



Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy

Assessment of Strategic Options

April 2008

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Appendix D

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Abbreviations

AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
DPD	Development Plan Documents
EA	Environment Agency
EH	English Heritage
HMO	Houses in Multiple Occupation
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
LDD	Local Development Document
LDF	Local Development Framework
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
NE	Natural England
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PPPs	Plans, Policies and Programmes
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage System

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Blackpool Council is currently preparing its Local Development Framework (LDF), which will replace the existing Blackpool Local Plan. As part of this process, a combined Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is being undertaken. The term SA shall be used to refer to the combined SA/SEA for the remainder of this report.

The LDF comprises a suite of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) which outlines its key development goals. When adopted, development control decisions must be made in accordance with the DPDs unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

A Core Strategy is required to be included as a DPD, setting out the general spatial vision and objectives of the LDF for the long-term. This report presents the assessment of the strategic options for the Core Strategy.

An SA Scoping Report was prepared for the LDF as a whole, and released for statutory consultation in November 2007. Part One of the report relates to the LDF as a whole, providing generic scoping information that applies to all Local Development Documents (LDDs), particularly the Core Strategy. Part Two consists of separate chapters providing additional scoping information relevant to individual LDDs.

1.2 Sustainability Appraisal

SA is a process for assessing the social, economic and environmental impacts of a plan and aims to ensure that sustainable development is at the heart of the plan-making process.

It is a legal requirement that the Core Strategy is subject to SA, under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This Act stipulates that the SA must comply with the requirements of the SEA Directive¹ which was transposed directly into UK law through the SEA Regulations².

The aim of the SEA is to *provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes*

¹ Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, June 2001

² S.I. 2004 No. 1633: The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004

with a view to promoting sustainable development (Article 1 of the SEA Directive).

The principle of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and in the future, lies at the heart of sustainable development. SA is an essential tool for ensuring that the principles of sustainable development are inherent throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy and that it broadly complies and contributes to relevant planning guidance. The overarching aim of the process is to ensure better decision making and planning, and it should be initiated at the earliest possible stage of the Core Strategy's preparation.

1.3 SA Guidance

The following guidance documents have been consulted throughout the preparation of this options assessment report:

- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) et al (2005): A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive
- ODPM (2005): Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents

1.4 Purpose of the Core Strategy

The Core Strategy will set out the general spatial vision and objectives of the LDF, and will outline Blackpool Council's strategy for delivering strategic development needs in the next 15 to 20 years. As it will therefore be integral in informing key strategic decisions in relation to planning and the shaping of Blackpool in the future, all other DPDs must conform to it.

The document will be inherent in the delivery of the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy, by setting out its spatial aspects and a long-term spatial vision. It will convey the elements of the community strategy that relate to the development and use of land, and will have a considerable impact upon the environment and the social and economic wellbeing of the local communities.

The Core Strategy will particularly focus on how proposed levels of housing and employment growth will be provided, and how retail, resort and other developments needs may be met in the future.

Blackpool Council aims to implement the Core Strategy in conjunction with the Fylde and Wyre Core Strategies in order to ensure transboundary development needs are addressed, e.g. in relation to employment, housing and transport etc.

1.5 Purpose and Structure of this Assessment of Strategic Options SA Report

This report documents the SA process which has so far comprised the scoping stage and the assessment of the strategic options for the Core Strategy.

Blackpool Council is currently preparing a 'Core Strategy Issues and Options' report (hereinafter referred to as the Issues and Options report), which seeks to determine the most appropriate path for Blackpool's development by exploring the complex relationship between growth and regeneration. It sets out the proposed vision, objectives (goals) and the alternative strategic options for the Core Strategy. The Issues and Options report also comprises more detailed sub-options for each option, which consist of more specific alternative scenarios for future development. These elements have been assessed through the SA.

It is intended that this Assessment of Strategic Options SA Report will be used as a consultation document, issued alongside the Issues and Options report, in order to obtain feedback on the preferred strategic options for the Core Strategy.

The results of this consultation will subsequently be used to inform the further development of the Core Strategy, when a Final SA Report will be prepared. The Final SA Report will document the entire SA process, and will be issued alongside the Draft Final Core Strategy (preferred option) to all statutory consultees and stakeholders for comments.

Table 1-1 outlines the structure of this Assessment of Strategic Options SA Report.

Section of Initial Report	Outline Content
Abbreviations	Abbreviations used in this report.
1: Introduction	Provides background to the SA and the Core Strategy and includes the purpose and the structure of this SA Report.
2: The SA Process	<p>Outlines the key elements of the SA process and the adopted approach to the assessment.</p> <p>Provides a summary of the SA process undertaken to date.</p> <p>Provides details of how to comment upon this SA Report.</p>
3: Assessment Methodology	<p>Explains how the SA Framework was developed.</p> <p>It also presents the matrices used in the assessment and identifies the main limitations of the SA process.</p>
4: Compatibility of the SA Objectives and the Core Strategy Vision and Goals	Provides an assessment of the compatibility of the Core Strategy's Vision and Goals, with the SA Objectives.
5: Assessment of the Core Strategy Strategic Options	Presents the assessment of the Core Strategy strategic options against the SA Objectives. The completed matrices

	to accompany the assessment are presented in Appendix C. Mitigation measures are proposed for the strategic options where relevant, and recommendations are made about which option(s) should be taken forward.
6: Conclusions and Next Steps	Provides a brief summary of the SA process undertaken and the key findings. Summarises the next steps of the SA process.
Appendix A:	SA Objective Compatibility.
Appendix B:	Compatibility of SA Objectives and the Core Strategy's Goals.
Appendix C:	Strategic Options Assessment Matrices.
Appendix D:	Copies of the Scoping Consultation Responses.

Table 1-1 Contents and Structure of the Assessment of Strategic Options SA Report

2 The SA Process

2.1 Approach

By combining the SA and SEA processes, this SA fully considers environmental, social and economic issues and their interactions, thereby ensuring the principles of sustainable development are fully integrated into the development of the Core Strategy.

The aim of the assessment of the strategic options was to determine the most sustainable option(s), in order to make recommendations to the plan-makers and to ultimately improve the sustainability of any future development.

Although there are formalised approaches for both SA and SEA, only the latter has a legal obligation to perform certain activities as stipulated in the SEA Directive. These legal obligations have been adhered to throughout the SA process by following a series of prescribed stages. The activities that must be undertaken to ensure compliance with the SEA Directive are highlighted in boxes throughout this report. It is the intention that the SA process is iterative. Figure 2-1 overleaf presents the stages in the SA processes alongside the parallel stages of the DPD preparation process.

