



Blackpool Council

## Sustainability Appraisal

### Blackpool Proposed Submission Core Strategy

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#### Non-Technical Summary

May 2014



**Hyder Consulting (UK) Limited**

2212959

Firecrest Court  
Centre Park  
Warrington WA1 1RG  
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)1925 830 206

Fax: +44 (0)1925 830 207

www.hyderconsulting.com



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#### Non-Technical Summary

<b>Author</b>	Kate Burrows	
<b>Checker</b>	David Hourd	
<b>Approver</b>	David Hourd	
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# CONTENTS

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Abbreviations .....	ii
1 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Purpose of the Core Strategy .....	1
1.2 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment .....	1
1.3 Purpose of the SA Report .....	2
1.4 How to Have Your Say .....	3
2 Existing Policy Background and Environmental Conditions .....	3
2.1 Plans, Programmes and Environmental Objectives .....	3
2.2 Existing Environmental Conditions .....	4
3 Assessment Methodology .....	5
3.1 Applying SA to the Core Strategy .....	5
3.2 Sustainability Objectives .....	6
3.3 Assessment of Alternatives .....	7
3.4 Assessment of the Proposed Submission Core Strategy .....	7
4 Results of the Sustainability Appraisal .....	8
4.1 The Spatial Vision .....	8
4.2 The Spatial Objectives .....	8
4.3 The Spatial Strategy .....	9
4.4 Core Policies .....	10
4.5 Strengthening Community Wellbeing .....	12
4.6 Regenerating Blackpool Town Centre and Resort Core .....	13
4.7 Enabling South Blackpool Growth and Enhancement .....	15
4.8 Cumulative Impacts .....	16
5 Monitoring .....	17

## Tables

Table 2-1	Key Issues and Opportunities	4
Table 3-1	Sustainability Objectives	6

# Abbreviations

SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the Core Strategy

Blackpool Borough Council is currently in the process of preparing a new Local Plan, which will eventually replace the existing Blackpool Local Plan adopted in June 2006. The new Local Plan will comprise two documents which will guide planning matters in Blackpool to 2027 Part1 will comprise the Core Strategy and Part 2 will comprise site allocations and development management policies (work has yet to start on this document). The Core Strategy will set out the long-term framework for the delivery of strategic development needs within the borough.

The Core Strategy Preferred Option was published and consulted upon in 2010. Subsequently this was revised and re-consulted upon in Spring 2012; Core Strategy Revised Preferred Option. Following consultation comments and further amendments, the Council has now produced a Proposed Submission Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy will focus on 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 Core Strategy will include:

- A Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives;
- Spatial Strategy;
- Core Policies; and
- Further policies by topic.

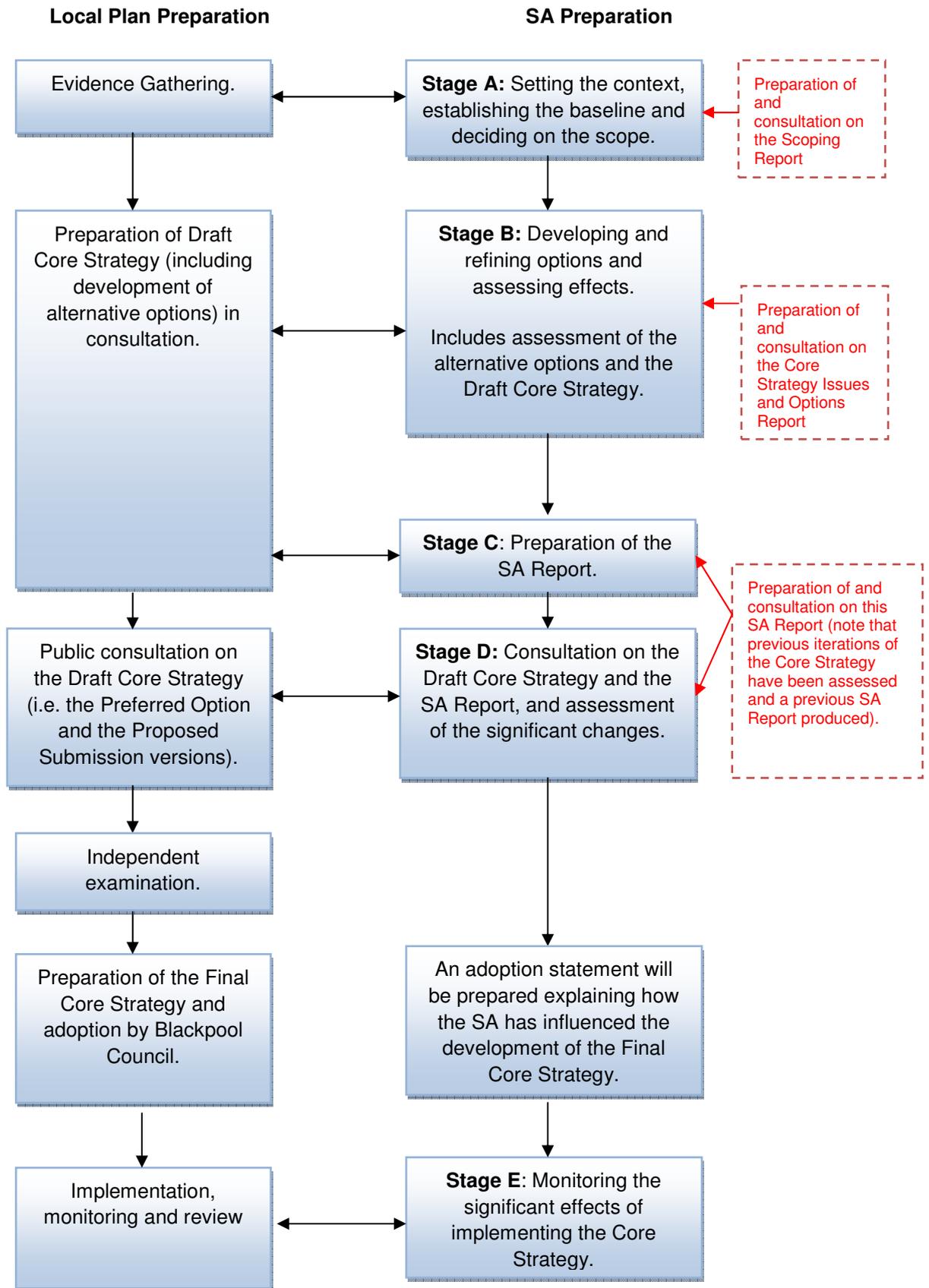
## 1.2 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

