

The Leisure Quarter Development Brief SPD Sustainability Appraisal Note

The Planning Act 2008 and The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended) removed the requirement for Sustainability Appraisal of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). This is because SPDs do not normally introduce new policies or proposals or modify planning documents which have already been subject to sustainability appraisal.

A Sustainability Appraisal is only required when a SPD is likely to give rise to significant environmental effects which have not been formally assessed in the context of a higher-level planning document such as a Core Strategy or Saved Local Plan.

In the case of 'The Leisure Quarter Development Brief SPD' the relevant higher level planning documents are the Blackpool Local Plan¹ and the Blackpool Core Strategy Preferred Option², both of which have been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. Both Sustainability Appraisal Reports can be viewed in full on the Council's website: www.blackpool.gov.uk

The two key planning policies informing the SPD are:

- **Saved Policy RR1: Visitor Attractions** (Blackpool Local Plan) and
- **Draft Policy R10: Former Central Station / Promenade Strategic Town Centre Site** (Blackpool Core Strategy Preferred Option)

Both policies were included in the respective Sustainability Appraisals³.

Saved Policy RR1 and Draft Policy R10 are set out below, along with the results of their Sustainability Appraisal assessment. Both policies performed well against the Sustainability Appraisal objectives, in particular in relation to economic growth, sustainable tourism, urban renaissance and promoting community cohesion.

The environmental effects of redeveloping the former Central Station site for leisure development have already been assessed and a Sustainability Appraisal for 'The Leisure Quarter Development Brief SPD' is not required.

¹ Adopted June 2006

² Published April 2010

³ When the Sustainability Appraisal for the Blackpool Local Plan was produced in February 2004, the policy for Visitor Attractions was numbered RR2. It was re-numbered RR1 when the Local Plan was adopted.

What the policies say:

RR1 Visitor Attractions

Within the defined Resort Core the Council will permit and encourage proposals for the development, extension or improvement of tourism attractions that draw large numbers of visitors provided that such development meets all of the following criteria:

- (a) The proposal makes a strong positive contribution to the physical and economic regeneration of the Resort Core, targeting, as far as possible, those areas/sites in greatest need of investment and renewal
- (b) The proposal would increase the range and/or quality of facilities available to the visitor and contribute to safeguarding and growing Blackpool's visitor market
- (c) The development proposal and associated activities including trip generation can be accommodated satisfactorily in a manner that relates well to adjoining uses; other existing visitor attractions and facilities, holiday and residential accommodation
- (d) New attractions should reinforce the existing concentrations of such uses rather than leading to a dispersed distribution of attractions.

Visitor Attractions proposed in locations outside the Resort Core will be permitted only:

- (a) Where a site is specifically allocated for this purpose

Or, where it can be demonstrated that all the criteria (b) to (e) below are satisfied:

- (b) The use or uses making up the proposed development could not reasonably be accommodated collectively or individually on a site or sites within the Resort Core
- (c) Good public transport facilities are available or can be provided between the development site, Town Centre and the Resort Core
- (d) The proposed development would be complementary to existing and proposed attractions within the Resort Core and be likely to generate additional trips thereto
- (e) The proposed development would not undermine the pace and extent of regeneration within the Resort Core.

R10 Former Central Station Site / Promenade Strategic Town Centre Site

To radically restructure and redevelop the former Central Station and adjoining Promenade frontage with major new landmark attractions which provide compelling new reasons to visit Blackpool:

- To promote its comprehensive redevelopment with major new themed leisure attractions
- To build on the "Golden Mile" brand by incorporating its strengths, and representing the best of the Promenade leisure attractions in contemporary new buildings
- To physically and functionally integrate the site with the adjoining principal retail core and with the seafront, re-connecting the Town Centre with the Beach
- To provide ancillary development that would complement, add value and support major new attractions including:
 - New hotel development
 - Ancillary retailing
 - Private/public car parking and coach drop-off and pick-up facilities
- To provide high quality public realm, and uplift all aspects of the visitor offer
- To relocate the Police Station and the Courts to Talbot Gateway.

Sustainability Appraisal Blackpool Local Plan

The methodology for undertaking the SA was as follows:

1. Develop appraisal criteria (25 in total)
2. Undertake a baseline assessment of key sustainable development pressures facing Blackpool
3. Scoping how well the Plan aims and objectives support the appraisal criteria
4. Scoping how well the Plan policies support the appraisal criteria
5. Identify key policies for detailed testing
6. Detailed testing of 48 out of the total of 99 policies⁴. Each policy scored against 25 appraisal criteria.

