



Blackpool Council
Sustainability Appraisal
Blackpool Core Strategy

Non-Technical Summary

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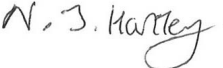




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Non-Technical Summary

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Abbreviations

DPD	Development Plan Document
LDF	Local Development Framework
NTS	Non Technical Summary
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SCS	Sustainable Community Strategy
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Strategy

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Core Strategy

Blackpool Borough Council is in the process of preparing its Local Development Framework (LDF), which will replace the existing Blackpool Local Plan (adopted in June 2006). The LDF will set out the Council's policies for spatial planning until 2027, and comprises a suite of Development Plan Documents (DPDs). The Core Strategy is the most important of these DPDs as it establishes the long-term framework for the delivery of strategic development needs within the Borough. The Core Strategy will particularly focus upon how proposed levels of housing and employment growth will be provided, together with how retail, resort and other development needs may be met in the future. The Blackpool Sustainable Community Strategy has informed the preparation of the Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy will include:

- A Spatial Vision;
- Spatial Objectives; and
- Core Policies (including the Spatial Strategy).

1.2 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Core Strategy has the potential to have a wide range of significant effects on sustainable development (both positive and negative). There is a legal requirement for it to be subjected to Sustainability Appraisal (SA), under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. 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 contribute to better decision-making and planning.

In accordance with good practice, the SA also incorporates the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. The aim of 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 with a view to promoting sustainable development'* (Article 1 of the SEA Directive). The combined SA/SEA ('the SA') has been undertaken in accordance with approved guidance.

SA is an iterative process and follows a series of prescribed stages in which the elements of the Core Strategy are appraised against sustainability objectives, to encourage the selection of the most sustainable options and to ultimately improve the sustainability of the development that is brought forward. Figure 1-1 presents these stages of the SA processes alongside the parallel stages in the development of the Core Strategy.

