land property. The Masterplan emphasises the importance in enhancing pedestrian and cyclist permeability into the site, and restricting traffic within the site. The increase in permeability into the site is likely to improve the social interaction among the community in Wickford.

\***Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain

\***Scale:** The Masterplan site

\***Temporary or permanent:** Permanent

\***Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:** The Masterplan considers all aspects. No recommendation is required

#### **Objective 2 - Reduce the incidence of health and disability deprivation (Basildon community strategy – feeling safe)**

Wickford Masterplan incorporates a reorganisation of existing health and community services as an integrated community facility. The Masterplan also incorporates an improvement to public transport and transport integration facilities, also developing a traffic reduction scheme within the town centre to reduce congestion and improve air quality thus reducing health deprivation.

\***Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain

- \***Scale:** The Masterplan site
- \***Temporary or permanent:** Permanent
- \***Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:** The Masterplan considers all aspects. No recommendation is required

**Objective 3 - Promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling (PPG13).**

The Masterplan promotes the centralisation of residential premises which will increase accessibility to services and facilities. The enhancement of pedestrian and cycling permeability within Wickford Town centre site will also improve accessibility. Improvement to the bus and rail services will encourage commuting from neighbouring towns and promote greater accessibility to facilities, services and jobs. While the Masterplan specifically addresses permeability within the Town centre, it is important that sustainable modes of transport (cycling and walking) connections between the Town Centre and surrounding suburbs and countryside beyond are also addressed. This is in order to maximise quality of life including recreational opportunities, for those living, working and visiting the area.

- \* **Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain
- \***Scale:** The Masterplan site
- \***Temporary or permanent:** Permanent
- \***Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:** The Masterplan considers most aspects, however should include consideration with regard to footpath and cycle linkages connecting the town centre with the surrounding suburbs and countryside beyond.

**Objective 4 - Secure an appropriate mix of dwelling size, type and affordability (PPG 3)**

The Masterplan clearly demonstrates a need to redevelop the town centre to reinforce and improve the character of the area.

- \***Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain
- \***Scale:** The Masterplan site
- \***Temporary or permanent:** Permanent
- \***Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:** The Masterplan considers all aspects. No recommendation is required

**Objective 5 - Improve the well being of communities, improve facilities, promote high quality and safe development, and create new opportunities for the people living in the area (PPS1).**

The Masterplan is likely to provide an overall positive effect.

- \***Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain

- \***Scale:** The Masterplan site
- \***Temporary or permanent:** Permanent
- \***Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:** The Masterplan considers all aspects. No recommendation is required

**Objective 6 - Reduce the fear of crime (Basildon community strategy).**

The Masterplan will directly reduce levels of fear of crime within the Wickford town centre. Particularly through the enhancement of natural surveillance through increased pedestrian permeability and increasing accessibility as well as creating open spaces. The Masterplan includes development of underused and vacant buildings which will also reduce likelihood of crime.

- \***Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain
- \***Scale:** The Masterplan site
- \***Temporary or permanent:** Permanent
- \***Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:** The Masterplan considers all aspects. No recommendation is required

**Objective 7 - The design, form, scales and materials used in the development should be sympathetic and appropriate to the area (Basildon Adopted Local Plan 1998)**

The Masterplan demonstrates good urban design which will transform the environment through creating character and distinctiveness. It aims to incorporate continuous street frontages and improve the form of the existing area.

- \***Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain
- \***Scale:** The Masterplan site
- \***Temporary or permanent:** Permanent
- \***Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:** The Masterplan considers all aspects. No recommendation is required

**Objective 8 - Increase the proportion of people of working age in employment (Basildon Community Strategy – Life long learning and Jobs)**

The Masterplan is likely to have a significant effect on increasing the level of peoples' aspiration within the area hence creating an influx of younger people within the area to access job prospects.

- \***Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain
- \***Scale:** The Masterplan site
- \***Temporary or permanent:** Permanent
- \***Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:** The Masterplan considers all aspects. No recommendation is required

**Objective 9 – Reduce the quantity of vacant commercial units (PPG 3, PPS 6)**

The Masterplan will have a major positive effect upon the number of vacant commercial units within Wickford Town centre. The Masterplan makes specific reference to the need to redevelop under utilised or unused buildings, which will encourage new businesses to the area creating an economic hub.