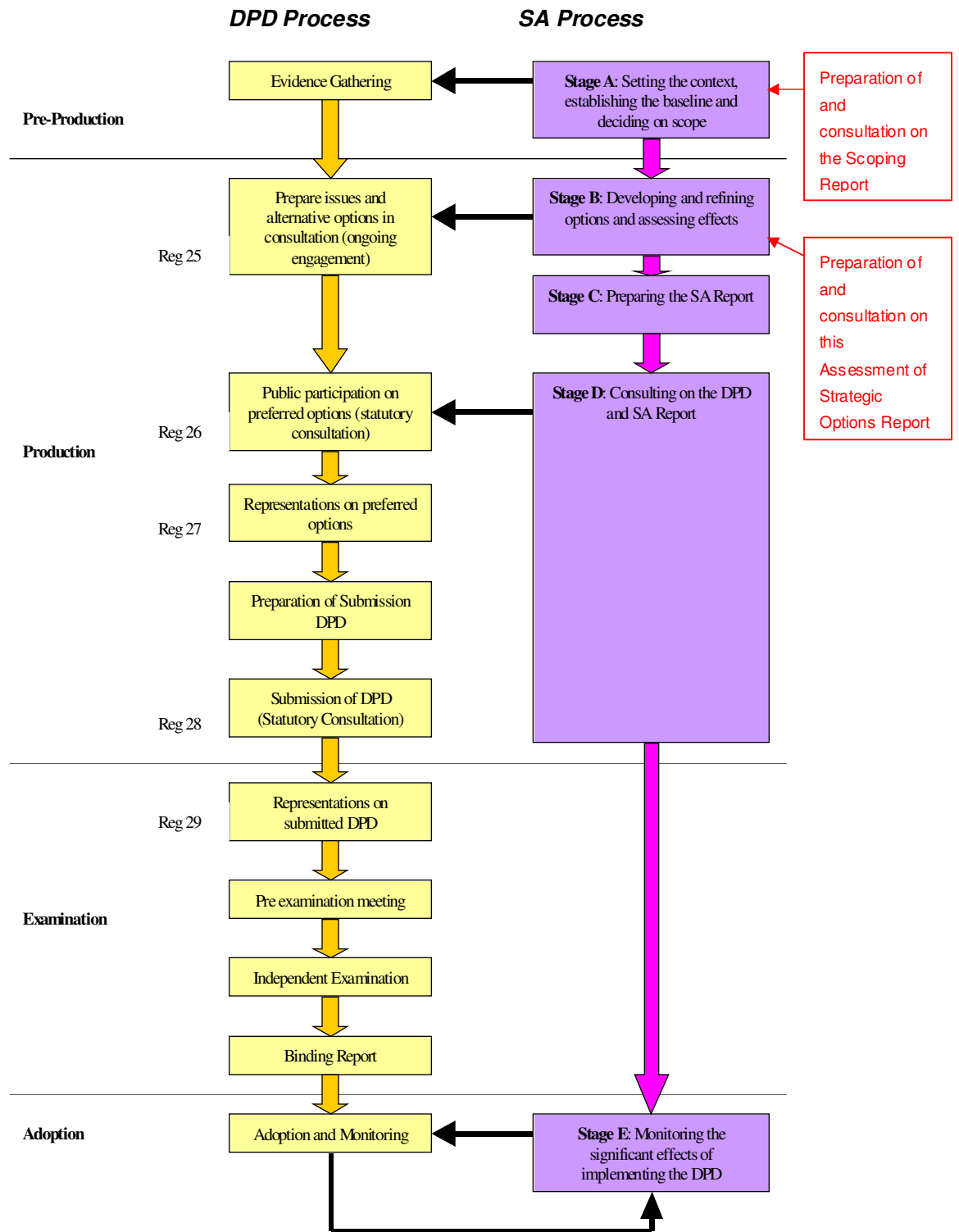


Figure 2-1 The DPD Preparation and SA Processes

2.2 SA Progress to Date

Table 2-1 summarises the SA process and the work undertaken to date.

Element of SA	Input
Scoping (Stage A)	<p>The SA process commenced in October 2007, with the preparation of the Scoping Report. Part One of the Scoping Report related generically to all LDDs, including the Core Strategy. This contained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A characterisation of the environmental, social and economic baseline within Blackpool as a whole. ▪ A review of relevant plans, programmes and policies (PPPs) that could influence the SA and the development of the Core Strategy. ▪ The identification of key sustainability issues and opportunities. ▪ The development of the SA Framework against which the elements of the Core Strategy have been assessed.
Scoping Consultation (Stage A)	<p>The Scoping Report was issued for public consultation in November 2007, for the statutory five week consultation period. The aim of this was to obtain comment and feedback upon the scope and level of detail of the SA.</p> <p>The Scoping Report was issued to the three statutory consultees (the Environment Agency (EA), Natural England (NE) and English Heritage (EH)) and other interested parties. Responses from all were received prior to this Assessment of Strategic Options SA Report being prepared.</p> <p>Hyder Consulting (UK) Limited subsequently incorporated responses into this Report where considered appropriate. Refer to Appendix D for copies of the scoping consultation responses from the statutory consultees.</p>
SA Framework (part of Stage A)	<p>The SA Framework was developed as part of the Scoping Report, and acts as the main tool for assessing the sustainability of the Core Strategy. It contains a series of 22 SA Objectives and associated sub-objectives, which address the full cross-section of environmental, economic and social sustainability issues within Blackpool.</p> <p>The SA Objectives and sub-objectives are presented in Section 3.3.</p>
Assessment of Strategic options (Stage B)	<p>This report is now being issued for consultation alongside the Core Strategy Issues and Options report.</p> <p>The aim of this consultation is to involve key stakeholders in the determination of the preferred option for the Core Strategy.</p>

Table 2-1 SA Progress to Date

2.3 Consultation and Involvement

This Assessment of Strategic Options SA Report has been issued for consultation alongside Blackpool's Core Strategy Issues and Options report. Please address any consultation responses to 'Development Plans and Projects Division' at the address below:

Blackpool Council
Development Plans and Projects
Planning Department
Tourism and Regeneration
PO Box 17
Corporation Street
Blackpool
FY1 1LZ

Copies of the documents are also available for public inspection free of charge during normal opening times at the following locations: Progress House Office Reception, Clifton Road, Blackpool, and the following libraries: Anchorsholme Library, Luton Road; Bispham Library, Devonshire Road; Boundary Library, City Learning Centre, Bathurst Ave, Grange Park; Central Library, Queen St, Blackpool; Layton Library, Talbot Road; Mereside Library, 6 Langdale Road; Palatine Library, St.Annes Road; Revoe Library, 1 Revoe Street. They are also available on the Council's website at www.blackpool.gov.uk.