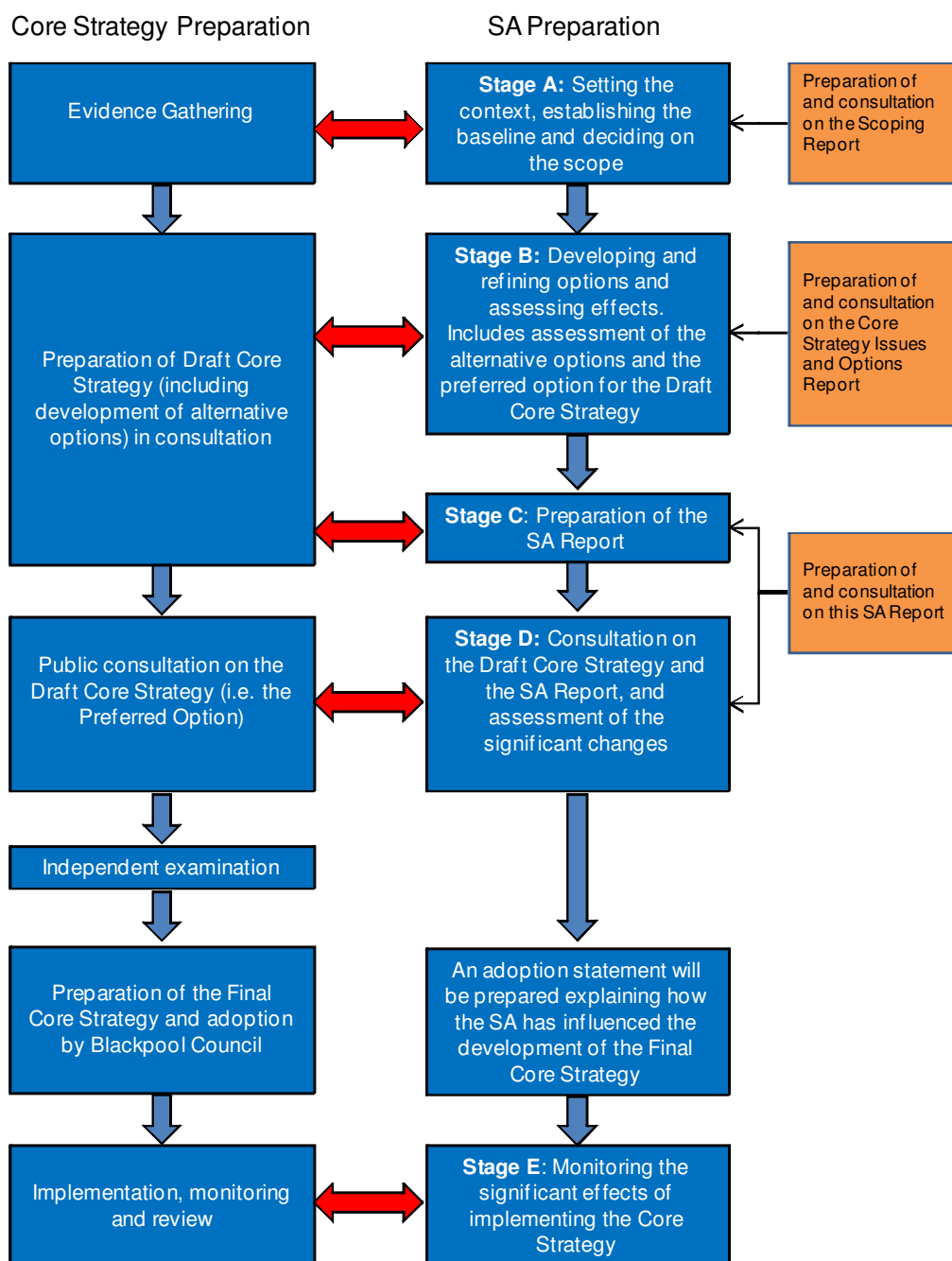


Figure 1-1 Key Stages in the Development of the Core Strategy and the SA

1.3 Purpose of the SA Report

Blackpool BC is committed to preparing a Core Strategy that contributes to sustainable development. The Council wants to achieve a balance between economic growth, social progress and environmental quality. The principle of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and in the future, lies at the heart of sustainable development.

This SA Report provides a summary of the SA process so far and presents the findings and recommendations of the assessment of the preferred option for the Core Strategy. Its key aims are to:

- Provide information on the Core Strategy and the SA process;

- Present the key existing social, economic and environmental conditions within Blackpool Borough, in the context of existing plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives, together with relevant baseline information;
- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the Core Strategy;
- Recommend measures to avoid, reduce or offset any potentially significant adverse effects; and
- Propose a monitoring framework that can be used to monitor the identified significant effects.

The SA Report will be consulted upon alongside the **Revised Preferred Option Core Strategy** and it is important that both documents are read together.

1.4 How to Have Your Say

Your comments are invited on the Revised Preferred Option Core Strategy and the SA Report.

Details of our consultation process are set out in the Statement of Community Involvement, which can be viewed online at www.blackpool.gov.uk/EnvironmentandPlanning/PlanningPolicy.

The consultation documents may be viewed at the address below:

Blackpool Council
Municipal Building
Corporation Street
Blackpool
FY1 1NF

Alternatively they can be viewed at Blackpool Council's Planning website:
www.blackpool.gov.uk/EnvironmentandPlanning/PlanningPolicy.

2 Existing Policy Background and Environmental Conditions

2.1 Plans, Programmes and Environmental Objectives

A review was undertaken of plans, policies and environmental objectives prepared at the international, national, regional, sub-regional and local levels to understand how they could influence the development of the Core Strategy and the SA process. A number of key themes were identified that should to be reflected in the scope and intent of the Core Strategy. These were used to develop the sustainability objectives for the SA.

2.2 Existing Environmental Conditions

A key part of the SA process was establishing the current social, economic and environmental conditions across the Borough. The aim was to determine the current situation, identify trends over time, key sensitive areas or populations, and to assess the permanence and reversibility of current problems.

The analysis of conditions across the Borough enabled the existing sustainability issues and opportunities to be identified. Some of the main issues and opportunities are presented by broad topic area in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1 Key Issues and Opportunities

Sustainability Topic	Key Sustainability Issues	Key Sustainability Opportunities
Environment	<p>Existence of Green Belt limiting greenfield expansion, but low supply of vacant brownfield land.</p> <p>Localised poor air quality associated with traffic.</p> <p>Blackpool is a densely populated borough, with few areas of greenspace and low levels of biodiversity.</p> <p>Sites for nature conservation are rare and require protection.</p> <p>Blackpool's heritage features and historic townscapes are worthy of protection.</p> <p>The majority of household waste is landfilled.</p>	<p>Remediation of contaminated sites should occur during all developments on brownfield land.</p> <p>The protection and enhancement of urban greenspaces should be encouraged.</p> <p>Sustainable design principles should be incorporated into new developments, including water and energy efficiency, Sustainable (urban) Drainage Systems (SuDS) and sustainable waste management.</p> <p>Environmental quality in run-down inner areas can be improved as part of wider neighbourhood renewal.</p>
Social	<p>Population growth is estimated at over 14% in the period 2006-2031.</p> <p>Blackpool has high numbers of children and elderly people which places a disproportionate strain on health and social services.</p> <p>Education attainment is low and leads to a cycle of poor skill levels, unemployment and low aspirations amongst many young people.</p> <p>Health levels are low and are associated with unhealthy lifestyles.</p> <p>Crime levels are high, especially in the town centre where they are associated with alcohol-related disorder.</p> <p>Blackpool has a large stock of poor quality rented housing, including many units in multiple occupancy. The lack of affordable housing is an issue.</p>	<p>Raising educational attainment will have multiple benefits in the long-term.</p> <p>The Core Strategy provides an opportunity to address crime and its underlying causes.</p> <p>A key priority is the diversification of the housing stock. There is a need for an expansion in the numbers of high quality homes orientated towards families and those in professional and managerial occupations.</p>
Economic	<p>There is low diversity in the economy, which is highly dependent on the fortunes of the tourist industry. Declining visitor numbers are a concern.</p> <p>There is an over-supply of low quality tourist accommodation.</p> <p>Earning and productivity are both lower than national averages.</p>	<p>Strengthening the tourism sector is vital for the economic sustainability of the Borough.</p> <p>Regeneration may stimulate further investment in both tourism and other sectors.</p> <p>Blackpool Airport provides a focus for potential investment and opportunity.</p> <p>Blackpool's role as a sub-regional service centre for the Fylde sub-region is important and should be promoted.</p>
Transport	<p>Transport links could be greatly improved from the north, north-east and south of the Borough and particularly within the town itself.</p> <p>Localised congestion and associated adverse air</p>	<p>Sustainable modes of transport should be promoted, including walking and cycling, potentially along designated routes.</p> <p>Expansion of Blackpool's tram network is a major</p>