\***Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain

\***Scale:** The Masterplan site

\***Temporary or permanent:** Permanent

\***Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:** The Masterplan considers all aspects. No recommendation is required

**10.1 ii) Environmental Objectives**

**Objective 10 - Improve the level of pedestrian and vehicular permeability into the redevelopment site (CABE BY Design- better place to live: A companion guide)**

The Masterplan makes specific reference to the need to enhance the pedestrian and cyclist permeability within the site increasing safety. Improvements include redesigned underpasses, the widening of streets and enhanced lighting and surveillance conditions. Upgrading of existing pedestrian crossings and general enhancement of the public realm by co-ordinating signage, finishes, landscape and street furniture. Improvements to public transport and road facilities will facilitate traffic flow. While the Masterplan specifically addresses permeability within the Town centre, it is important that sustainable modes of transport (cycling and walking) connections between the Town Centre and surrounding suburbs and countryside beyond are also addressed. This is in order to maximise quality of life including recreational opportunities, for those living, working and visiting the area.

\***Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain

\***Scale:** The Masterplan site

\***Temporary or permanent:** Permanent

\***Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:** The Masterplan considers most aspects, however should include consideration with regard to footpath and cycle linkages connecting the town centre with the surrounding suburbs and countryside beyond.

**Objective 11 - Ensure that development is located where everyone can access services or facilities on foot, bicycle or public transport rather than having to rely on access by car (PPS1).**

The Masterplan aims to improve accessibility and co-locate facilities and services. Improvements to Public transport and pedestrian/cyclist permeability. While the Masterplan specifically addresses permeability within the Town centre, it is important

that sustainable modes of transport (cycling and walking) connections between the Town Centre and surrounding suburbs and countryside beyond are also addressed. This is in order to maximise quality of life including recreational opportunities, for those living, working and visiting the area.

**\*Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain

**\*Scale:** The Masterplan site

**\*Temporary or permanent:** Permanent

**\*Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:** The Masterplan considers most aspects, however should include consideration with regard to footpath and cycle linkages connecting the town centre with the surrounding suburbs and countryside beyond.

### **Objective 12 - Promote traffic management schemes to enhance safety (PPG 13).**

The Masterplan includes traffic calming methods, reducing the dominance of the road within the high street by narrowing and shortening carriage ways, also upgraded junctions are to be included. An improved public transport network will work towards promoting traffic management.

**\*Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain

**\*Scale:** The Masterplan site

**\*Temporary or permanent:** Permanent

**\*Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:** The Masterplan considers most aspects. However could consider better access links with the countryside via improved footpaths/cycle routes to improve the environment.

### **Objective 13 - Maximise the use of previously developed land (PPS 1, PPG 3, PPS 6)**

The Masterplan clearly demonstrates that development opportunities are considered for previously developed land and underused/vacant land. However some previously developed land could be considered for Wildlife habitats, especially if wildlife is already present within the area.

**\*Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain

**\*Scale:** The Masterplan site

**\*Temporary or permanent:** Permanent

**\*Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:** The Masterplan considers most aspects. However should seek to survey the area and where appropriate allocate some land for green spaces throughout. Also consideration should be given to provide better access links with the countryside via improved footpaths/cycle routes to improve the environment.

### **Objective 14 - Planning should seek to maintain and improve the local environment and help to mitigate the effects of declining environmental quality (PPS 1).**

The Masterplan incorporates tree planting to soften the urban form and enhance the environment. This also serves to improve the appearance of the riverside area which is under-utilised. The Masterplan also enhances the environment through streetscape and shop front improvements schemes. While the Masterplan specifically addresses permeability within the Town centre, it is important that sustainable modes of transport (cycling and walking) connections between the Town Centre and surrounding suburbs and countryside beyond are also addressed. This is in order to maximise quality of life including recreational opportunities, for those living, working and visiting the area.

**\*Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain

**\*Scale:** The Masterplan site

**\*Temporary or permanent:** Permanent

**\*Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:** The Masterplan considers most aspects, however should include consideration with regard to footpath and cycle linkages connecting the town centre with the surrounding suburbs and countryside beyond.

**Objective 15 - Enhance as well as protect biodiversity, natural habitats, landscape and townscape character, and the historic environment (Paragraph 27 (ix) PPS1).**

The Masterplan incorporates the use of street trees to enhance the environment and aims to make more of an attractive feature of the riverside area which is under-utilised. The Masterplan also enhances the environment through streetscape and shop front improvements schemes. The Masterplan does incorporate centralisation of residential units within the town centre, which may have some impact on townscape and landscape, however does incorporate public spaces into the townscape design.