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 Local Plan and the SA



## 1.3 Purpose of the SA Report

**Blackpool Borough Council 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 an updated summary of the SA process so far and presents the findings and recommendations of the assessment of the Proposed Submission 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 findings of the SA Report will be consulted upon alongside the Proposed Submission Core Strategy.

## 1.4 How to Have Your Say

Your comments are invited on the Proposed Submission Core Strategy and the SA Report.

The consultation documents may be viewed at the address below:

Customer First Centre  
Blackpool Council  
Municipal Buildings  
Corporation Street  
Blackpool  
FY1 1NF

Alternatively they can be viewed at Blackpool Council's Planning website:

[www.blackpool.gov.uk/corestrategy](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/corestrategy)

This Non-Technical Summary of the SA Report and the Core Strategy is also available for public inspection free of charge during normal opening times at all libraries within the borough.

# 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 (where relevant) 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>Approximately 80% of Blackpool's urban area is developed and with the exception of the beach and Promenade and there is limited open space. Localised poor air quality associated with traffic.</p> <p>Blackpool's status as a mass visitor destination poses a potential threat to environmentally sensitive sites unless managed appropriately.</p> <p>Marton Mere's Site of Special Scientific Interest and local Nature reserve requires protection.</p> <p>It will be important to protect Blackpool's heritage assets and historic townscapes.</p> <p>Recycling rates are lower in Blackpool than national and county averages.</p>	<p>Brownfield sites should be remediated where possible. The biodiverse nature of brownfield sites must be acknowledged where relevant.</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 could be improved as part of wider neighbourhood renewal.</p>
Social	<p>Population growth is estimated to grow by 5% by 2027.</p> <p>Blackpool has a high proportion of older residents 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>Levels of violent crime are high, are focused in the town centre and are often related to alcohol. Alcohol related crime is often related to criminal damage.</p> <p>Substance misuse is also an issue with drug possession and dealing rates being above the county and regional average.</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>

Sustainability Topic	Key Sustainability Issues	Key Sustainability Opportunities
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 quality is an issue.</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 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 Local Development Framework (now the new Local Plan) 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). The SA 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.

The six alternative Strategic Options 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 Preferred Option for the Core Strategy was presented in the SA Report and the accompanying Non-Technical Summary (Hyder Report Numbers 006-NHR-NH51129-01 and 007-NH51129-NHR-01 respectively). This was consulted upon in 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 was developed (May 2012) and subsequently consulted upon.
- 5 The Council has now produced a Proposed Submission Core Strategy (2014) and this SA Report (011-NH51129-WXR-04-F) and the associated Non-Technical Summary 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**

<b>Sustainability Objectives</b>	
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 Reasonable 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.

The 2013 Strategic Housing Market Assessment identified a range of alternative housing figures which have been considered in the Housing Technical Paper (June 2014). The range included high, medium and low growth scenarios. However, in considering the options the Council concluded that the high and low growth figures would not deliver the needs of the local community as set out in the Core Strategy. As such, no alternative housing growth scenarios were assessed as part of this SA at this stage.