Sustainability Topic	Key Sustainability Issues	Key Sustainability Opportunities
	quality is an issue.	<p>opportunity.</p> <p>Blackpool's Cycling Town status is a further opportunity to promote cycling as part of new development.</p> <p>Enhancements could be made to the town's bus system, including improved interchange facilities between bus and rail.</p> <p>Expansion of Blackpool Airport offers economic benefits but raises environmental concerns.</p>

3 Assessment Methodology

3.1 Applying SA to the Core Strategy

The SA was undertaken in the following stages:

- 1** The process began in October 2007 with the preparation of a SA Scoping Report for the Blackpool Council LDF 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 (see Section 3.2, below). The Scoping Report was issued to statutory consultees (Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England) for comment.
- 2** Six alternative Strategic Options for the Core Strategy were developed by Blackpool Council, and set out in the 'Blackpool Core Strategy Issues and Options' report (June 2008). The aim of this document was to determine the most appropriate path for the development of Blackpool, by exploring the complex relationship between growth and regeneration.

These were appraised against the SA Framework with the aim of informing the selection of a Preferred Option. The results were presented in an Assessment of Strategic Options Report. This report was also issued for consultation and further comments duly carried forward.
- 3** The appraisal of the Final Preferred Option for the Core Strategy was presented in the SA Report and the accompanying Non-Technical Summary (Report Numbers 006-NHR-NH51129-01 and 007-NH51129-NHR-01 respectively). This was consulted upon in summer 2010.
- 4** Following a review of the consultation comments received in 2010 and a series of policy changes at the national level (including the Localism Act and the National Planning Policy Framework) the Revised Preferred Option Core Strategy has been developed (April 2012). This SA Report (000-NH51129-UE31R-01-F) and NTS document the appraisal of this version of the Core Strategy.

3.2 Sustainability Objectives

As part of the scoping stage of the SA process, 22 sustainability objectives were devised to assess the sustainability performance of the Blackpool Core Strategy, as listed in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 Sustainability Objectives

Sustainability Objectives	
1	To reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime
2	To improve levels of educational attainment for all age groups and all sectors of society
3	To improve physical and mental health for all and reduce health inequalities
4	To provide greater choice, quality and diversity of housing across all tenures to meet the needs of residents
5	To promote community spirit and cohesion and to provide opportunities for community involvement across all sectors of society
6	To maintain and improve access to basic goods, services and amenities for all groups
7	To encourage sustainable economic growth and business development across the borough
8	To develop the skills and training needed to establish and maintain a healthy labour market
9	To encourage economic inclusion
10	To deliver urban renaissance
11	To develop and market the borough as a place to live, work and do business
12	To protect and enhance biodiversity
13	To protect and enhance the borough's townscape character and quality
14	To protect and enhance the cultural heritage resource
15	To protect and enhance the quality of water features and resources
16	To guard against land contamination and encourage the appropriate re-use of brownfield sites within the urban boundary
17	To limit and adapt to climate change
18	To protect and improve air quality
19	To increase energy efficiency and require the use of renewable energy sources
20	To ensure the sustainable use of natural resources
21	To minimise waste, increase re-use and recycling
22	To promote the use of more sustainable modes of transport

The SA aims to contribute to the achievement of the sustainability objectives, and, where there is conflict, provides mitigation measures to ensure that development is carried out in the most sustainable manner. Each element of the Core Strategy has been assessed against the sustainability objectives.

3.3 Assessment of Alternatives

Six alternative Strategic Options were initially identified for the Core Strategy, each one focusing on a different approach to development within the Blackpool Borough. These were assessed as part of the Issues and Options SA Report in 2008. As a result of this assessment, in which all six options were tested for their compatibility against the SA Objectives, two options were taken

forward and combined to develop the Preferred Strategy. The remainder were not considered to be in the best interests of delivering a sustainable Blackpool.