The Masterplan needs to take into consideration the impact of development on the historic environment. Ensuring the protection of the historic features/deposits is an important statutory requirement, due to little excavation work being undertaken in the town centre in recent times, this would warrant further investigation and reference within the Masterplan

**\*Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain

**\*Scale:** The Masterplan site

**\*Temporary or permanent:** Permanent

**\*Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:**

The Masterplan should consider and place greater emphasis on greening/ green space provision in order to protect and enhance biodiversity. It is suggested that an initial starting point should be to conduct a survey to ascertain existing wildlife present within the area. This will enable suitable habitat protection and mitigation measures to be incorporated within the scheme, i.e. bat roosts etc. This could be developed further by the incorporation of green corridors within the built environment. The Wickford Town centre Masterplan needs to consider the impact of the development on the Historic Environment within the Plan area.

The Wickford Town centre Masterplan needs to consider the impact of the development on the Historic Environment within the Plan area. It is suggested that an initial starting point should be to evaluate the impact of the development on the Historic Environment in the town centre in order to record any surviving archaeological deposits. Ensuring the protection of the historic environment is a statutory requirement and should be considered in the Masterplan.

**Objective 16 - Promote the sustainable use of water resources (PPS1).**

The Masterplan acknowledges this factor and will appropriately consider it during the delivery of the Plan.

\***Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain

\***Scale:** The Masterplan site

\***Temporary or permanent:** Permanent

\***Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:** There are no recommendations at this stage, however upon implementation; establishment of a monitoring framework is required.

**Objective 17 - Reduce flood risk to people, property and the environment**

The Masterplan acknowledges the importance of this factor and will appropriately consider it during the delivery of the Plan.

\***Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain

\***Scale:** The Masterplan site

\***Temporary or permanent:** Permanent

\***Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:** There are no recommendations at this stage, however upon implementation; establishment of a monitoring framework is required.

**Objective 18 - Promote sustainable use of energy efficient resources (PPS22)**

The Masterplan acknowledges the importance of this factor and will appropriately consider it during the delivery of the Plan.

\***Likelihood/Certainty:** Certain

\***Scale:** The Masterplan site

\***Temporary or permanent:** Permanent

\***Timing:** Short, medium and long term effects are evident.

**Recommendation:** There are no recommendations at this stage, however upon implementation; establishment of a monitoring framework is required.

**10.2 Conclusions:**

The Masterplan performed well in terms of sustainability criteria and the plans objectives, including enhancing Wickford's image and identity, improving access and movement within the area, improving the public realm by creating meeting points and

public spaces. The Masterplan will also create new development opportunities through the introduction of new facilities and services, aimed at enhancing the town character and local environment.

It also acknowledges the importance of the efficient use of natural resources and sustainable construction. However, while the Masterplan acknowledges these issues, due to the strategic nature of the document, care must be taken to ensure that the importance of water and energy conservation, flood risk and sustainable construction as a whole are not lost at the implementation stage. Equally the plan did raise additional issues which were highlighted through this SA process. These included the need to place greater consideration on protecting and enhancing biodiversity within the Masterplan, through the incorporation of green spaces/mitigation measures and corridors between them to accommodate and enhance existing biodiversity within the Town centre. Furthermore the SA process has highlighted the need to link Masterplan proposals in relation to permeability and specifically make the link to footpaths and cycle routes in the town centre with the surrounding suburbs and countryside beyond. The purpose being, to promote sustainable transport, improved accessibility, recreational opportunities and wider quality of life benefits for the area.

The Masterplan needs to take into consideration the impact of development on the historic environment. Ensuring the protection of the historic features/deposits is an important statutory requirement, due to little excavation work being undertaken in the town centre in recent times, this would warrant further investigation and reference within the Masterplan

## Production Stage

### 11.0 Cumulative, Synergistic and Secondary Effects and their causes

When determining the significant effects of a policy or plan ODPM guidance recommends consideration being made to potential cumulative, secondary and synergistic effects of the Masterplan. The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects should also be considered. The key receptors of potential positive cumulative effects in relation to the Masterplan were local residents as well as workers and residents from elsewhere that frequent the Wickford area. Table 7 sets out the cumulative, synergistic and secondary effects and their causes identified.

#### 11.0 i) Summary:

The cumulative effects were considered, and only positive effects were highlighted.

