

Lichfield District Local Plan Review

Preferred Options

Sustainability Assessment

Non-Technical Summary

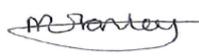
On behalf of Lichfield District Council

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Prepared by:	Molly Stanley	Signed:	
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Checked by:	Mark Walton	Signed:	
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Verified by:	Mark Walton	Signed:	
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Contents Page

1.0	Introduction.....	4
2.0	Sustainability Assessment – SA Framework and Objectives	8
3.0	Developing and assessing Options and 'reasonable' alternatives.....	11
4.0	Appraisal of significant environmental effects - Preferred Options.....	14
5.0	Mitigation and Enhancement	26
6.0	Monitoring and Next Steps	27

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 WYG is commissioned by Lichfield District Council (The Council) to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of the the Lichfield District Local Plan Review (the Plan).

1.1.2 The Plan will set out the following:

- Spatial Strategy;
- Vision for the District;
- strategic objectives for the District;
- Strategic and local policies;
- Site allocations;
- Monitoring and implementation framework for the next 15 years.

1.1.3 The extant Lichfield District Local Plan comprises:

- The Local Plan Strategy (adopted 17th February 2015); and
- The Local Plan Allocations (currently at an advanced stage of preparation).

1.1.4 The above documents will guide new development in the District for the period 2008 to 2029. The Local Plan Review, the subject of this sustainability appraisal, comprises a full review of the Spatial Strategy set out in the adopted Local Plan Strategy and an associated review of the vision, strategic objectives and planning policies that support the Spatial Strategy. Once adopted the Local Plan Review will replace the extant Lichfield District Local Plan documents.

1.1.5 The Council prepared and consulted upon the Local Plan Review: Preferred Options and Policy Directions between January and March 2019. This represented the second stage in the Local Plan Review process. The Council has now reached the next stage of this process and produced the Local Plan Review: Preferred Options document.

1.1.6 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Lichfield District Local Plan Review: Preferred Option has been prepared by Footprint Ecology. The HRA is presented as a separate 'standalone' document but the findings of the HRA have been taken into account in this SA.

1.1.7 The SA is a mechanism for considering and communication the likely effects of a draft plan, and alternatives, in terms of sustainability issues, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and enhancing the positives. The SA of the Local Plan is a legal requirement.

1.1.8 Under S19(5) of the Act and the SEA Regulations which came into force in England and Wales in July 2004 SA and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) are mandatory for all Local Plans and SPDs. S39 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires Local Plans/SPDs to be prepared with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. SA is one way of helping fulfil this duty through a structured appraisal of the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the plan. The production of a SA is one of the “tests of soundness” on a Local Plan/SPD.

<p>Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Identify other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives 2: Collecting baseline information 3: Identify sustainability issues and problems 4: Develop the SA framework 5: Consult the consultation bodies on the scope of the SA report
<p>Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Testing the Local Plan objectives against the SA framework 2: Developing the Local Plan options including reasonable alternatives 3: Evaluate the likely effects of the Local Plan and alternatives 4: Considering way of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects 5: Propose measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan
<p>Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report</p>
<p>Stage D: Seek representations on the SA report from consultation bodies and the public</p>
<p>Stage E: Post adoption reporting and monitoring</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Prepare and publish post-adoption statement 2: Monitor significant effects of implementing the Local Plan 3: Respond to adverse effects

Figure 1: SA Process Stages

- 1.1.9 The requirement to undertake SEA is established in the EU by the European Directive 2001/42/EC, 'the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment' (commonly known as the SEA Directive). The SEA Directive is transposed into English law by the SEA Regulations.
- 1.1.10 SEA and SA are closely linked. SA aims to integrate sustainability issues into decision making by appraising the plan or strategy using environmental, social and economic objectives, whilst SEA also aims to facilitate sustainable development but its emphasis is on integrating environmental considerations into decision making through analysis of environmental issues.
- 1.1.11 SA/SEA is a five stage process. Figure 1 above sets out each of the stages and the stage currently reached.
- 1.1.12 This document comprises the Sustainability Appraisal Report Non-Technical Summary (NTS) for the Lichfield District Local Plan Review: Scope Issues and Options. The report meets the requirements of a 'Non-Technical Summary' set out at Paragraph 12 and Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations 2004.