In the 2010 SA, alternatives were considered for two policies – R10 and R19. These options related to allocation for the new national conference centre, wider retail, leisure and mixed used development around the Central Station and Promenade, and improving the quality of main holiday areas without defining boundaries for these areas. A review was made of these alternatives as part of the SA process. In each case, it was determined that the preferred policy version performed better in terms of promoting sustainable development than the alternatives.

3.4 Assessment of the Revised Preferred Option Core Strategy

The following elements of the Core Strategy have been assessed against the sustainability objectives

- The Spatial Vision and Objectives;
- Core Policies which are set out under the following headings:
 - Spatial Strategy
 - Core Policies
 - Strengthening Community Wellbeing
 - Regenerating Blackpool Town Centre and Resort Core
 - Enabling South Blackpool Growth and Enhancement

Following the SA in 2010, recommendations were made to improve the sustainability of each element of the Core Strategy. These included alterations to the wording of certain policies, indication of a need for amendments or clarification in the accompanying text, or suggestions for new policies to address sustainability issues. The amendments made to produce the Revised Preferred Option Core Strategy have addressed some of the recommendations made in 2010.

4 Results of the Sustainability Appraisal

4.1 The Spatial Vision

The Spatial Vision focuses on the economic and social regeneration of Blackpool. The continued promotion and development of Blackpool as the number one resort in the UK is integral to this Vision, and recognises that the town's fortunes are intimately connected with its ability to respond to changing demands in the tourism and leisure market. This overarching theme positively contributes to sustainability objectives which relate to enhanced community spirit and cohesion, delivery of urban renaissance, development of Blackpool as a place to live, work and do business (all year round), and promotion of sustainable tourism.

The social and economic Sustainability Objectives would be further supported by the aim of creating an improved range of new high quality homes in attractive neighbourhoods, including affordable housing. The Spatial Vision aims to retain a strong educational offer supporting a skilled and educated workforce, thereby encouraging aspiration and ambition. It also directly seeks to ensure that Blackpool has an accessible network of quality green open spaces, coast and countryside, which could have consequent benefits for health, well-being and community cohesion.

By encouraging higher quality developments within Blackpool, the Spatial Vision would help to promote a visually attractive and safe urban environment, thereby meeting the Sustainability Objectives relating to urban renaissance, landscape/townscape and a reduction in crime.

Long-term threats from climatic and/or coastal changes could generate significant consequences for Blackpool's environment, its tourist economy and the well-being of its communities, all three of which are inextricably connected. The Spatial Vision been strengthened since the previous SA consultation to include reference to climate change issues.

The Vision has also been strengthened in terms of the effective management of natural resources and enhanced biodiversity. 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.

4.2 The Spatial Objectives

All 20 Strategic Objectives offer some compatibility with the sustainability objectives related to economic, environmental and social improvement. In particular, they focus on delivering sustainable economic growth, urban renaissance and public services that meet the needs of the population. In addition, many of the Strategic Objectives seek to ensure well-designed places are created which protect Blackpool's rich heritage and natural environment along with addressing climate change issues. No specific recommendations have been made to change the Strategic Objectives as it is felt that they offer a strong basis for the future development of Blackpool Borough and the accompanying Spatial Strategy and policy framework.

4.3 The Spatial Strategy

The preferred Spatial Strategy has been modified since that consulted upon in 2010 with the main change being the approach proposed at Marton Moss. The Spatial Strategy continues to focus on Inner Area Regeneration comprising Blackpool Town Centre, The Resort Core and the Neighbourhoods within the Inner Areas, as well as supporting growth in South Blackpool. However, at Marton Moss, future development will be guided by a neighbourhood planning process with a stronger focus in this location upon protection and enhancement of the existing resources.

A large number of positive effects have been recorded for this Spatial Strategy particularly for the SA Objectives addressing tourism, economic growth and inclusion, housing, the marketability of the borough and access to services. Sustainable economic development and employment provision would be targeted towards the inner areas of the borough which are currently the most economically deprived. Whilst Blackpool is England's largest seaside resort, it has and continues to underperform from an economic perspective. The economy is underpinned by the tourism and service sector with jobs being low skill, low wage and highly seasonal. The Spatial Strategy, by targeting regeneration to the town centre and resort core would, therefore support the objective of economic inclusion and reducing unemployment in the areas in most need. It is recognised that a large amount of office-related employment opportunities are concentrated in South Blackpool near the airport. The redevelopment of central sites, such as the Central Business District would improve the range of employment opportunities in the town centre.

The strategy has the potential to result in a number of other long-term indirect benefits including reducing crime levels, raising the poor levels of health and improving educational attainment. Regenerating sites such as Winter Gardens, the Central Business District and the Former Central Station would help to create high quality employment opportunities that may raise skills levels in the long-term.