Your comments are invited on the SA. Please send them to the above address, marked for the attention of 'Development Plans and Projects Division'.

3 Assessment Methodology

3.1 Requirements of the SEA Directive

Box 1 identifies the activities which are required to comply with the SEA Directive as part of the assessment process.

In the Environmental Report, "the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme ... and reasonable alternatives ... are [to be] identified, described and evaluated" (Article 5.1). The Environmental Report should include information that may "reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme [and] its stage in the decision-making process" (Article 5.2).

Information to be provided in the Environmental Report includes:

- *"the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects" (Annex I (f) and footnote)*
- *"an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with" (Annex I (h))*
- *"the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme..." (Annex I (g))*

Box 1 SEA Directive Requirements Applicable to Assessment of Effects and Mitigation

3.2 Scope of the Core Strategy

The following elements of the Core Strategy have been assessed so far through the SA process:

- The Core Strategy spatial vision
- The Core Strategy and Sustainable Community Strategy shared goals (objectives)
- The six strategic options for the Core Strategy

3.3 SA Framework

The SA Framework underpins the assessment methodology. A suite of 22 SA Objectives has been developed against which the sustainability performance of the Core Strategy elements has been assessed. These were developed at the Scoping stage and are considered to be appropriate to all elements of the LDF.

The methodology used to develop the SA Objectives was in accordance with the ODPM guidance. They have been devised using the SEA Directive topics and informed by the issues and opportunities identified

through the baseline data collection. This was supplemented with direction from the key international, national, regional and local planning documents reviewed at the Scoping stage.

The SA Objectives are intended to be overarching and inspirational. A series of sub-objectives have been developed in order to support each objective, to ensure only relevant issues to Blackpool are considered during the assessment. These sub-objectives has been used to assist the assessment team during consideration of the likely impacts on the achievement of an SA Objective.

The 22 SA Objectives and associated sub-objectives are indicated in Table 3-1 below.

SA Objective		Sub-Objectives
1	To reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	<i>To reduce levels of crime</i>
		<i>To reduce the fear of crime</i>
		<i>To reduce alcohol and drug misuse</i>
		<i>To reduce levels of anti-social behaviour</i>
		<i>To encourage safety by design</i>
2	To improve levels of educational attainment and training for all age groups and all sectors of society	<i>To improve access to lifelong learning opportunities and other adult education</i>
		<i>To increase levels of participation and attainment in education for all members of society</i>
		<i>To increase the percentage of young people who progress into further and higher education and work-based training</i>
3	To improve physical and mental health for all and reduce health inequalities	<i>To improve access to health and social care services</i>
		<i>To reduce health inequalities amongst different groups in the community</i>
		<i>To promote healthy lifestyles</i>
		<i>To increase/improve access to greenspace</i>
4	To ensure housing provision meets local needs	<i>To reduce the number of unfit homes</i>
		<i>To reduce multi-occupancy and improve the quality of rented accommodation</i>
		<i>To increase the availability of decent quality affordable housing for all</i>
		<i>To reduce levels of homelessness</i>
5	To protect and enhance community spirit and cohesion	<i>To improve relations between all social groups</i>
		<i>To develop opportunities for community involvement</i>
6	To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities for all groups	<i>To improve access to cultural and recreational facilities</i>
		<i>To maintain and improve access to essential services and facilities</i>

SA Objective		Sub-Objectives
7	To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development across the Borough	<i>To increase levels of employment and to increase the range of local employment opportunities</i>
		<i>To encourage economic growth</i>
		<i>To encourage new business formation</i>
		<i>To strengthen Blackpool as a Sub-Regional Centre</i>
8	To promote sustainable tourism	<i>To encourage sustainable tourism</i>
		<i>To support the preservation and /or development of high quality built and natural environments within the Borough</i>
		<i>To modernise the tourism industry</i>
9	To promote economic inclusion	<i>To reduce levels of unemployment in areas most at need</i>
		<i>Improve household earnings</i>
10	To deliver urban renaissance	<i>Improve vitality and vibrancy of town centres</i>
		<i>To improve access to public transport in urban areas</i>
11	To develop and market the Borough as a place to live, work and do business	<i>To support the preservation and or development of high quality built and natural environments within the Borough</i>
		<i>To promote the area as a destination for short and long term visitors and new residents</i>
		<i>To enhance the Borough's image as an attractive place to do business</i>
12	To protect and enhance biodiversity	<i>To protect and enhance designated sites of nature conservation importance</i>
		<i>To protect and enhance wildlife especially rare and endangered species</i>
		<i>To protect and enhance habitats and wildlife corridors</i>
		<i>To provide opportunities for people to access wildlife and open green spaces</i>
13	To protect and enhance the Borough's landscape and townscape character and quality	<i>To protect and enhance landscape character and quality</i>
		<i>To protect and enhance townscape character and quality</i>
		<i>To promote sensitive design in development</i>
14	To protect and enhance the cultural heritage resource	<i>To protect and enhance historic buildings and sites</i>
		<i>To protect and enhance historic landscape/townscape value</i>
15	To protect and enhance the quality of water features and resources	<i>To protect and enhance surface water quality</i>
		<i>To protect and enhance groundwater quality</i>
		<i>To protect and enhance coastal waters</i>
16	To guard against land contamination and encourage	<i>To reduce the amount of derelict, contaminated, and vacant land</i>

SA Objective		Sub-Objectives
	the appropriate re-use of Brownfield sites	<i>To encourage development of Brownfield land where appropriate</i> <i>Maintain and enhance soil quality</i>
17	To limit and adapt to climate change	<i>To reduce or manage flooding</i> <i>To reduce greenhouse gas emissions</i> <i>To encourage the inclusion of SuDs in new development</i>
18	To protect and improve air quality	<i>To protect and improve local air quality</i>
19	To increase energy efficiency and require the use of renewable energy sources	<i>To increase energy efficiency</i> <i>To increase the use of renewable energy</i> <i>To reduced the use of energy</i>
20	To ensure sustainable use of natural resources	<i>To reduce the demand for raw materials</i> <i>To promote the use of recycled and secondary materials in construction</i>
21	To minimise waste, increase re-use and recycling	<i>To increase the proportion of waste recycling and re-use</i> <i>To reduce the production of waste</i> <i>To reduce the proportion of waste landfilled</i>
22	To promote the use of more sustainable modes of transport	<i>To reduce the use of private car</i> <i>To encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport</i> <i>Encourage the uptake of ICT</i>

Table 3-1 SA Objectives and Sub-Objectives for the Core Strategy

3.4 Assessment of the Spatial Vision

Good practice guidance recommends that the key aims and principles of the plan should be assessed against the SA Objectives, in order to test their compatibility and to determine whether they accord with broad sustainability principles.

