

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY (NTS)

This is the NTS of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report

1. This is the NTS of the SA Report documenting the processes of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) within an integrated appraisal for the draft Warwick District Canalside Development Plan Document (DPD). This summary is an integral part of the SA Report that accompanies the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission draft DLP for public consultation during October to November 2019. It provides an outline of the SA process and findings, including how the SA has influenced the development of the draft Plan, and in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the European SEA Directive, and UK guidance on SA/SEA.

The Warwick Local Plan 2011-2029 & the Canalside Development Planning Document (DPD)

2. The overarching development plan document (DPD) for the Warwick District area is the Local Plan that was adopted in September 2017. The Local Plan set out a commitment to draft two DPDs for the District: Gypsy & Traveller DPD and Canal DPD. The Canal DPD will identify a new Conservation Area(s), consider how the canalside can be improved in relation to opportunity sites for new/redevelopment in the urban sections and consider issues around the canal environment throughout the district.
3. The Canalside DPD has been prepared in accordance with national planning requirements and informed by various technical studies, the Sustainability Appraisal, and consultation with key stakeholders. The DPD sets out the issues and opportunities for the canals and their immediate environs, together with a number of objectives. The DPD is structured into sections, as follows:
 - Background with relevant national & local policies; Neighbourhood Plans
 - The Extent of this DPD
 - Conservation Area
 - Context: The Grand Union canal; the Stratford upon Avon and Birmingham & Fazeley Canals
 - The History of Canals in Warwick District
 - How the Use of Canals has Changed
 - What has Happened Elsewhere?
 - Issues
 - Options & Identifying the Potential
 - Opportunity sites
 - Policies CS1-8 and Site-Specific CS9-CS11
 - Objectives

- Who is Involved?
- Appendices 1 Other Sites Analysis; 2 Listed Buildings; 3 Constraints

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

4. The purpose of Sustainability Appraisal is to promote sustainable development through the integration of environmental, social and economic considerations in the preparation of Local Plans. This requirement for SA is in accordance with planning legislation and paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Local Plans must also be subject to Regulations for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Government advises that an integrated approach is taken so that the SA process incorporates the requirements for SEA – and to the same level of detail.
5. SA is an iterative and ongoing process that informs plan-making by assessing developing elements of the plan, evaluating and describing the likely significant effects of implementing the plan, and suggesting possibilities for mitigating significant adverse effects and enhancing positive effects. UK Guidance suggests a staged approach to SEA. Initially the scope of the SA is determined by establishing the baseline conditions and context of the area by considering other relevant plans and objectives, and by identifying issues, problems and opportunities. From this the scope of the SA is prepared and includes a SA Framework of objectives for sustainable development relevant to the Canalside area and which forms the basis against which the draft DPD is assessed.
6. Local Plan Documents must also be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). The Habitats Regulations (amended 2018) afford a high level of protection to sites in a network of internationally important sites designated for their ecological status. These sites comprise European Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and Ramsar sites. It is a requirement to consider if the plan is likely to have significant effects on any relevant designated site. HRA is a two staged process – screening and appropriate assessment (if significant adverse effects are screened as likely).

Sustainability Characteristics of the Warwick Canalside Area & Likely Evolution without the DPD

7. The baseline characterisation of the Warwick District area was undertaken as part of the SA scoping stage in 2014 and updated as the SA progressed in line with the development of the Local Plan through to adoption in 2017. There are no internationally designated sites (SACs, SPAs or Ramsar) within a 15 km radius of the Warwick District area. There is no nationally designated landscape (AONB) but the landscapes in the District are valued for their scenic qualities, rich wildlife and cultural associations. Much of the rural areas through which the canals run is designated as Green Belt. The Leam Valley Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located north of the Grand Union Canal and to the east of Leamington Spa. The Newbold Combyn Park LNR is to the south of

the Grand Union Canal to the east of Leamington Spa. There are various Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) associated with the two canals and their canalsides.