The quality and diversity of the housing stock is a significant issue in the borough. The oversupply of small, poor quality bedsits and flats not only reduces the attractiveness of the

borough as a place to live but is a factor contributing to the high levels of transience, low levels of health and other social issues. This strategy seeks to tackle this issue and should result in the long-term, in a significant improvement in the quality, choice and affordability of the housing combined with the implementation of other policies in the Core Strategy. It is expected that improvements to the quality of housing and neighbourhoods could help to improve community spirit and cohesion, if levels of transience are reduced and feelings of civic pride are promoted through the regeneration process. Adopting a neighbourhood planning approach at Marton Moss is also likely to benefit community cohesion by providing residents with the opportunity to influence how the area develops in the future.

Within Blackpool there is relatively little open space and, therefore, the focus upon Inner Area Regeneration should help to protect these sites from development which could offer landscape/townscape, ecological, water, heritage and soil resource benefits, as well as ensuring that these sites continue to be available as a valuable community resource. The Spatial Strategy also ensures that the special character of Marton Moss is protected and enhanced.

Positive effects are recorded for the heritage objective as the majority of the borough's heritage assets are concentrated in the town centre and significant investment in the quality of the public realm should offer long-term benefits to the setting and enjoyment of these features.

Adverse impacts upon coastal or surface water are unlikely in the long-term providing issues associated with sewerage capacity are addressed in South Blackpool.

Overall resort regeneration and housing / employment development has the potential to generate increased vehicular movement and private car use. However, focussing development in the resort core should make such facilities more accessible which may help to reduce the risk of increased vehicular movements. There are also policies within the Core Strategy addressing connectivity and the wider initiatives being pursued as a result of Blackpool's Cycle Town Status should also help to reduce traffic movements. If the connectivity policies are successful in promoting increased public transport use then there could be long-term benefits for the health and well-being of the borough's residents.

4.3.1 Mitigation

The following measures are recommended to Blackpool Council to improve the sustainability performance of the Spatial Strategy and its implementation:

- Transport assessments should be undertaken for new developments, particularly those within the town centre as there is the potential for significant cumulative traffic impacts associated with the scale of development proposed.
- Continued collaboration is required with Fylde Borough Council in relation to the development of a sustainable extension in South Blackpool to ensure that all potential locations and boundaries of this site are thoroughly assessed. Consistency with the emerging Fylde Core Strategy will also be vital to ensure that consistent messages are being provided to the public and future developers.
- Provisions for neighbourhood regeneration outside of the inner area regeneration boundary e.g. Queens Park and Mereside should be referenced in the Spatial Strategy.
- Further liaison should occur with United Utilities regarding the sewerage capacity issues near Junction 4 of the M55 and associated with any future development on the Fylde/Blackpool border.

4.4 Core Policies

The Core Policies are:

- CS2: Housing Provision

- CS3: Economic Development and Employment
- CS4: Retail and other Town Centre Uses
- CS5: Connectivity
- CS6: Green Infrastructure
- CS7: Quality of Design
- CS8: Heritage
- CS9: Energy Efficiency and Climate Change
- CS10: Planning Obligations

Generally the Core Policies performed well against the SA Objectives with many positive scores recorded which reflects the amendments made to the policies following recommendations of the SA process in 2010. Urban regeneration and an increase in natural surveillance could indirectly reduce crime rates in the long-term in Blackpool, through an increased sense of community spirit and pride in relation to an improved environment and quality of place. Furthermore, providing housing stock suited to the needs of the area will avoid creating remote areas which could make residents feel more vulnerable and also reduce the number of houses in multiple occupation which provide opportunities for crime.

Policy CS3 highlights the need to equip Blackpool's people with the appropriate skills, improve aspirations and opportunities through strong links between schools, colleges and existing and prospective employers. This would directly contribute to increased educational attainment levels and improve local skills in the long-term. Improving local skills would also benefit new employment development within the town centre and may reduce high employment and income deprivation over the long term.

There are high levels of health deprivation within Blackpool, however, the creation of a high quality accessible public realm, encouraging walking and cycling, the extension / creation of new areas of green space, the provision of affordable high quality homes and access to new job opportunities would contribute to improved health across the borough through providing a better environment for residents to pursue healthy lifestyles.

Housing and employment development has the potential to adversely affect environmental resources, such as biodiversity, landscape / townscape, heritage and flood risk, however, it also has the potential to enhance these resources. The Core Policies seek to ensure that environmental resources of the borough are protected. However, the SA process identified that sites selected for development in South Blackpool should be carefully assessed at the project level to ensure that there would be no adverse effects on the Ribble Alt and Estuaries Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site.

Regeneration and housing / employment development, together with enhanced connectivity within the Borough, has the potential to generate increased vehicular movement and private car use. This could lead to an increase in emissions which could lead to adverse effects on local air quality and climate change issues in the long-term. However, Policies CS5, CS6 and CS7 all seek to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport and encourage a number of sustainable travel enhancements to reduce congestion (including cycling and walking opportunities, and an enhanced public transport network).