The direction and severity of the effects were described using the assessment notation as follows:

√ = definite positive impact √? = uncertain or slight positive impact 0 = no impact
 ✖ = definite negative impact ✖? = uncertain or slight negative impact
 ? = unknown impact / depends on interpretation of policy

SUMMARY POLICY RR1 Visitor Attractions

Key points from testing exercise	Suggestions for changes to policy
Overall a good policy, but phrasing “good public transport facilities are available or <u>can</u> be provided” is weak.	Replace “good public transport facilities are available or <u>can</u> be provided” with “good public transport facilities are available or <u>will</u> be provided.”

The SA was completed in February 2004 for the revised deposit draft of the Local Plan. No changes were made to Policy RR1 before the Plan was submitted for examination. After the examination, minor amendments were made to Policy RR1 in accordance with the Inspector’s recommendation. These changes were as follows:

- (a) The proposal makes a strong positive contribution to the physical [insert] *and economic* regeneration of the Resort Core, targeting, as far as possible, those areas/sites in greatest need of investment and renewal
 [insert] (d) *New attractions should reinforce the existing concentrations of such uses rather than leading to a dispersed distribution of attractions.*

⁴ Policies were selected based on their importance to sustainable development and the extent to which they had changed since an earlier version of the Plan. Policy RR1: Visitor Attractions was included in this selection.

DETAILED TESTING OF POLICY RR1 Visitor Attractions

CRITERIA	SCORE	COMMENTARY
A More Efficient Use of Resources and Less Waste		
1. Reduce energy consumption, promote renewable energy, and conserve water	○	
2. Reduce land take and protect soil	○	
3. Conserve scarce construction resources	○	
4. Minimise waste arising and maximise reuse, recovery and recycling	○	
Lower Levels of Pollution		
5. Minimise pollution	○	
A More Diverse Natural Environment		
6. Conserve and enhance wildlife habitats and species	○	
7. Sustain character and diversity of the countryside & coast, preserve landscape quality	○	
Managing the Effects of Climate Change		
8. Protect coasts & flood defence and manage the potential effects of climate change	○	
9. Encourage CO ₂ fixing	○	
Basic Needs for Everyone which are Met more Locally		
10. Meet housing need especially of low income households and improve the supply of good quality housing	○	
11. Promote access to essential facilities	○	
12. Promote equity and equality of opportunities	○	
More Opportunities for Work in a Diverse Economy		
13. Strengthen the local economy	√	Should improve tourist economy if there is a demonstrated demand for the facilities proposed.
14. Target economic development towards regenerating disadvantaged areas	○	

CRITERIA	SCORE	COMMENTARY
15. Benefit the most economically disadvantaged	○	
16. Promote a diverse economy	○	
Access to Facilities, Goods, Services and People whilst Protecting the Environment		
17. Reduce the number and length of trips and the need to travel by car	√	Keeps visitor attractions close together, or where there are good public transport facilities to the town centre and resort core.
18. Promote access to the countryside	○	
19. Sustain the character and vitality of urban centres	○	
Less Fear of Crime and Persecution		
20. Promote a sense of safety	○	
Access to Education, Training and Information		
21. Promote access to training and skills for all	○	
People having a Say in Decision Making		
22. Involving local people	○	
People Valuing the Neighbourhoods and Communities in which they Live		
23. Promote community cohesion	√	Keeps visitor attractions concentrated in certain areas, thereby reducing disturbance in residential areas.
24. Improve the quality of the built environment and harmony with surroundings	○	
25. Preserve historic and archaeological resources	○	

Sustainability Appraisal Blackpool Core Strategy Preferred Option

The SA has been carried out in three stages:

1. The process began in October 2007 with the preparation of an SA Scoping Report for the Local Development Framework as a whole. This set out the geographic scope of the SA, established baseline information and identified key sustainability issues and opportunities. The sustainability objectives were developed at this stage (22 in total).
2. Six alternative Strategic Options for the Core Strategy were developed, and set out in the 'Blackpool Core Strategy Issues and Options' report (June 2008). These were appraised against the SA Framework with the aim of informing the selection of a Preferred Option.
3. The Preferred Option for the Core Strategy (April 2010) was assessed against the sustainability objectives. This includes the Spatial Vision, Spatial Objectives, and Policies and Development Proposals (set out under the following headings):
 - The Spatial Strategy: Regeneration Diversification and Growth
 - Town Centre and Resort Renaissance (includes Policy R10)
 - M55 Hub Growth Point
 - Balanced Healthy and Greener Blackpool.