The spatial vision has been reviewed against the SA Objectives, and a summary of the key strengths, weaknesses and recommendations have been identified (as presented in Section 4.2). Recommendations are made to offset or alleviate any adverse impacts that have been predicted, or to enhance any opportunities that have been identified.

3.5 Assessment of Goals

Good practice guidance also recommends that the goals of a plan should be assessed against the SA Objectives.

The assessment of the goals against the SA Objectives has been undertaken using a matrix based approach. Recommendations to offset or alleviate any potential conflicts are provided in Section 4.3, and the full compatibility assessment is presented in Appendix B.

3.6 Assessment of the Spatial Options

The strategic options for the core strategy have also been assessed against the SA Objectives. This has enabled the identification of the key strengths and weaknesses of each option, the potential areas for improvement, and also determination of the most sustainable options. Recommendations are made to offset or alleviate any adverse impacts that have been predicted, or to enhance any opportunities that have been identified.

The matrix used for the options assessment was designed to facilitate easy comparison between the options. An extract of this matrix is presented in Table 3-2. The assessment notations used in the assessment, together with their definition (i.e. how a positive score was assigned) are presented in Table 3-3. When undertaking the assessment, the symbols assigned in the matrix were justified in the commentary box along with any uncertainties.

The results of the assessment of the strategic options for the Core Strategy are presented in Appendix C. Assumptions made for the assessment are also presented.

SEA Objectives <i>Sub-Objectives</i>	Option 1: Urban Concentration / Intensification – Seeks to target growth as far as possible to the existing urban area, and maximise opportunities to re-utilise any vacant or underused land.		Option 2: Inner Area Regeneration – Looks to target more growth to Central Blackpool to assist the regeneration of the town centre and resort core and inner neighbourhoods.	
	Performance (spatially)	Commentary	Performance (spatially)	Commentary
<p>To reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime</p> <p><i>To reduce levels of crime</i></p> <p><i>To reduce the fear of crime</i></p> <p><i>To reduce alcohol and drug misuse</i></p> <p><i>To reduce levels of anti-social behaviour</i></p> <p><i>To encourage safety by design</i></p>	+	<p>Crime rates within Blackpool have risen steadily over recent years, and the urban areas currently experience higher than average rates of violent crime and criminal damage which is often alcohol related.</p> <p>Regenerative benefits offered by new development could have a positive impact on crime in the long term, in the target and wider areas, through safety by design measures and an improved sense of community pride and ownership.</p> <p>Crime deprivation is highest in the inner wards, not all of which would be directly benefited by this option, although above average crime deprivation remains an issue across the wider urban area.</p>	+	<p>The inner wards, particularly Waterloo, Bloomfield, Talbot and Claremont, experience high levels of crime deprivation.</p> <p>Although crime is influenced by a suite of factors, regeneration of the environment within the inner areas is likely to contribute to a reduction in crime in the long term, through safety by design measures and an improved sense of community pride and ownership. Knock-on benefits within wider areas may be realised.</p>

Table 3-2 Options Assessment Matrix Extract

Impact	Description	Symbol
Major Positive Impact	The option majorly contributes to the achievement of the SA Objective.	++
Positive Impact	The option contributes partially to the achievement of the SA Objective but not completely.	+
No Impact/ Neutral	There is no clear relationship between the option and/or the achievement of the SA Objective or the relationship is negligible.	0
Negative Impact	The option partially detracts from the achievement of some elements of the SA Objective.	-
Major Negative Impact	The option majorly detracts from the achievement of the SA Objective.	--
Uncertain impact – more information required	It is not possible to determine the nature of the impact as there may be too many external factors that would influence the appraisal or the impact may depend heavily upon implementation at the local level.	?

Impact	Description	Symbol
Positive and Negative Impacts	The option has a combination of both positive and negative contributions to the achievement of the SA Objective.	+/-

Table 3-3 Options Assessment Notation

4 Compatibility of the SA Objectives and the Core Strategy Vision and Goals

4.1 Introduction

The spatial vision and the goals of the Core Strategy have been reviewed to determine their compatibility with the SA Framework. The results of this assessment are presented in the following sections.

4.2 Spatial Vision

The wider spatial vision to be delivered by the Core Strategy is as follows:

“Blackpool will be the civic, cultural, retail and educational centre of the Fylde Coast, serving 350,000 local residents. It will be recognised as a unique, year-round 21st century visitor experience, offering escapism and fun with high quality attractions, and state of the art conferencing facilities, accommodation and hospitality.

The New Blackpool will attract higher value visitors, businesses and residents, creating the market and conditions for a wider and improved housing offer, and for higher value employment and growth. It will have a stable and growing population, offering a full range of educational provision, giving its people the skills and aspirations to succeed.

New homes and jobs will be provided in sustainable locations to meet the community’s needs and support regeneration. Neighbourhoods will be enhanced in appearance with good access to shopping, health, recreation, open space and other facilities to meet community needs. Inner Blackpool will be transformed into a place offering a mix of aspirational and affordable housing within mixed, attractive neighbourhoods, with access to quality local services.

Higher quality developments will promote pride in the town and provide focus within a visually attractive, safe urban environment. An integrated transport system will provide safe, healthy and easy access across Blackpool. Areas of urban or natural quality throughout the New Blackpool will be conserved and enhanced.”

4.2.1 Sustainability comments

The vision to become the civic, cultural, retail and educational centre of the Fylde Coast seeks to ensure Blackpool is recognised as a unique, year round 21st century visitor experience. These aims would positively contribute to the sustainability objectives relating to enhanced community spirit and cohesion, the delivery of urban renaissance, the development of Blackpool as a place to live, work and do business, and the promotion of sustainable tourism.