**Table 7 Cumulative, Synergistic and Secondary Effects and their Causes**

Cumulative Effects	Affected Receptor	Causes
<b>Negative Effects</b>		
N/A		
<b>Positive Effects</b>		
Reduction in fear of crime	Wickford town centre, workers and residents from neighbouring areas	Re-utilisation of vacant and underused buildings will enhance the reducing public pathologies such as graffiti. The fear of crime will be reduced due to improved lighting and increased development of areas and increased pedestrian permeability in and around the high street improving natural surveillance, as will residential abodes developed above shops.
Social inclusion	Wickford town centre, workers and residents from neighbouring areas	By co-locating services (Incorporating mixed developments), increasing residential abodes in the town centre and developing public transport, this will ultimately encourage social inclusion.
Sustainable urban development	Wickford town centre	The development of affordable new housing is an example of urban sustainable development. As is the encouraged development of vacant and under used buildings.
Reduced traffic	Wickford town centre, workers and residents from neighbouring areas	The incorporation of a traffic management scheme will calm traffic, as will the allocation of pedestrian dominance within the town centre itself.
Increased accessibility	Wickford town centre, workers and	Improving integration of Station facilities both in terms of improved public transport and cycle

	residents from neighbouring areas	facilities, increasing pedestrian permeability and reducing the dominance of the car, will increase accessibility both within the town centre and will improve links with neighbouring towns.
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## **Adoption and Monitoring**

### **12.0 Implementation and Monitoring**

Monitoring the significant sustainability effects of implementing the Masterplan is an important ongoing element of the sustainability appraisal process. Given the inherent long-term nature of sustainability and strategic planning, it is crucial to monitor the implementation and performance of the Masterplan throughout its duration to ensure its long term conformity to sustainability. Where the Masterplan is found not to be performing well, the monitoring framework provides the platform to adjust policy to achieve the desired outcome.

Outcomes from the various stages of SA process provide the basis on which the monitoring framework has been established. The type of data requiring monitoring is identified through the following SA stages:

- Significant sustainability issues,
- Assessment process,
- Consultation
- Baseline data.

Equally, the significant short, medium and long term effects and suggested mitigation measures arising from the appraisal process also provides an important basis for shaping the monitoring framework.

Taking into consideration the issues highlighted in the stages of SA set out above, Table 8 on the following page illustrates areas requiring monitoring. It also includes relevant information sources, and identifies the threshold at which remedial action should be triggered. Furthermore, the table contains proposed mitigation measures the Masterplan could take to counter-act the subsequent effects of potential trends.

**Table 8. Documenting the Monitoring Data**

<b>What needs to be monitored (effect)?</b>	<b>What sort of information is required (indicator)?</b>	<b>Source/s of information</b>	<b>Key Trends</b>	<b>What remedial action should be taken?</b>	<b>When should remedial action be considered?</b>
Population	Ensure Population composition remains comparable with Basildon, England & Wales using 2001 baseline statistics.	ONS (See Table 3 Appendix 3)	Predominantly old & ageing population, with percentages greater than comparators in higher age categories and lower in younger age categories. Average population density greater than Basildon and greater than average for England & Wales, which reflects commuting populous of the town.	Promote social inclusion & ensure that the percentage population composition of Wickford reflects that of Basildon / England & Wales.	If significant differences in the population make-up occur.
Residential density	Ensure that the population density of the 3 ward areas remain comparable with the 2001 census, ONS.	ONS, see table 4 appendix 3.	Wickford residential density is 3 times greater than Basildon and 5 times greater than the average for England.	All new housing to be high density	when Wickford's housing density increases considerably beyond existing figures.
Income Deprivation	Ensure that Employment & Income Scores remain comparable with	IMD04 L-SAOs (See Table 6 Appendix 3)	Wickford's score for income averages is over 60%, where the best favours a score of 100%	Encourage employment education opportunities	If education and training services fail to meet the

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	England using baseline data from 2004.			and skills.	requirements of the resident population.
Crime Data	Recorded Crime Levels, as compared with Basildon District using baseline figures from 2002-2004 data	Basildon District Council (see Graph 2 Appendix 3)	Wickford has favourable levels of recorded crime, with a significant drop in figures between 02/03 and 03/04	Wickford has the lowest level of recorded crime in the borough, however action to reduce fear of crime and design out crime (vandalism, car crime & burglary) could be taken.	If crime and fear of crime fail to decrease year on year
Health	Ensure Health Statistics, as compared with Basildon, England and Wales using baseline figures from 2001 data	ONS (See Table 8 Appendix 3)	Wickford has a higher percentage of people who consider themselves to be in good health	Improve access to health facilities and services.	If health services fail to sustain the requirements of the resident population.
Education	Ensure Qualification Levels remain comparable with Basildon, England and	ONS from Dataset Qualifications UV24 (See	Comparable with Basildon, England & Wales	Ensure that education and training continues to	If education and training services fail to sustain the