The assessment matrix includes the following aspects:

- Impact - whether the effect of the effect is positive, negative or neutral when assessed against the objectives
- Timescale - the timescale over which the impact is likely to be realised
- Permanency – whether the impact is likely to be permanent or temporary
- Uncertainty – the level of uncertainty of the impact prediction i.e. whether it is low, medium or high
- Spatial Scale - whether the effect is likely to be realised in and around the site, or throughout the rest of the Borough. This is qualified in the commentary box

The direction and severity of the effects were described using the assessment notation as follows:

Major Positive Impact	++	Positive Impact	+	No Impact/Neutral	0
Negative Impact	-	Major Negative Impact	--	Uncertain impact	?
Positive and Negative Impacts	+/-				

The SA was completed in April 2010. No changes were made to Policy R10 before the Core Strategy Preferred Option was published.

POLICY R10 Former Central Station / Promenade Strategic Town Centre Site

Objective	Performance of Policy R10	Temporal scale Permanency Certainty	Geographical extent	Commentary / Mitigation (relating to policies R5-R11 which include strategies and site specific policies in Blackpool Town Centre)
1. To reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	0	Medium and Long-term Temporary Low Certainty	N/A	Blackpool town centre currently experiences crime and disorder associated with high alcohol consumption and anti-social behaviour. Regeneration initiatives may help to improve the quality of the environment and discourage such activity. Diversifying the age and profile of visitors may also reduce problems. However, any initiatives should occur following liaison with the police and licensees to enable a consistent approach to be taken to crime reduction. Principles of designing out crime should be applied to new developments in the town centre and Talbot Gateway.
2. To improve levels of educational attainment and training for all age groups and all sectors of society	0	N/A	N/A	No policies would have an impact upon this SA Objective.
3. To improve physical and mental health for all and reduce health inequalities	0	N/A	N/A	No policies would have an impact upon this SA Objective.
4. To ensure housing provision meets local needs	0	Medium and Long-term Permanent Medium Certainty	Talbot Gateway development	New housing will be provided as part of the Talbot Gateway development, but it is not known to what extent it will meet local needs. The construction of apartments is not supported by Policy G4 as there is already an oversupply of such accommodation in the town, although higher quality developments may meet a niche requirement.

Objective	Performance of Policy R10	Temporal scale Permanency Certainty	Geographical extent	Commentary / Mitigation (relating to policies R5-R11 which include strategies and site specific policies in Blackpool Town Centre)
5. To protect and enhance community spirit and cohesion	0	Medium and Long-term Temporary Low Certainty	Town Centre	Improving the attractiveness of Blackpool town centre for local people is likely to encourage greater community interaction and use of public spaces. Impacts are likely to be relatively small, but will support neighbourhood regeneration referred to in other policies.
6. To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities for all groups	0	Medium and Long-term Permanent Medium Certainty	Town Centre	New retail and leisure services will benefit local people as well as visitors. Basic services are provided in the town centre and are an integral part of new development policies for Talbot Gateway and the Abingdon Street area. Talbot Gateway also provides a highly accessible location for new housing. However, the focus in the town centre itself is likely to remain on higher end developments. Impacts will therefore be relatively small.
7. To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development across the Borough	++	Long-term Temporary High Certainty	Town Centre	The policies prioritise retail and leisure developments in the town centre and recognise that rejuvenating Blackpool's tourist image is vital for initiating wider regeneration across the town. Taken together the various policies seek to disseminate the benefits of a vibrant town centre into its margins and the inner areas beyond.
8. To promote sustainable tourism	++	Medium and Long-term Temporary High Certainty	Town Centre	All the policies in this section support the improvement of Blackpool's offering to visitors. Policies R7, R10 and R11 are directly concerned with tourist infrastructure whilst the others promote retail and other developments that will support the overall strategy. Tourism provides economic benefits, but care should be taken to ensure that these do not come at a cost to the environment or to community relations. However, there is nothing to indicate that this would be the case in relation to Policies R5-R11.