### 3.4 Assessment of the Proposed Submission Core Strategy

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

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

Following the SA for the Revised Preferred Option Core Strategy in 2012 it was issued to Blackpool Council's spatial planning team. Blackpool Council then reviewed the SA, concentrating on the recommendations made to improve the sustainability performance of the Core Strategy and prepared a response to the SA (this was published on Blackpool Borough Council's website). The response summarised the SA recommendations and identified changes that had been made to the Core Strategy where the Council felt were appropriate. Where the Council did not consider changes were necessary they outlined a justification of why not.

Generally the recommendations suggested were noted by the Council and improvements were made to the most relevant policy. i.e. the recommendation to ensure the principles of designing out crime within the 'Regenerating Blackpool Town Centre and Resort Core' policies was included within the supporting text to Policy CS7: Quality of Design. The remaining recommendations were either deemed not necessary to include within the suggested policy as reference was made elsewhere in the Core Strategy (the policies within the Core Strategy should not be read in isolation, instead the Core Strategy should be read as a whole) or a 'saved Local Plan' policy currently addressed the recommendation which would eventually be replaced by an updated Development Management Policy (the policies within the 'saved Local Plan and the future development management policies will form part of the statutory Development Plan for Blackpool and therefore should be read in conjunction with the Core Strategy).

Where Hyder felt the recommendations were sufficiently taken on board these are not repeated in the summaries below, Section 5 of the SA Report or Appendix F of the SA Report. However, where Hyder felt recommendations had not been addressed in the response to the SA sufficiently, these are repeated under the mitigation sub-headings.

## 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 Strategic Objectives

All 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 was felt they offer a strong basis for the future development of Blackpool.

## 4.3 The Spatial Strategy

The Spatial Strategy focusses on inner area regeneration comprising Blackpool town centre, the resort core and neighbourhoods within the inner areas, along with supporting growth in South Blackpool. Future development at Marton Moss would be guided by a neighbourhood planning process with a strong focus on the protection and enhancement of existing resources.

A large number of positive effects were recorded for the Spatial Strategy particularly against 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 support the objective of economic inclusion and reducing unemployment in the areas in most need. It is recognised that a large amount of 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 agreement of strategic priorities for land around Junction 4 of the M55 on the Fylde/Blackpool boundary between the three Fylde Coast Authorities and Lancashire County Council and the promotion of sustainable development of the Blackpool Airport corridor would establish a wider and more balanced housing choice within the sub- regional housing market area and may attract major new economic development to help strengthen the economy along the Fylde Coast.

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 in comparison to other boroughs in Lancashire, 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 were recorded against the heritage SA 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 assets.

Adverse impacts on coastal and 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:

- In addition, development to the south of Blackpool should be directed in a way that complements the existing town centre and resort, providing additional jobs in the process. There should be a link between any extension and the town centre, which will avoid any feeling of isolation on the edge of the town. Community cohesion with residents of the neighbouring borough of Fylde could also be encouraged.
- It is recommended that Policy CS1 is strengthened to specifically note that development to the south of Blackpool would be supported by services etc that meet the local needs.
- New employers should be encouraged to provide apprenticeships and training opportunities to help improve the skills levels of the Blackpool population.
- Ensure that landscape and visual assessments are prepared for any future sustainable extension in South Blackpool.
- It is essential that any development should be focussed away from the flood risk areas. New development should not result in increased flood risk.
- New developments should be encouraged to achieve challenging re-use and recycling targets.

## 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: Water Management;
- CS11: Sustainable Design and Low Carbon Energy; and

- CS11: Planning Obligations.

The Core Policies generally performed well against the SA Objectives with many positive scores recorded against the social and economic SA objectives. 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 high quality 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.

Policies CS2 and CS3 ensure that housing targets for 2012 – 2027 reflect the assessed need of the future population, ensure housing targets are realistic to deliver (i.e. take account of market signals and challenging issues associated with viability etc) and ensure housing growth is aligned to economic prosperity. The latter is considered important in order to address a number of challenges regarding Blackpool's current housing market and the dynamics of its local economy. All of the above would ensure positive effects against the economic and social SA Objectives.

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 Core Policies have been strengthened with the creation of two policies drawn from the previous Policy CS9 Energy Efficiency and Climate Change in order to more clearly address climate change related issues. Policy CS9 and CS10 focus on water management, sustainable construction and renewable and low carbon energy within the borough. This enables a strong emphasis to be placed upon sustainable design and construction principles and requires new non-residential development (over 1000m<sup>2</sup>) achieves the BREEAM 'very good' standard.

These policies ensure that new development minimises flood risk, incorporates SuDS features, maximises potential for renewable energy installations and includes renewable and low carbon energy provision all of which will contribute towards supporting the boroughs resilience.