By seeking to create wider and improved housing offer, particularly including affordable housing, together with higher value employment and growth, the vision would ensure positive contribution to social and economic SA Objectives. The vision aims to provide new homes and employment development in sustainable locations in order to meet the requirements of the local community. This is important in order to curb the current out-migration trends of younger generations.

The vision aims to deliver a range of educational provisions, thereby helping to increase skills and aspirations. It also directly seeks to ensure that the enhancement of neighbourhoods considers access to basic services and open space, which can have knock-on benefits upon health and wellbeing.

By encouraging higher quality developments within the town, thereby contributing to a visually attractive and safe urban environment, the vision meets the sustainability objectives relating to urban renaissance and a reduction in crime. Environmental SA Objectives relating to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, the townscape / landscape and cultural heritage features are addressed through the vision's aim to conserve and enhance areas of urban and natural quality.

The vision aims to create an integrated transport system across Blackpool and therefore positively contributes to the sustainability objectives relating to air quality and the promotion of sustainable transport.

4.2.2 Recommendations

It is recommended that the vision should be strengthened in terms of the protection of open space and biodiversity features. As Blackpool is densely urban in nature, it is essential that open space and areas of high quality natural environment are protected and where possible enhanced.

It may be beneficial for the vision to refer to the necessity to ensure adaptation to the effects of climate change, particularly in relation to flooding due to its location along the coastline. Long-term threats such as climate change could generate significant consequences upon Blackpool's environment and its communities.

4.3 The Goals

Good practice guidance recommends that the objectives of the plan should be assessed for their compatibility with the SA Objectives. The aim of this is to test whether or not they accord with sustainability principles. The full compatibility assessment is presented in Appendix C.

The Core Strategy and the Draft Sustainable Community Strategy share the same goals. Together their aim is *'to restore Blackpool as the vibrant, prosperous sub-regional centre of the Fylde Coast, and develop a unique*

21st century resort offer and a more sustainable and diversified economy for the benefit of all its residents and visitors’.

The goals are to:

- 1 Improve prosperity for our population
- 2 Develop a safe, clean and pleasant place
- 3 Improve skills levels and educational attainment
- 4 Improve the health and well-being of the population

4.3.1 Compatibility Results

Although no significant conflicts were identified through the compatibility assessment between the SA Objectives and the proposed Core Strategy goals, some areas of uncertainty were noted, for example if it was unknown how the goals might be translated into policy and therefore how they could potentially impact upon the SA Objectives. Table 4-1 summarises this compatibility assessment.

Core Strategy Goal	Potential Areas of Uncertainty or Conflict with SA Objective
1 Improve prosperity for our population	SA Objectives 12 to 22 – Improved prosperity of the population could generate adverse impacts up the SA Objectives relating to the environment, by potentially neglecting to consider the built and natural environment in achieving success and wealth.

Table 4-1 Proposed Core Strategy Goals and SA Objective Compatibility Results

4.3.2 Recommendations

The identification of the potential for conflicts does not necessarily mean that objectives need to be changed, rather these tensions should be taken into consideration at later stages in the SA process. The following recommendations are therefore proposed for the Core Strategy goals.

The proposed Core Strategy goals together positively contribute to all the SA Objectives in some way. However they do not directly relate to housing, the economy or the environment, which are important sustainability issues. It is therefore recommended that the goals are either strengthened to directly address these issues, or separate goals are added.

5 Assessment of the Core Strategy Strategic Options

5.1 Requirements of the SEA Directive

The activities stipulated in the SEA Directive, relevant to the consideration and assessment of alternatives, are outlined in Box 2.

The Environment Report should consider "reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme" and give "an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with" (Article 5.1 and Annex I(h))

Box 2 SEA Directive Requirements Applicable to Consideration and Assessment of Alternatives

5.2 Key Baseline Issues

The key issues and opportunities identified through the SA process so far are summarised below. This list will be refined and updated as the SA process continues.

- High proportion of elderly residents. There is a need to reduce the outward migration of young people and provide a viable and coherent population able to provide and support vital services and the local economy.
- Low levels of educational attainment and training participation. There is a need to generate new employment opportunities, which would contribute to improved skills.
- Health deprivation issues, particularly within inner wards.
- High standards of bathing water quality, which should be maintained and enhanced where possible. Potential significant tourism implications.
- Lack of affordable housing supply due to increasing house prices and low incomes. Inner area housing in need of investment and renewal.
- Problems with overcrowding and houses in multiple occupations (HMO). Large stock of poor quality, cheap, private rented accommodation, particularly within inner areas, which generates associated social problems.
- Little or no open space, particularly in the inner areas. Development should be located upon Brownfield land in preference to Greenfield land. The protection of the natural environment and greenspace is essential, and can generate knock-on social benefits.

- Adapting to the threat and risks associated with climate change e.g. rising sea levels and flooding. Flood risk should be considered in all developments, and the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) promoted where possible.
- Protection and enhancement of all aspects of biodiversity, e.g. important habitats and protected species. This includes nationally important site of Marton Mere Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) / Local Nature Reserve (LNR). Potential implications upon sensitive sites due to the pressures of tourism. Developments should be mindful that Brownfield land can have potential biodiversity value.
- Distinct cultural heritage resources within Blackpool, particularly within the town centre, which affords protection. Potential tourism opportunities. Cultural heritage resources should be taken into consideration in all developments.
- Predominantly urban nature, with many areas in need or regeneration. Enhanced environment would help to market Blackpool's image as a place to live and visit.
- The need to maintain and enhance community cohesion and local distinctiveness, e.g. through increased availability of local services, opportunities for young people and high quality design.
- There is a need to increase recycling rates, and encourage increased use of sustainable natural resources and energy efficiency.
- Localised congestion and associated air quality is currently an issue within the main urban areas. Existing Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) within/around the town centre. All future development should consider potential impacts upon air quality.
- Efficient public transport system with opportunities to further enhance, in order to contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions. Tram proposals are particularly a major opportunity.
- Blackpool Airport should be used to promote economic growth and the marketing of Blackpool as a sub-regional hub for Fylde. However, there could be potential environmental implications.
- Economic dependence upon the tourism industry, which generates seasonal unemployment. Sustainable tourism development is therefore essential, in conjunction with environmental protection and enhancement.
- There is a large volume of tourist accommodation that is generally of low quality. The upgrading of holiday accommodation is needed to achieve sustainable regeneration.
- Resort decline in recent years, due to the downturn in seaside tourism from the 1980's onwards, therefore a need to re-establish

Blackpool as a thriving resort through targeted new investment and the upgrading of holiday accommodation.