The policies also place a strong emphasis upon sustainable design and construction principles and require that new residential development meets the Code for Sustainable Homes Standards and new non-residential development (over 1000m²) achieves the BREEAM 'very good' standard.

4.4.1 Mitigation

The following measures are recommended to Blackpool Council to improve the sustainability performance of the policies and their implementation:

- Policies CS2 and CS3 should include specific reference to the protection of European Sites in South Blackpool.

4.5 Strengthening Community Wellbeing

This section of the Core Strategy includes the following policies:

- Policy CS11 – Sustainable Neighbourhoods
- Policy CS12 – Housing Mix, Density and Standards
- Policy CS13 – Affordable Housing
- Policy CS14 – Health and Education
- Policy CS15 – Gypsy and Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople

Generally the Strengthening Community Wellbeing policies performed well against the SA Objectives. There is a clear commitment to creating communities that are healthy and safe that feelings of community spirit and pride can be developed. This is particularly important in Blackpool where transience has been a historical issue. The focus on providing high quality educational facilities in the borough could also help to raise levels of educational attainment and aspirations which are again significant problems in the inner Blackpool neighbourhoods.

The policies promote the development of high quality housing with an appropriate mix of types and tenures to meet the needs of existing and future residents as well as addressing problems associated with poor quality housing and Houses in Multiple Occupation. Combined with improvements to the quality of the public realm and the provision of areas of open space there could be indirect, positive health impacts as people's health is influenced by the settings of their everyday lives.

Within the Core Strategy as a whole there is a strong focus upon the central Blackpool neighbourhoods as this is where significant investment is needed to raise quality of life and to reduce overall levels of deprivation. However, there are other locations in Blackpool where investment is needed that lie outside of the resort core (Kincraig, Grange Park, Mereside, Queens Park). This is acknowledged in Policy CS11 and is, therefore a very important policy as these locations are not specifically referenced in other parts of the Core Strategy.

The development of new infrastructure such as education and health facilities could lead to changes to the local landscape/townscape and potentially adverse effects on biodiversity resources depending upon where new development is sited. However, there are other policies in the Core Strategy that address these issues and the development of a high quality public realm that includes well designed buildings, as well as landscaping and new green infrastructure could offer long-term benefits. There may also be benefits for heritage resources within the town centre as there may be scope to improve the setting of buildings, for example, those within the town centre Conservation Area.

Policy CS15 regarding Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is focussed upon ensuring that locations for these sites are selected to ensure that there are accessible and that the sites have the necessary infrastructure. However, the SA process has identified that this policy could be improved to ensure sufficient protection to biodiversity resources.

Policies CS11, CS14 and CS15 all seek to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport and the co-location of jobs/homes/services. Whilst the level of development proposed in Blackpool has the potential to lead to increased carbon emissions and more travel, the emphasis in the policies is on creating an environment where people can walk/cycle to access

facilities and local amenities. In the long-term, if these policies are successful, there could be benefits for air quality in the town centre where an AQMA is designated. There may also be long-term benefits for health and well-being as the environment would be established where local people have the opportunity to pursue healthy and more sustainable lifestyles.

4.5.1 Mitigation

The following measures are recommended to Blackpool Council to improve the sustainability performance of the policies and their implementation:

- Policy CS15 should include a specific reference to the need to protect European sites and should state that new sites should not lead to adverse effects on protected species/habitats.
- Policy CS15 could be strengthened to ensure that new pitch provision does not lead to significant adverse effects on heritage resources.

4.6 Regenerating Blackpool Town Centre and Resort Core

This section of the Core Strategy includes the following policies:

Blackpool Town Centre

- Policy CS16 – Blackpool Town Centre
- Policy CS17 – Winter Gardens
- Policy CS18 – Central Business District (Talbot Gateway)
- Policy CS19 – Leisure Quarter (Former Central Station Site)

Resort Core

- Policy CS20- Leisure and Business Tourism
- Policy CS21 – Arrival and Movement
- Policy CS22 – Key Resort Gateways
- Policy CS23 – Promenade Holiday Accommodation
- Policy CS24 – Off Promenade Holiday Accommodation

4.6.1 Blackpool Town Centre Policies

These policies focus economic growth, development and investment in Blackpool Town Centre with three strategic sites for investment identified: the Central Business District, Winter Gardens and the Leisure Quarter. Whilst there has been some improvement in visitor numbers and the retail offer in Blackpool, its economy is underperforming and the regeneration proposed by these policies should lead to positive impacts in the long-term. The policies perform well against the SA Objectives addressing economic development and economic inclusion, urban renaissance and improving the image and marketability of the borough.