## 4.4.1 Mitigation

No modifications have been suggested to improve the sustainability performance of the policy.

## 4.5 Strengthening Community Wellbeing

This section of the Core Strategy includes the following policies:

- Policy CS12 – Sustainable Neighbourhoods;
- Policy CS13 – Housing Mix, Density and Standards;
- Policy CS14 – Affordable Housing;
- Policy CS15 – Health and Education; and
- Policy CS16 – Traveller Sites.

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 CS12 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 CS16 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 CS12, CS15 and CS16 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 modification could be made to Policy CS16 to improve its sustainability performance:

- Although impacts were assessed as neutral with regard to pitch provision Policy CS16 may benefit from including specific reference to stating Brownfield land will be preferable over Greenfield land for additional pitch provision.

## 4.6 Regenerating Blackpool Town Centre and Resort Core

This section of the Core Strategy includes the following policies:

- Policy CS17 – Blackpool Town Centre;
- Policy CS18 – Winter Gardens;
- Policy CS19 – Central Business District (Talbot Gateway);
- Policy CS20 – Leisure Quarter (Former Central Station Site);
- Policy CS21- Leisure and Business Tourism;
- Policy CS22 – Key Resort Gateways; and
- Policy CS23 – Managing Holiday Bed Spaces.

### 4.6.1 Blackpool Town Centre and Resort Core 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.

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.

Holiday accommodation will be supported as an integral part of the tourism offer in sustainable locations within the town centre, resort core and defined holiday accommodation areas. This would complement other policies within the Core Strategy and may help to benefit community spirit and cohesion if new mixed neighbourhoods are established. 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.

## 4.6.2 Mitigation

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

- It is important to ensure a mix of facilities are provided that meets the needs of local residents as well as visitors. This would ensure that Blackpool has a year round vibrancy.
- Well planned, sensitive designs should be promoted within new development in order to protect and enhance heritage resources.

- It will be important for effects on the AQMA to be assessed as part of planning applications particularly for major developments such as those planned at the Leisure Quarter.
- Strategies for parking provision need to be carefully considered for all developments in the town centre and transport assessments need to accompany all planning applications to ensure that the individual and cumulative effects of the development are understood and appropriately mitigated. Developing cycling links as part of the new developments could also be addressed in the policies.
- Whilst the quality of design is addressed in other parts of the Core Strategy there is scope for the accommodation policies to promote innovative design – there may be scope to cross reference the design policies as the promenade has to be a flagship ‘centrepiece’ for the resort.

## 4.7 Enabling South Blackpool Growth and Enhancement

This section of the Core Strategy includes the following policies:

- CS24 – South Blackpool Employment Growth;
- CS25 – South Blackpool Housing Growth;
- CS26 – Marton Moss: Safeguarding and Enhancement; and
- CS27 – South Blackpool Transport and Connectivity.

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 CS26 offers a number of opportunities to build upon these existing characteristics and to develop the area such that new allotments, footpaths and buildings can be improved. A neighbourhood planning approach would be developed which may encourage the community to be actively involved in the future development of the area, therefore 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. This is also identified in Policy CS25 which states: *‘the pace and form of housing development in South Blackpool needs to complement and support progress on inner area regeneration sites in order to deliver a balanced, and better quality mix of different types of new housing’*

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 CS24 and CS25 and this is likely to offer benefits for the economy of Blackpool and that of the Fylde sub-region. Policy CS25 also promotes the sustainable development of wider land to support sub-regional growth. Whilst new development close to these transport links could lead to increased traffic flows, Policy CS27 seeks to improve the connectivity within South Blackpool and with the rest of the borough. The Policy highlights the importance of the M55 to Heyhouses Link to improving communications for the area between Lytham St. Anne’s and the Strategic Road Network. Opportunities to upgrade the South Fylde rail line and the potential for a link with the modernised Blackpool tramway would create a direct and efficient transport link along the length of the Fylde coast from Fleetwood to Lytham and on to Preston. This would directly serve to improve connectivity and would have transboundary effects.

The improvement of public transport, footpath and cycle networks within the borough would provide opportunities for residents to choose more sustainable modes of transport which would also indirectly provide health benefits.

Policy CS25 promotes major redevelopment and enhancement of land along the Airport corridor and close to J4 of the M55 Development in this area would contribute positively to the achievement of the land contamination objective (i.e. reduction and remediation). The removal of the strategic housing site at Marton Moss improves the performance of these policies against this objective.

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 modification could be made to the policies to improve their sustainability performance:

- Reducing infiltration and increasing runoff across South Blackpool may have an impact on surface and sub-surface waterbodies, although more information would be needed to quantify this impact. A full assessment would need to be undertaken prior to development. Proposals to incorporate SuDS into design would help to mitigate these impacts.

## 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.