- The majority of employment estates are located on the edge of Blackpool. There is a need to strengthen the retail offer.
- High crime deprivation, particularly within the town centre areas. Crime rates are gradually increasing.
- Access to services generally adequate due to its urban nature, however issues with environmental deprivation.

All of these issues have potential environmental, social and economic implications, and will need to be taken into consideration by plan-makers throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy. Awareness of these issues and opportunities is also essential to the assessment process.

5.3 Assessment of the Strategic Options

5.3.1 Business as Usual Scenario

The Core Strategy should contribute to sustainable development, by building upon the existing conditions within Blackpool, seeking to deliver enhancements and by rectifying existing problems which can be influenced by land-use planning.

Option 6 consists of a market driven approach, without the benefits of a planning framework. This option has therefore been considered as the 'Business as Usual Scenario', i.e. no Core Strategy scenario. This provides a benchmark against which the performance of the other options can be compared.

5.3.2 Strategic Options

The assessment of options is intended to be an iterative process with frequent communication between the plan-makers and the SA team. The six alternative options are as follows:

- 1 **Urban Concentration / Intensification** seeks to target growth as far as possible to the existing urban area, and maximise opportunities to re-utilise any vacant or underused land. This option would be supported by development in inner areas and at Marton Moss.
- 2 **Inner Area Regeneration** looks to target more growth to central Blackpool to assist the regeneration of the town centre and resort core and inner neighbourhoods. Option 2 would be supported by development at Marton Moss.

- 3 **Suburban Expansion** looks to what extent there could be wider expansion beyond the existing urban area to develop remaining lands along its eastern boundary between Blackpool and Carleton, Blackpool and Staining and in south-east Blackpool. This option would be supported by an inner area development.
- 4 **Marton Moss Urban Extension** similarly looks to what extent the town can meet its expansion needs beyond its existing urban area, but more singularly focussing growth on Marton Moss. Option 4 would be supported by an inner area development.
- 5 **Wider M55 Hub Growth Point** looks (in conjunction with the choices set out in the Fylde Core Strategy Issues and Options Report) to what extent Blackpool and Fylde's respective housing and employment needs could best be met by a wider focus for expansion around the M55 junction hub on the edge of Blackpool. This option would be supported by an inner area development.
- 6 **Market Driven Approach** informs wider consideration of all the options by assessing what would be likely to happen without a planning framework.

The Government and regional policy require specific housing and employment provision, as part of the national policies for housing growth. Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Councils, together with the Local Strategic Partnership, aim for even higher levels of development in order to support their own economic growth and regeneration. The assessment of options has therefore considered Blackpool's requirements for around 4-5000 new homes, and 40 hectares of employment land, together with all other supporting land uses, services, facilities and recreational opportunities needed for balanced and healthy local communities.

The assessment has focussed upon the primary elements of each option, i.e. without any associated supporting development, in order to bring out the key differences between them. Potential impacts as a result of the supporting development associated with each option are discussed at the bottom of the full options assessment matrix, presented in Appendix D.

Table 5-1 presents a summary of the assessment scores for each option against the SA Objectives. Table 5-2 presents a summary of the key sustainability strengths and weaknesses of each of the alternative spatial options. It also includes the recommendations and mitigation measures for each option, together with an overall comment on the option(s) that should be taken forward from a sustainability perspective. These tables should be read in conjunction with Blackpool Council's Issues and Options report.

SA Objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
To reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime	+	++	?	?	?	?/+
To improve levels of educational attainment and training for all age groups and all sectors of society	?	+	?	?	?	?
To improve physical and mental health for all and reduce health inequalities	+/-	+	-	-	?	+/-
To ensure housing provision meets local needs	+	+	+	+	+	+
To protect and enhance community spirit and cohesion	?	+	-	-	+	?
To improve access to basic goods, services and amenities for all groups	++	++	?	+	+	+
To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development across the Borough	+	+	+/-	+	++	+
To promote sustainable tourism	0	++	0	0	0	?
To promote economic inclusion	+	++	+	+	+	+
To deliver urban renaissance	+	++	0	0	0	?
To develop and market the Borough as a place to live, work and do business	+	++	+/-	+/-	+	+/-
To protect and enhance biodiversity	+/-	0/+	--	-	+	-
To protect and enhance the Borough's landscape and townscape character and quality	+/-	+	-	-	-	+/-
To protect and enhance the cultural heritage resource	+/-	+/-	?	0	0	?
To protect and enhance the quality of water features and resources	?	0	-	-	-	-
To guard against land contamination and encourage the appropriate re-use of Brownfield sites	++	+	-	-	-	-

SA Objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
To limit and adapt to climate change	+/-	+/-	-	-	-	+/-
To protect and improve air quality	+/-	+/-	-	-	-	-
To increase energy efficiency and require the use of renewable energy sources	?	?	+/-	+/-	+	?
To ensure sustainable use of natural resources	-	-	-	-	+/-	-
To minimise waste, increase re-use and recycling	+/-	+/-	-	-	+/-	?
To promote the use of more sustainable modes of transport	++	++	-	-	--	+/-