Blackpool town centre includes a number of under-used, derelict and vacant properties and the development of these sites should help to ensure that regeneration benefits are spread across the town centre. Issues of poor connectivity and permeability of the town centre are apparent and it is evident in the policies that there is a focus upon improving movement through the town centre and the arrival experience for town centre users. For maximum sustainability benefits to be delivered, the sites need to be designed in a holistic manner. Blackpool Council is a major

landowner across the town centre and this is likely to reduce some of the uncertainty associated with the type of development that will occur and reduce the risk of development occurring in a piecemeal manner. The production of development briefs is also likely to be beneficial.

The policies will have a long-term positive effect on Blackpool's townscape, as a result of enhancements to the public realm and the provision of new or refurbished buildings in the town centre. High standards of design will be required in order that new developments complement its notable heritage features. The majority of Blackpool's heritage assets are concentrated in the town centre and, therefore, there is scope for the regeneration to enhance the setting of a number of these buildings, particularly Winter Gardens. Improvements to the layout of streets, modified traffic movements and enhanced public transport provision could help to reduce congestion in parts of the town centre which is likely to have long-term benefits for the townscape and cultural heritage assets, as well as raising the quality of the town centre environment for residents, workers and visitors. There may be long-term benefits for crime and fear of crime if the quality of the urban environment improves, natural surveillance increases through a more user-friendly and populated urban environment and secured by design principles are integral to the design process. Positive and negative effects were recorded against the air quality objective as redevelopment in the town centre has the potential to increase traffic from residents, visitors and workers which could increase congestion and result in adverse air quality effects, where there are already air quality issues (there is an AQMA designated in the town centre). However, modifications to the streetscape, changes to traffic flows and enhanced public transport links could offer some mitigation for potential adverse effects. In the long-term, if walking and cycling links are promoted through other initiatives such as the Blackpool Cycling Towns Project, then there may be scope to increase the use of sustainable modes of transport which could also offer indirect benefits for health and well-being.

This section does not directly address environmental issues such as biodiversity, water quality, and the use of natural resources or waste as these are covered elsewhere in the Core Strategy. However, the ambitious regeneration agenda set out within the policies provides an excellent opportunity to integrate sustainable design principles into new developments.

4.6.2 Resort Core Policies

These policies focus upon developing the tourist industry of the borough by diversifying and raising the quality of the facilities that are available. Major positive effects are recorded against the sustainability objectives addressing economic growth, promoting sustainable tourism, promoting economic inclusion, delivering urban renaissance and developing the marketability of the borough. These policies collectively promote a better range of tourist attractions, an improved public realm, improved connectivity across the different resort neighbourhoods and a rationalised and enhanced accommodation offer. The promenade area has recently benefitted from significant investment to improve the sea defences, the public realm and access to the beach. These policies would complement the works that have been completed.

Attracting more visitors to Blackpool has the potential to increase traffic flows which could have adverse effects for the environment, as well as residents, workers and the tourists themselves. However, the policies seek to reduce town centre movements and ensure that the transport network supports a developed tourist industry. There are a number of other planning documents and initiatives such as the Town Centre Strategy, the Local Transport Plan and the Blackpool Cycling Towns Project that will be fundamental to encouraging the public to use public transport and for demonstrating to visitors that they do not need to use their car once they are in the resort core.

The rationalisation of the visitor accommodation offer in the borough complements other policies in the Core Strategy and will help to address some of the social problems that exist in central Blackpool. Transforming inner resort neighbourhoods characterised by boarding houses and small private hotels into mixed residential neighbourhoods is a significant challenge, but also a

major opportunity for Blackpool to build new sustainable communities. Neighbourhood plans should be developed and important to the success of these regenerated areas will be connectivity to the town centre, both physically and also in terms of access to new employment opportunities.

4.6.3 Mitigation

The following measures are recommended to Blackpool Council to improve the sustainability performance of the policies and their implementation:

- The level of development proposed in the town centre has the potential to result in the generation of large volumes of waste including construction and demolition waste. New developments should be encouraged to achieve challenging re-use and recycling targets.
- Principles of designing out crime should be applied to all the town centre policies.
- Care should be taken when redeveloping brownfield sites to guard against potential contamination. Blackpool has few former industrial sites, but both the Rigby Road and former Central Station areas may require remediation prior to comprehensive redevelopment.
- As part of the redevelopment of the resort core and the town centre, opportunities should be sought, where possible, to enhance biodiversity in this intensely urban environment and to identify how residents can easily access areas of public open space to provide long-term health and well-being benefits.
- Opportunities should be sought to actively engage communities in the regeneration process to ensure that feelings of civic pride and community spirit are further developed.
- Neighbourhood regeneration initiatives should be developed in consultation with the police and community safety teams to maximise the opportunities that can be taken to address crime and alcohol related disorder in Blackpool town centre.
- New employers should be encouraged to offer training schemes and apprenticeships to help contribute to improved skills levels.
- Transport assessments should accompany planning applications that are likely to be significant generators of traffic. It will be essential to understand the individual and cumulative effects of new developments to ensure that mitigation strategies can be carefully considered. This further emphasises the need for a holistic approach to new development.