1.2 Lichfield District Local Plan Review – Purpose and Objectives

- 1.2.1 Lichfield District Council is seeking to pursue a plan that meets the future social, economic and environmental needs of the District. The Local Plan Review's purpose is to shape the future of the District up to 2040. The current Local Plan Strategy sets an overall vision for the District.
- 1.2.2 The current Local Plan Strategy vision for the District was the subject of an earlier Sustainability Appraisal process and thus is considered '*fit for purpose*' for identifying the spatial options to be taken forward in the Lichfield District Local Plan Review. The Council has proposed no substantive changes to the existing Vision as part of the Preferred Options stage except to extend the end date of the plan from 2036 to 2040.
- 1.2.3 To support the Vision the Local Plan Review sets 15 strategic objectives for delivering sustainable economic growth, healthy and safe communities and an integrated infrastructure network within an attractive environment. These are summarised as:

Strategic objective & priority 1 - Sustainable Communities

Strategic objective & priority 2 - Rural Communities

Strategic objective & priority 3- Climate Change

Strategic objective & priority 4 – Our Infrastructure
Strategic objective & priority 5 – Sustainable Transport
Strategic objective & priority 6 – Meeting Housing Need
Strategic objective & priority 7 – Economic Prosperity
Strategic objective & priority 8 – Employment Opportunities
Strategic objective & priority 9 – Our centres
Strategic objective & priority 10 – Visitor economy
Strategic objective & priority 11 – Health & Safe Lifestyles
Strategic objective & priority 12 – Countryside Character
Strategic objective & priority 13 – Natural Resources
Strategic objective & priority 14 - Built Environment
Strategic objective & priority 15 - High Quality Development.

- 1.2.4 The Vision and Strategic objectives set out the Council's aim to accommodate growth and associated infrastructure, whilst protecting the District's built and natural environment and delivering a high quality of life for the District's residents, visitors and workers.

1.3 Baseline Context

- 1.3.1 The Sustainability baseline for Lichfield District used for the purposes of this Assessment is set out in the Scoping Report (July 2019). This sets out the updated empirical data on all relevant economic, social and environmental factors. The baseline information provides the basis for identifying trends, predicting the likely effects of the Plan and monitoring its outcomes.

1.4 Integrated Sustainability Assessment

- 1.4.1 This SA Report has been prepared to assist in the production of the Lichfield District Local Plan Review: Scope, Issues and Options to ensure that the principles of sustainable development are at the core of the decision-making process in a transparency and open manner. The report provides a independent qualitative assessment of the sustainability implications of all potential spatial development options and policies considered as part of the emerging Local Plan Review.
- 1.4.2 The SA Report will be made available for public consultation alongside the Lichfield District Local Plan Review: Preferred Option.

2.0 Sustainability Assessment -SA Framework and Objectives

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The SA framework is used to predict and evaluate the social, economic and environmental effects of proposed options and policies (and any reasonable alternatives) being considered. It is important that the assessment process is practical and manageable.
- 2.1.2 Based on the review of the policy context and baseline information (established through scoping) a range of key sustainability issues were established that identify what the SA should focus upon. These key issues were used as a basis for establishing a series of sustainability objectives and supporting questions (to aid the assessment process) that together make-up the Sustainability Appraisal Framework.