Objective	Performance of Policy R10	Temporal scale Permanency Certainty	Geographical extent	Commentary / Mitigation (relating to policies R5-R11 which include strategies and site specific policies in Blackpool Town Centre)
9. To promote economic inclusion	+	Medium and Long-term Permanent High Certainty	Town Centre	Regeneration initiatives are likely to generate new job opportunities at various skill levels. Inner areas of Blackpool suffer from employment deprivation and are well placed to capitalise on direct and cumulative opportunities. In addition, the policies in this section make provision to improve the fortunes of areas on the periphery of the town centre and to spread the benefits of regeneration. Small businesses are likely to benefit, and employment opportunities are likely to expand.
10. To deliver urban renaissance	++	Medium and Long-term Permanent High Certainty	Town Centre	The town centre policies fully support the aims of urban renaissance and regeneration based upon Blackpool's existing qualities and a strategy for long term prosperity.
11. To develop and market the Borough as a place to live, work and do business	+	Medium and Long-term Permanent High Certainty	Town Centre	The town centre policies fully support the aims of urban renaissance and regeneration based upon Blackpool's existing qualities and a strategy for long term prosperity.
12. To protect and enhance biodiversity	0	N/A	N/A	No policies would have an impact upon this SA Objective.
13. To protect and enhance the Borough's landscape and townscape character and quality	+	Medium and Long-term Permanent High Certainty	Town Centre, especially Talbot Gateway and former Central Station	Taken together, the policies in this section would have a cumulatively very positive effect on Blackpool's townscape, provided that high standards of design are ensured during any new development. Policy R5 should contain some wording to this effect. Presently underused and visually unattractive sites would be redeveloped as part of the Talbot Gateway and former Central Station proposals. Cohesive and sensitive designs should be encouraged which build on existing strengths, such as heritage structures.

Objective	Performance of Policy R10	Temporal scale Permanency Certainty	Geographical extent	Commentary / Mitigation (relating to policies R5-R11 which include strategies and site specific policies in Blackpool Town Centre)
14. To protect and enhance the cultural heritage resource	0	Medium and Long-term Permanent High Certainty	Town Centre	This section recognises the importance of retaining and enhancing Blackpool's built heritage to support regeneration. The Tower, Winter Gardens and St John's Church are identified as important centrepieces within different parts of the town centre. New development - individually or in combination - has the potential to impact on the appearance of the town centre, and therefore on the setting of historic buildings. Policy R11 would help to enhance the setting of notable buildings along the Promenade. Well planned, sensitive designs must be promoted within new development to protect and enhance heritage resources.
15. To protect and enhance the quality of water features and resources	0	N/A	N/A	No policies would have an impact upon this SA Objective.
16. To guard against land contamination and encourage the appropriate re-use of brownfield sites	+	Medium and Long-term Permanent High Certainty	Town Centre, especially Talbot Gateway and former Central Station	Spatial planning for the town centre focuses on comprehensive redevelopment of two key sites – Talbot Gateway and the former Central Station. Retaining retail, administration and leisure functions within the existing town centre represents the most sustainable approach to regeneration. Care should be taken when redeveloping brownfield sites to guard against potential contamination.
17. To limit and adapt to climate change	+/-	Medium and Long-term Temporary / Permanent Low Certainty	Town Centre	Policies in this section promote significant new development in the town centre, which individually or cumulatively may impact upon this SA Objective. Impacts may be positive or negative. However, policies directly addressing climate change issues are provided elsewhere in the Core Strategy, and the document is designed to be read as a whole.

Objective	Performance of Policy R10	Temporal scale Permanency Certainty	Geographical extent	Commentary / Mitigation (relating to policies R5-R11 which include strategies and site specific policies in Blackpool Town Centre)
18. To protect and improve air quality	+/-	Medium and Long-term Temporary / Permanent Low Certainty	Town Centre	Policies in this section promote significant new development in the resort neighbourhoods, which individually or cumulatively may impact upon this SA Objective. Impacts may be positive or negative. However, policies directly addressing road transport, the principal source of poor air quality, are provided elsewhere in the Core Strategy, and the document is designed to be read as a whole.
19. To increase energy efficiency and require use of renewable energy sources	+/-	Medium and Long-term Temporary / Permanent Low Certainty	Town Centre	Policies in this section promote significant new development in the town centre, which individually or cumulatively may impact upon this SA Objective. Impacts may be positive or negative. However, policies directly addressing energy issues are provided elsewhere in the Core Strategy, and the document is designed to be read as a whole.
20. To ensure sustainable use of natural resources	+/-	Medium and Long-term Temporary / Permanent Low Certainty	Town Centre	Policies in this section promote significant new development in the town centre, which individually or cumulatively may impact upon this SA Objective. Impacts may be positive or negative. However, policies directly addressing resource issues are provided elsewhere in the Core Strategy, and the document is designed to be read as a whole.
21. To minimise waste, increase reuse and recycling	0	N/A	N/A	No policies would have an impact upon this SA Objective.
22. To promote the use of more sustainable modes of transport	0	Short, Medium and Long-term Permanent Medium Certainty	Town Centre	The level of regeneration proposed is likely to increase traffic in Blackpool. Policies R4 and S8 address transport management issues and would help to mitigate adverse impacts. The policies aim to improve connectivity across the town centre, thereby encouraging walking and cycling. This sustainability benefit could be further emphasised in the accompanying text. They do not directly address other forms of transport.