4.7 Enabling South Blackpool Growth and Enhancement

This section of the Core Strategy includes the following policies:

- CS25 – South Blackpool Employment Growth
- CS26 – South Blackpool Hosing Growth
- CS27 – Marton Moss: Safeguarding and Enhancement
- CS28 – South Blackpool Transport and Connectivity

Since the publication of the 2010 Core Strategy, there has been a modified approach to development proposed in South Blackpool with the removal of the strategic housing site at Marton Moss and a reduction in the proposed level of housing growth. Marton Moss is the only large area in the borough that remains undeveloped and it is recognised as having local landscape, heritage and nature conservation value, as well as being used by local residents for recreational and amenity purposes. Policy CS27 offers a number of opportunities to build upon these existing characteristics. A neighbourhood planning approach is proposed for this location

which means that the community will be actively involved in the future development of the area and so there may be indirect, positive impacts upon community spirit and cohesion. There may also be indirect benefits for the regeneration of the centre of Blackpool as developers will be focussed upon addressing the needs of the town centre and resort core.

There are a number of successful economic developments already located in South Blackpool and there is scope for development to capitalise upon the existing transport links including the M55 and the airport. Some employment and housing development will be pursued in South Blackpool as outlined in policies CS25 and CS26 and this is likely to offer benefits for the economy of Blackpool and that of the Fylde sub-region. Whilst new development close to these transport links could lead to increased traffic flows, Policy CS28 seeks to improve the connectivity within South Blackpool and with the rest of the borough. There may also be indirect health benefits in the long-term associated with an improved public transport and footpath and cycle network as there will be more opportunity for residents to use 'healthier' modes of transport.

Policy CS25 promotes major redevelopment and enhancement of some of the existing older estates that lie close to the Blackpool Business Park. Re-use of these sites would contribute positively to the achievement of the land contamination objective (i.e. reduction and remediation). However, there is some greenfield land in South Blackpool that may be redeveloped and where possible, brownfield sites should be used in preference.

There is an opportunity to actively promote sustainable design methods in the development of South Blackpool. New residential and employment development would benefit from energy efficiency methods, recycling and composting facilities, secure cycle storage and other such features. More ambitious schemes such as district heating and on-site renewable energy generation could also be considered, along with green roofs, grey water technology and rain water harvesting. Policies relating to environmental design are included elsewhere in the Core Strategy, but it may also be worth emphasising high standards and promoting innovation as part of any new development in South Blackpool.

Mitigation

The following modifications could be made to the policies to improve their sustainability performance:

- The requirement for additional sustainable design measures could be included within these policies.
- Opportunities for apprenticeships and training should be provided by new employers to help improve skills levels.
- The supporting text of the Policy CS28 identifies the potential for the development of an additional link road running from the M55 northwards. This would need to be subject to environmental assessment to ensure that any potential adverse effects are adequately mitigated.

4.8 Cumulative Impacts

The combined impacts of the Core Strategy with the impact of other plans and programmes, including those in neighbouring authorities, have been assessed.

The policies within the Core Strategy tend to be complementary and to contribute positively overall to sustainability objectives when viewed together. Cumulative benefits are identified on crime and the fear of crime, education, health, housing, access to services, community spirit, sustainable tourism and economic growth and inclusion and biodiversity.

There are some potential concerns centred on the combined impacts of various developments on townscape/landscape, biodiversity, local air quality and natural resources. A higher level of development is likely to generate greater volumes of waste and to consume natural resources although the stringent application of the Core strategy policies could help to mitigate these impacts. Close to the boundaries of the Borough, there may be cumulative impacts on landscape/townscape character and on community spirit and cohesion as a result of new urban extension (if developed) near to Junction 4 of the M55 although these would depend upon their design and construction. This is something that needs to be considered further by Blackpool and Fylde Borough Councils collaboratively. A memorandum of understanding has been drafted with Wyre and Fylde Borough Councils that outlines those strategic planning issues that require cross boundary co-operation and collaboration. The purpose of this is to ensure that the development plans of each authority are sustainable, deliverable and found 'sound' at examination.

Mitigation measures are proposed for individual policies which, if successfully implemented, would reduce the potential for cumulative impacts to occur.

5 Monitoring

Once the Blackpool Core Strategy is implemented, its significant impacts need to be monitored. Monitoring will be used to identify the performance of the Core Strategy, identify undesirable effects, and confirm whether the impacts predicted in the assessment were accurate.

The monitoring framework is presented in the SA Report, and defines:

- The potentially significant effects that need to be monitored;
- How the effect should be monitored;
- A target that should be achieved;
- Where data could be obtained from; and
- How often the monitoring data should be gathered.