8. The District has a rich historic and cultural heritage. One of the major outcomes of the assessment of the canals in developing the Canalside DPD was the designation of a new Canal Conservation Area in recognition of the special qualities and character of and interest in the canals and their immediate environs.
9. Air quality and traffic congestion, particularly in the main towns, are key issues. The Council has designated five air quality management areas (AQMAs) due to elevated annual average concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in Warwick, Leamington Spa and in Kenilworth. The Council's recent Air Quality SPD (January 2019) guides new development with regard to transport, air quality, energy and green infrastructure.
10. There is a network of rivers, waterbodies and watercourses running through the District, including the two canals and the Warwickshire River Avon. The river runs north to south through the district and then feeds into the Severn Estuary towards the south-west. Water is abstracted from the canal system for both agriculture and commercial uses. The water levels need to be maintained for navigation and to support the multifunctionality of the water including biodiversity/green infrastructure, recreation/leisure & wellbeing, together with its contribution to climate change resilience and role in sustainable water management.
11. The rural parts of the district comprise mostly agricultural land quality Grades 3a & 3b. The canals run through the important cultural/historic urban areas of Warwick and Leamington Spa; the rest of the routes are through rural areas. The canals were built for transportation but fell out of use with the coming of the railways and then the road network. Some canalside areas had previous industrial uses and may have contaminated land.
12. Approximately 90% of the District's population live in the four main urban areas (Royal Leamington Spa, Warwick, Kenilworth and Whitnash) with the remaining 10% living in a number of relatively small villages. The population has grown from 124,000 in 2000 to around 140,000 in 2017. It is thought that there are only permanent residential moorings at the Saltisford Canal Arm in Warwick with 7 moorings. The canals are widely used for boating holidays and leisure use.
13. The District has a strong local economy, with a skilled population and higher than average levels of productivity and earnings compared with regional and national averages. However, the changing needs of business means that some of the District's traditional industrial areas require regeneration. The District's 40km of canal offer particular opportunities for recreation, regeneration and environmental improvement.

Key Sustainability Issues, Problems and Opportunities

14. May be summarised, as follows:

- Degraded environment with dumping of litter/rubbish, vandalism with crime and the perception of crime, and poor visual and aesthetic quality – strong opportunities to regenerate and improve the local environments, including safety and improved access
- Vacant and underused buildings – opportunity to facilitate regeneration and reuse; maintain and repair significant buildings and historic assets
- Accessibility – canals provide important linear routes for walking and cycling for healthier living as well as routes for water-based transport; accessibility could be improved including for a wider cultural diversity
- Flooding and water resources – canals may be subject to flooding; the canals also provide water supplies to industry and agriculture, but levels need to be maintained to support navigation and wildlife. The canals also have a wider role in sustainable water management and climate change resilience.
- Green infrastructure – making linkages to networks and improvements with biodiversity gains for wildlife and people
- Increased boating use
- Pressures for overdevelopment at some sites
- High Speed 2

15. Without the Warwick Canalside DPD to guide and manage new development in an integrated and holistic way, issues for sustainable water management, degraded industrial areas that do not meet future business needs, poor accessibility, and continuing crime or fear of crime will continue with adverse effects on the use of the canals and environs for leisure, cultural and health activities. The DPD offers opportunities to update business needs at certain industrial estates, suggesting regeneration and new residential development with improved access and green infrastructure.

How has the Warwick Canalside DPD been assessed?

16. The SA Framework, together with the baseline information, comprised the basis for assessment, and is summarised in the following table:

SA Objective
1. To have a strong and stable economy
2. To enable a range of sustainable transport options
3. To reduce the need to travel
4. To reduce the generation of waste and increase recycling
5. To ensure the prudent use of land and natural resources

6. To protect and enhance the natural environment
7. To create and maintain safe, well-designed, high quality built environments
8. To protect and enhance the historic environment
9. To create good quality air, water and soils
10. To minimise the causes of climate change by reducing greenhouse gases and increasing the proportion of energy generated from renewable and low carbon sources
11. To adapt to the predicted impacts of climate change including flood risk
12. To meet the housing needs of the whole community (ensuring the provision of decent and affordable housing for all, of the right quantity, type, size and tenure)
13. To protect, enhance and improve accessibility to local services and community facilities
14. To improve health and well being
15. To reduce poverty and social exclusion
16. To reduce crime, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour

Categories of Significance		
Symbol	Meaning	Sustainability Effect
++	Major Positive	Proposed development encouraged as would resolve existing sustainability problem
+	Minor Positive	No sustainability constraints and proposed development acceptable
=	Neutral	Neutral effect
?	Uncertain	Uncertain or Unknown Effects
-	Minor Negative	Potential sustainability issues: mitigation and/or negotiation possible
--	Major Negative	Problematical & improbable because known sustainability issues; mitigation likely to be difficult and/or expensive
+	-	SA Objectives 2, 5, 6, 13 and 14 consider more than one topic & as a result there is the potential for different effects. For example, Objective 2 relates to encouraging the use of public transport, walking & cycling as well as reducing traffic congestion. Development could have a negative effect on traffic; however, it could also provide new cycle/walking routes with a positive effect – and thus, two symbols.

What reasonable alternatives have been considered & addressed?

17. The number and extent of reasonable alternatives to be considered through plan-making and the SA are limited. However, the development of the draft DPD has considered vacant or under-utilised land and/or opportunities for regeneration. Most of these were identified to be not yet available and therefore, not considered to be reasonable alternatives for the purposes of SA. The three site areas that had been identified in the Local Plan Policy DS17 are progressed further in the DPD and were subject to SA.

What are the likely significant effects of the draft DPD? How has the SA influenced the draft DPD?

18. Overall, the implementation of the guidance and policies presented in the draft DPD was found to have significant positive sustainability benefits for communities and housing. The DPD helps to resolve existing sustainability problems, for example, the poor access to the canal in certain urban areas and the concerns over crime and anti-social behaviour. Requirements in the DPD to improve access and the canal pathway, and for design/layout to provide surveillance will help reduce problems regarding safety and crime or fear of crime. These positive effects are likely to extend beyond the environs of the canals and development site areas. The approach of developing previously used land has major positive effects for the effective use of land.
19. The DPD recognises likely future business needs, enabling regeneration and new residential development on underused industrial estates that will also facilitate improved accessibility. This is likely to have wider and synergistic effects on sustainable transport and health and well-being through increased safe use. The SA did not make any suggestions for the draft DPD; the findings of the SA confirmed that the plan-making had identified the relevant issues and opportunities and had made provision through policies to mitigate any potential negative effects.

How could negative effects be mitigated?

20. Strong policies are in place to protect and enhance environmental and historic resources and assets with at least effects mitigated to neutral with some enhancements indicating positive effects. For example, the requirements for biodiversity, green infrastructure and landscape/townscape will have positive effects that could be synergistic and cumulative in the longer term.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

21. The HRA was updated in consideration of recent significant changes to HRA practice in the UK. A pragmatic and proportional approach was taken and to clearly demonstrate due process in line with updated guidance. Since the DPD is focused on canals that are linked to other water systems, there could be the potential for environmental pathways. It was concluded that the Warwick Canalside DPD will not have adverse effects, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, on the integrity of the internationally designated protected site of the Severn Estuary.

Were there any difficulties encountered?

22. There were no significant technical difficulties encountered during the preparation of this SA. There are inherent difficulties in predicting the likely future baseline and assumptions were made using professional judgment.

Consultation

23. The proposed scope of the SA was consulted on in early September 2019 with the statutory bodies (Historic England, Environment Agency, and Natural England). This SA Report accompanies the draft Warwick Canalside DPD for wider consultation with stakeholders and the public. Any comments received on the SA Report will be submitted with the draft DPD to the Secretary of State for independent examination later in 2019.

Monitoring Proposals

24. Local planning authorities are required to produce Monitoring Reports (MRs) including indicators and targets against which the progress of the Plan can be assessed. There is also a requirement to monitor the predictions made in the SA and Government advises Councils to prepare a monitoring strategy that incorporates the needs of the two processes to make best use of shared information and resources. The Warwick monitoring strategy for the Local Plan is considered satisfactory for the requirements from the SA process.