2.2 Stage A – Scoping

- 2.2.1 The scoping stage of a SA involves the collation of evidence relating to the baseline position and policy context - culminating in a series of key issues that should be a focus for the SA and which helped to establish a sustainability framework.
- 2.2.2 The Lichfield District Local Plan Review: Scoping Report was previously published in December 2017. The Council updated the Scoping Report in July 2019 to have regard to the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Strategic Growth Study February 2018 and the National Planning Policy Framework standard method for assessing housing need published in February 2019 have been considered alongside other changes in policy context. **Sustainability Objective 1 in relation to meeting housing need has been amended as a result.**
- 2.2.3 The Lichfield District Local Plan Review: Scoping Report was the subject of formal consultation with statutory consultees/stakeholders and the comments received taken into account. This included, as a minimum the three statutory environmental consultation bodies set out in the SEA Regulations (namely Natural England, Environment Agency and English Heritage). Based on the consultation exercise, two changes to the wording of the objectives used in the SA were agreed by the District Council. Historic England requested that **SO 12** was amended to include specific reference to '*heritage assets*' and Natural England requested that **SO 7** is amended to reference '*managing* water and air pollution.

2.2.4 The Sustainability Topics were established at the scoping stage to reflect the headline principles of sustainable development. These topics also reflect those issues referred to in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations, which are suggested as issues that should be addressed in a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The SA objectives used in this process are set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Sustainability Objectives (SO)

Ref. no.	Sustainability Objective	Link to topics in SEA Regulations
1	Provide housing that meets the needs of all of our existing and future residents	(b) population (j) material assets
2	To promote safe communities and reduce fear of crime	(b) population (c) human health
3	Improve access to health facilities and promote wellbeing	(b) population (c) human health
4	Maximise the use of previously developed land/ buildings and encourage the efficient use of land	(b) population (c) human health (j) material assets
5	To improve the educational attainment of the working age population	(b) population (c) human health
6	To achieve stable and sustainable levels of economic growth and maintain economic competitiveness	(b) population (c) human health

7	To reduce and manage water and air pollution	(f) soil (g) water (h) air (i) climatic factors
8	To minimise waste and increase the recycling and reuse of waste materials	(i) climatic factors
9	To reduce <i>and manage</i> flood risk and surface water run-off	(g) water (j) material assets
10	To reduce and manage the impacts of climate change and the Districts contributions to the causes	(i) climatic factors
11	To promote biodiversity protection enhancement and management of species and habitats	(a) biodiversity (d) flora (e) fauna (f) soil
12	To ensure the protection and enhancement of the historic environment, <i>heritage assets</i> and its setting	(k) cultural heritage
13	Protect, enhance and manage the character and quality of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place	(l) landscape (k) cultural heritage
14	To increase opportunities for non-car travel and reduce the need for travel	(b) population (c) human health

3.0 Developing and assessing options and reasonable alternatives (Stage B)

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Regulation 12 (2) of the 2004 Regulations states that where an environmental assessment is required an environmental report shall be prepared to "*identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of –*

(a) Implementing the plan or programme; and

(b) Reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme".

3.1.2 An assessment of '*reasonable*' alternatives to the selected plan is required to meet the requirements of Regulation 12 of the 2004 Regulations and in doing so, identify and evaluate their sustainability impacts. The Regulations imply that alternatives that are not reasonable do not need to be subject of the SA process. For the purposes of the SA it is assumed that unreasonable alternatives include policy options that do not meet the objectives of the plan or national policy (e.g. the National Planning Policy Framework) or site options that are unavailable or undeliverable.

3.2 Preferred Growth Option and policies

3.2.1 The Lichfield District Local Plan Review: Scope, Issues and Options identifies six broad spatial options for the distribution of housing growth and economic growth. These options were identified by the District Council for the purposes of this SA. The six spatial options are:

- Residential Growth Option 1 – Town focussed development;
- Residential Growth Option 2 – Town and Key Rural Villages Focussed Development;
- Residential Growth Option 3 – Dispersed Development;
- Residential Growth Option 4 – New Settlement Development;
- Employment Growth Option 1 – Expansion of existing employment locations; and
- Employment Growth Option 2 – New Locations.