Table 5-1 Summary of Option Assessment Scores

Core Strategy Strategic Option	Key Strengths and Weaknesses	Key Mitigation Measures / Recommendations
<p>Option 1</p> <p>Urban Concentration / Intensification – Seeks to target growth as far as possible to the existing urban area, and maximise opportunities to re-utilise any vacant or underused land.</p>	<p>Option 1 performs well against many of the SA objectives, most notably because it focuses development in urban areas that on the whole would benefit from some form of regeneration, and are already well served by transport infrastructure and essential services. Impacts are likely to be realised in the wider borough, e.g. in terms of crime and economic growth.</p> <p>The option also focuses development on Brownfield and underused land. However, whilst there may be numerous benefits associated with this, the actual extent of benefits may be limited principally because the option is likely to result in only very small scale development spread thinly across the urban area. It may not therefore be possible to target this into areas most at need of regeneration.</p> <p>It is likely that the option would only contribute several hundred dwellings out of the 4000-5000 actually required and hence a significant sub-urban extension at Marton Moss, and potentially within inner urban areas, would also be needed which could result in adverse impacts of its own. The analysis of Option 4 outlines the issues associated with such an extension.</p> <p>Furthermore, a key weakness of Option 1 is the likelihood that areas of urban open space may be lost in order to accommodate new development, or at least requirements for the provision of public open space in new developments may need to be reduced. Although this is as yet undecided, this may also extend to the loss of some existing shopping facilities, tourist accommodation and small businesses all of which would be detrimental. The loss of open space could also generate adverse impacts upon biodiversity and townscape.</p> <p><i>If the negative effects of reduced public open space can be overcome, the principle of some level of urban intensification on Brownfield sites should be taken forward in conjunction with other proposals.</i></p>	<p>The key negative impacts of this option could be mitigated through the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The protection and enhancement of open space provision should be integral to this option. ▪ The removal of businesses should be mitigated e.g. through relocation and targeting new employment at local people. ▪ The tourism sector should be developed sustainably, as part of the options, to ensure a high quality of visitor offer. There should be an appropriate balance between residential and tourism development in the area. ▪ It should be ensured that employment development creates opportunities for local people, where possible. ▪ It is recommended that all development should consider the potential for biodiversity, including in Brownfield sites, and implement appropriate mitigation measures where necessary. ▪ The character, quality and setting of the Town Centre Conservation Area and other cultural heritage features should be protected and where possible enhanced. All developments should be encouraged to use high quality design that fits in with the existing character of the townscape. ▪ New development should not result in the loss of floodplain or increased flood risk. ▪ Suitable traffic assessments and air quality modelling, if necessary, should be conducted when appropriate.
<p>Option 2</p> <p>Inner Area Regeneration – Looks</p>	<p>Option 2 performs very strongly against many of the SA objectives, notably because it focuses development into the areas most at need of regeneration, in areas that could potentially spearhead wider regenerative efforts given its</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Energy efficiency and the use of renewables should be promoted in all developments. ▪ The use of sustainable natural resources should be

Core Strategy Strategic Option	Key Strengths and Weaknesses	Key Mitigation Measures / Recommendations
<p>to target more growth to Central Blackpool to assist the regeneration of the town centre and resort core and inner neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>central location at the heart of the town, and also in areas that are well serviced by public transport and essential services. There is potential for cumulative benefits associated with wider regeneration proposals. However, it is essential that growth in this area provides sufficient balance between residential growth and growth in the tourism industry. Inner areas are central within the Blackpool resort and could therefore stimulate wider regeneration of the tourist offer. It should also be noted that there are significant other regeneration proposals in and around this area which would assist both residential and commercial regeneration.</p> <p>With the above in mind, it is important to also consider that only around 1000 dwellings could be provided through this option, with the remainder requiring a substantial suburban extension at Marton Moss which could generate adverse impacts of its own. The analysis of Option 4 outlines the issues associated with such an extension.</p> <p><i>The principle of developing in the inner urban areas along with other regeneration schemes should be taken forward, although the balance between residential and tourist development must be retained. Further development outside these areas will also be required.</i></p>	<p>encouraged in all new developments, and standards such as the Code for Sustainable Homes should be considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is essential that sustainable waste management is incorporated within all developments. <p><i>Key recommendations relating to Marton Moss are presented through Option 4.</i></p>
<p>Option 3 Suburban Expansion – Looks to develop remaining lands along its eastern boundary between Blackpool and Carleton, Blackpool and Staining and in south east Blackpool.</p>	<p>This option would generate benefits associated with developing residential land closer to potential sources of employment in eastern Blackpool. The option also includes for some growth in the inner regeneration areas which could lead to some of the positive effects identified in Option 2 above although not as strongly.</p> <p>The key concerns with this option relate to a less well developed transport infrastructure in the east and the cumulative loss of a number of small areas of urban fringe open space, which may also lead to an encroachment on Green Belt and possible settlement coalescence.</p> <p>A number of environmental SA objectives could be adversely affected by this option, the main issues being landscape, biodiversity and potential flood risk.</p> <p>Potentially, 5000 dwellings could be provided through this option, with the remainder provided within inner areas. However, it could also be considered that with the exception of Marton Moss, these small extensions may not have</p>	<p>The key negative impacts of this option could be mitigated through the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All developments should be encouraged to consider safety by design. Greenfield land should be maintained and enhanced where possible. Any loss of open space should be replaced. Employment development should be located within close proximity to adequate transport links, to ensure support for overall economic development across the borough. It should be ensured that tourism related developments are located within close proximity to the transport network, to enable efficient links to the central tourist attraction locations. It should be ensured that employment development creates

Core Strategy Strategic Option	Key Strengths and Weaknesses	Key Mitigation Measures / Recommendations
	<p>the critical mass to support a sustainable community and may in fact result in increased pressure on existing local services.</p> <p>It is not recommended that this option is carried forward into the preferred strategy.</p>	<p>opportunities for local people, in order to ensure a reduction in economic inequalities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order for some town centre benefits to be realised, suburban developments should be located within close proximity to public transport links to allow connectivity and to promote use of sustainable transport measures.
<p>Option 4</p> <p>Marton Moss Urban Extension – Similarly looks to what extent the town can meet its expansion needs beyond its existing urban area, but more singularly focusing growth on Marton Moss.</p>	<p>Option 4 consists of a major new sub-urban expansion at Marton Moss. This option has only limited provision for supporting development in the inner urban regeneration areas so the benefits realised there would be smaller. There are few significant environmental constraints to development in this area and whilst ‘greener’ areas would be lost, they do not represent the same character and quality of the more rural locations identified in Option 3.</p> <p>This option could potentially provide 5000 dwellings. There are however uncertainties as to whether it could create a truly sustainable community. It has sufficient critical mass to become more self-sufficient and sustainable transport proposals have been suggested. However, the layout and former uses for the site suggest that employment provision could be limited which is a significant weakness. It is expected that supporting shops, community facilities and services would be provided and a range of housing to meet local needs would also be inherent.</p> <p>This option would perform significantly better against the SA objectives if there was a strong commitment to it being developed and designed as a sustainable community following principles associated with the Growth Point proposal in Option 5 and also the Best Practice in Urban Extensions and New Settlements guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Without such a commitment, it is considered that this option should not be taken forward, as it would not be in the best interests of delivering a sustainable Blackpool.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that all areas with biodiversity potential, particularly important designated areas, are safeguarded and where possible enhanced. Any loss of open space should be replaced. Suburban extensions should maximise opportunities for the creation of green corridors, providing connectivity between the more urban areas and open space. The character, quality and setting of the Stanley Park Conservation Area and other cultural heritage features should be protected and where possible enhanced. All development should be in-keeping with the existing character and quality of the townscape / landscape. The use of Brownfield land should be encouraged, and all developments need to consider the potential for contaminated land, and implement remediation measures if necessary. New development should not result in the loss of floodplain or increased flood risk. The implementation of SuDS should be encouraged.
<p>Option 5</p> <p>Wider M55 Hub Growth Point – Looks (in conjunction with the choices set out in the Fylde Core Strategy Issues and Options Report) to what extent Blackpool</p>	<p>Option 5 has significant strengths and weaknesses. As with Options 3 and 4, it has only limited provision for supporting development in the inner urban regeneration areas, so the benefits realised there would be smaller. It would also be situated on primarily Greenfield land with associated landscape and environmental disadvantages and would mark a significant focus of development away from the existing urban area. This could be perceived in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable traffic assessments and air quality modelling, if necessary, should be conducted when appropriate. Energy efficiency and the use of renewables should be promoted in all developments. The use of sustainable natural resources should be