<b>What needs to be monitored (effect)?</b>	<b>What sort of information is required (indicator)?</b>	<b>Source/s of information</b>	<b>Key Trends</b>	<b>What remedial action should be taken?</b>	<b>When should remedial action be considered?</b>
	Wales using baseline figures from 2001 data	Table 9 Appendix 3)		reflect the national average through annual LEA reviews.	requirements of the resident population.
Floor space	Ensure Commercial and Industrial Floor space and Rateable Value Statistics; remain comparable with Basildon, England and Wales using baseline figures of 2004 data.	ODPM (See table 11 Appendix 3) It should be noted that this information is based on provisional data 2003, pending data based on new geographic units known as Super Output Areas (SOAs).	Wickford centre has one of the lowest amounts of office floor space when compared with competing local centres.	Increase the availability of office floor space	When commercial floor space fails to provide adequate employment opportunities to sustain the residential population.
Employment	Ensure Economic Activity remains comparable with Basildon, England and Wales using baseline	ONS (See Table 12 Appendix 3).	Wickford has a relatively low percentage of unemployment compared to Basildon, and England & Wales,	Promote and facilitate employment opportunities.	If employment opportunities fail to increase.

<b>What needs to be monitored (effect)?</b>	<b>What sort of information is required (indicator)?</b>	<b>Source/s of information</b>	<b>Key Trends</b>	<b>What remedial action should be taken?</b>	<b>When should remedial action be considered?</b>
	data.		and has a strong concentration of professional & skilled workers		
Air Quality	Roads predicted to exceed AQS Annual average PM10 & NO2 Objectives (based on 1997 met).	Proviser (See Table 14 Appendix 3).	A132 is a poor air quality near exceedence site for emissions of PM10 & NO2.	Establish a transport management plan to improve air quality.	If air quality fails to improve year on year.
Traffic Flows	Traffic Flows & Traffic Growth within Wickford – is reduced from 2004 baseline data.	Essex Traffic Monitoring Report 2004 (see Appendix 15 page 3)	Considerable traffic problems during peak times. Traffic growth has increased slightly.	Increase the provision of public transport and cycling facilities to encourage use of sustainable modes of transportation / decrease personal car usage. Further enhance the traffic management scheme.	When there isn't a reduction in private car use, year on year.
Site Permeability	Vehicular and pedestrian permeability	DTZ (See figure 2	Dominated by vehicular access and poorly linked	Increase the provision of	When pedestrian

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	into town centre using DTZ information as baseline levels.	Appendix3)	for pedestrians / cyclists. Poor linkages with surrounding neighbourhoods.	public transport and cycling facilities to encourage use of sustainable modes of transportation and encourage residents from surrounding neighbourhoods into town centre.	flows fail to increase year on year.
Biodiversity	MGB boundary; register of Tree Preservation Orders	See appendix 3 see biodiversity, flora and fauna section.	The area surrounding the Masterplan is MGB. There are currently no tree preservation orders within the Masterplan site.	Improve biodiversity habitats and green linkages within the built environment	When there is a considerable reduction in biodiversity.

<b>What needs to be monitored (effect)?</b>	<b>What sort of information is required (indicator)?</b>	<b>Source/s of information</b>	<b>Key Trends</b>	<b>What remedial action should be taken?</b>	<b>When should remedial action be considered?</b>
Cultural Heritage	Overall assessment on the impact of development on the historic environmental assets: Evaluate and record any surviving any archaeological deposits within the Plan Area.	English Heritage and Essex County Council (Historic environment management)	Little excavation work has been undertaken in the centre of Wickford as much of the past development occurred in the 1960's and 70's. The Historic Environment Record shows the area bisected by 2 Roman Roads and a number of finds spots of Roman and Late Iron Age deposits. Areas which do not have basements will require evaluation followed by excavation if deposits are identified.	Assessments, evaluation and excavation of archaeological and historic assets.	Prior to development.
Water quality	Water quality of the River Crouch	Environment Agency	In compliance.	Incorporate pollution control methods.	If water quality deteriorates year on year.

<b>What needs to be monitored (effect)?</b>	<b>What sort of information is required (indicator)?</b>	<b>Source/s of information</b>	<b>Key Trends</b>	<b>What remedial action should be taken?</b>	<b>When should remedial action be considered?</b>
Water consumption	Water consumption within Wickford Town centre	Essex and Suffolk water company	Current unsustainable water consumption	Reduce leakages, encourage water efficient devices within development. Aim to reduce water use by 25% from current levels.	When there is no reduction in consumption levels or there is an increase in levels using baseline data as a benchmark.
Flood Management	Flood risk to properties	Flood risk - Environment Agency	Wickford is currently under threat from flooding. There are currently no flood defences within Wickford.	Incorporate flood defence measures	When flooding occurs within development site
Energy consumption	Number of energy efficient developments at application stage.	Energy saving trust	Current unsustainable water consumption	Aim to increase use of renewable resources, in line with Kyoto Protocol	When there is no decline in energy consumption levels using baseline data as a target.

Table 9 below, develops this framework further by establishing both the responsibility and frequency for monitoring under the “what needs to be monitored” column in the preceding table. Table 9 also establishes the format that the data should be presented in, its reliability, issues and constraints surrounding its collection. This is an important consideration in order to ensure monitoring is undertaken on all significant aspects identified by the sustainability appraisal process. Where issues and uncertainties are identified on any particular data source, it is important to identify additional sources that would suffice as a performance indicator.

**Table 9. Managing the Monitoring Process**

<b>Monitoring activity to be undertaken</b>	<b>Who is responsible for undertaking the monitoring?</b>	<b>When should it be carried out (dates and frequency)?</b>	<b>How should the results be presented/appropriate format?</b>	<b>Status/problems encountered</b>
Population	Basildon District Council	10 years	Graph and explanation	Statutory Government process/infrequency in production
Residential population	Basildon District Council	10 years	Graph and explanation	Statutory Government process/infrequency in production
Income Deprivation	Basildon District Council	4 years	Table and explanation	Statutory Government process/infrequency in production
Crime Data	Basildon District Council	annually	Table and explanation	Statutory Government process/infrequency in production
Health	Basildon District Council	4 years	Table and explanation	Statutory Government process/infrequency in production
Education	Basildon District Council	4 years	Table and explanation	Statutory Government process/infrequency in production
Floor Space	Basildon District Council	annually	Table and explanation	Statutory Government process/infrequency in production
Employment	Basildon District	annually	Graph and explanation	Statutory Government

<b>Monitoring activity to be undertaken</b>	<b>Who is responsible for undertaking the monitoring?</b>	<b>When should it be carried out (dates and frequency)?</b>	<b>How should the results be presented/appropriate format?</b>	<b>Status/problems encountered</b>
	Council			process/infrequency in production
Cultural Heritage	Essex County Council	Prior to development	Explanation and maps	Compulsory requirement of local authorities/
Air Quality	Basildon District Council	annually	Table, Map and explanation	Statutory Government process/
Traffic Flows	Basildon District Council	2 years	Table and explanation	Statutory Government process/infrequency in production
Site Permeability	Basildon District Council	Prior to development/ annually	Town Centre map and explanation	Non statutory local authority information/ no requirement to collate data
Biodiversity	Basildon District Council	annually	Text and maps	Statutory Government process
Water quality	Basildon District Council	annually	Text and graph	Compulsory requirement of local authorities
Water consumption	Essex County Council	annually	Graph and text	Compulsory requirement of local authorities
Flood Management	Environment agency	As appropriate (When flooding occurs)	text and diagram	Compulsory requirement of local authorities
Energy consumption	Essex county Council	Prior to development	Graph and text	Compulsory requirement of local authorities
Soil	Basildon District Council	annually	Text	Compulsory requirement of local authorities/ infrequency of production

## **12.1 Trends and Constraints**

While it is important to try and predict the future sustainability impact of the Masterplan it is difficult to achieve for a number of reasons. Firstly it cannot be assumed in all cases that current trends will continue. Secondly, it is not always clear that subsequent changes in trends over time are a direct result of a specific policy or other initiatives/external factors.

Taking all these issues into consideration the data sources identified are deemed suitable, reliable and timely for the purpose for SA performance monitoring of the Wickford Town centre Masterplan. However the monitoring framework is an iterative process and will require constant review in order to reflect the dynamic nature of both the local environment and legislative context which impacts on it.