Core Strategy Strategic Option	Key Strengths and Weaknesses	Key Mitigation Measures / Recommendations
<p>and Fylde's respective housing and employment needs could best be met by a wider focus for expansion around the M55 junction hub on the edge of Blackpool.</p>	<p>the long-term as a precursor to further urban infill between this and the existing urban areas in the south east of Blackpool. Although the site is Greenfield, there are no significant environmental designations and it could be considered that the landscape value has already been degraded by the presence of the M55 and existing development. Whilst the efficient motorway access is beneficial it may also result in higher car dependence and vehicle movements.</p> <p>The main strengths with this option relate to the commitments through growth point development, aiming to create sustainable communities with all the environmental enhancements and mitigation measures that are inherent with this. There would be close proximity between jobs and homes, the easy access to the M55 would be very positive in terms of employment land investment potential and the development would meet a wide range of housing needs not just for Blackpool but also Fylde.</p> <p><i>If all the elements of a sustainable community are encouraged, this option should be taken forward in conjunction with other recommended proposals, as a supporting development.</i></p>	<p>encouraged in all new developments, and standards such as the Code for Sustainable Homes should be considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is essential that sustainable waste management is incorporated within all developments. ▪ It should be ensured that new development is located near to public transport links / facilities to encourage sustainable transport modes. Developments should consider the promotion of sustainable travel e.g. through implementation of Green Travel Plans.
<p>Option 6 Market Driven Approach – Informs wider consideration of all the options by assessing what would be likely to happen without a planning framework. (i.e. Do-Northing Approach)</p>	<p>The key concern with this option is the lack of certainty that a market driven approach would bring. It is possible that many of the projects identified in Options 1-5 together with their identified benefits and disbenefits could still be brought forward under this option, or indeed they may not. This uncertainty leads to an inability to plan strategically in a way that would enable benefits to be maximised and adverse impacts controlled and reduced.</p> <p><i>It is not considered that such an uncoordinated approach to development would be in the best interests of delivering a sustainable Blackpool.</i></p>	<p>The key negative impacts of this option could be mitigated through the above mentioned recommendations and the following additional measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is essential that housing provision meets local requirements, e.g. in terms of affordable housing and a mix of tenures. ▪ New development should be accessible to existing facilities, or adequate facilities should be implemented in conjunction. Developments should be located within close proximity to public transport links to allow connectivity.

Table 5-2 Strategic Options Assessment Summary

5.3.3 Cumulative and Synergistic Effects

The SEA Directive requires that the assessment includes identification of cumulative and synergistic effects. With regards to the Core Strategy options, the cumulative and synergistic effects may be realised:

- **Transport / Air Quality** - A combination of the Core Strategy options, together with other proposed developments within Blackpool, could generate increased traffic and congestion, which would adversely impact upon local air quality. It is essential that the Core Strategy promotes the use of public transport measures, particularly by tourists, to try and reduce future carbon dioxide emissions.
- **Regeneration** – A suite of regenerative benefits could be realised with the implementation of the Core Strategy and other key development proposals within Blackpool. Positive impacts could be realised in terms of townscape, overall aspirations, health, crime and community spirit.

The above issues have been taken into account inherently through the assessment of each option. A full assessment of cumulative / synergistic effects will be easier once a preferred option has been identified.

6 Conclusions and Next Steps

6.1 Summary of Findings

Assessments of the Core Strategy vision, goals and strategic options have been undertaken, in order to determine their performance against sustainability objectives to inform the preferred strategy.

It is recommended that the vision should be strengthened to ensure protection and enhancement of the natural environment, including biodiversity and open space, where possible. Adaptation to the effects of long-term issues such as climate change should also be considered.

It is recommended that the goals are either strengthened to directly address the important sustainability issues of housing, the economy and the environment, or new separate goals are added.

It is considered that Option 1 should be taken forward into the preferred strategy, if the potentially adverse impacts upon open space can be mitigated. Option 2 should also be carried forward in conjunction, although it is essential that a balance between residential and tourist development is ensured. Further development outside these areas would be required in order to accommodate housing needs. This could be met by taking either forward Option 5 as a supporting development, as long as all the elements of a sustainable community are considered, or Option 4 if there was a strong commitment to it being developed as a sustainable community. Options 3 and 6 are not considered to be in the best interests of delivering a sustainable Blackpool.

6.2 Next Steps

Table 6-1 outlines the next steps in the SA process, indicating how the SA and Core Strategy development processes will evolve up to publication of the Final Core Strategy.

Stage in the Process	Likely Dates
The consultation responses on the strategic options will be reviewed and amendments incorporated into the preparation of the Core Strategy and the SA Report as necessary.	April / May 2008
Development of the Core Strategy will continue, including the preparation of suitable policies to support the strategy. The SA process will carry on in parallel to the preparation of the Core Strategy, and will include an assessment of the draft policies.	November / December 2008
The Final Core Strategy will be published for consultation alongside the Final SA Report, which will include a summary of the entire SA process, a full assessment of the proposed policies, and the proposed monitoring	July / August 2009

framework to be implemented once the Core Strategy is adopted.	
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Table 6-1 **Next Steps in the SA Process**

Appendix A

SA Objective Compatibility

Appendix B

Compatibility of SA Objectives and the Core Strategy's Goals

Appendix C

Strategic Options Assessment Matrices

Appendix D

Copies of the Scoping Consultation Responses