3.2.2 These spatial options were the subject of previous SA dated January 2019. The preferred spatial option being taken forward in the Lichfield District Local Plan Review represents a combination of Residential Growth Options 2 and 4 and Employment Growth Option 1. The Preferred Spatial Option is considered to meet the requirement for 'reasonable' alternatives in the 2004 Regulations.

3.2.3 The specifics of the Preferred Spatial Option is set out in draft Strategic Policy OSS2: Our Spatial Strategy. Strategic Policy OSS2: Our Spatial Strategy defined the quantum of growth for Lichfield District for the plan period until 2040:

- to deliver a minimum of 7,280 dwellings to meet local housing needs and contribute 4,500 dwellings to meeting the greater Birmingham and Black Country housing market area shortfall;
- new growth/development will be directed to the most sustainable locations via a hierarchy of centres and settlements;
- the reuse of previously developed land and the efficient use of land will remain a key priority of the District;
- new strategic allocations to bring forward 5,525 dwellings will be focussed on Lichfield and other larger service villages, namely. Fradley, Fazeley and Whittington;
- identification of areas of development restraint to deliver growth at the appropriate level;
- policy support of a new settlement (Preferred Policy: New Settlement) providing it is self-sustaining and creates a 'sustainable place to live';
- existing infrastructure will be protected;
- high value employment will be encouraged;
- the natural and built environment will be protected and enhanced;
- quality of life, health and well-being will be protected and enhanced; and
- the Green Belt will be protected.

3.2.4 Strategic Policy OEET1: Our Employment and Economic Development Employment Growth defines the quantum of economic growth as:

- The allocation of approximately 61 hectares of land to be informed by the ELAA;
- Supporting rural diversification;
- Encouraging education and skills development;

- Supporting the expansion, conversion and redevelopment of existing employment premises/areas; and
- Non-employment uses will not usually be supported in existing or allocated employment areas.

3.2.5 The proposed Growth Option and the Spatial Strategy set out in Policies OSS2 and OEET1 have been assessed against the Sustainability Objectives.

3.2.6 The proposed Growth Option and the Spatial Strategy are also supported by a suite of supporting planning policies that provide environmental and policy direction associated with bringing forward new development for the plan period. The policies are split into groupings that correspond to the key aspects of the Local Plan Review and have each been assessed against the Sustainability Objectives.

3.2.7 Lichfield District Council has also considered an alternative policy option against not implementing the plan. This 'no development' option will result in the Council relying on extant local plan policy until it becomes out of date and national guidance only. It is acknowledged that this option is not supported by the Government and also does not give the Council control over the direction or quantum of future growth or the delivery of associated infrastructure requirements but represents a 'reasonable alternative'. Policies have been assessed against a no development option in order to provide a baseline or fall-back environmental state as required by the SEA Directive.

4.0 Appraisal of 'significant' environmental effects associated with Lichfield Local Plan Review: Preferred Option

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 An appraisal of the Lichfield Local Plan Review: Preferred Option including the proposed strategic housing allocations and policies considered in this SA. The alternatives housing sites have also been assessed. This section of the report summarises the findings of the Sustainability Assessment of the Lichfield Local Plan Review: Preferred Option in respect of any significant effects associated with the SA objectives and also considers ways of mitigating adverse effects and any cumulative effects arising from the Local Plan Review as a whole. This accords with Tasks B3 and B4 of the five stage SA process.

4.2 Assumptions, uncertainties and difficulties

4.2.1 An appraisal of environmental effects inevitably relies on assumptions and an element of subjective judgement. As the Local Plan Review contains strategic options there are no short, medium or long term effects associated with this stage of the Local Plan.

4.2.2 It is a requirement of the SEA Regulations that consideration is given to difficulties that are encountered during the SA process. This could include any data limitations or the availability of other relevant assessments. This is noted in the individual option matrices. As the Local Plan Review evolves the evidence base for the document will expand and been refined resulting in a more robust understanding of the effects of the site options on the Sustainability Objectives.

4.2.3 If any other uncertain effects or difficulties have been encountered as part of the assessment process then these are noted under the relevant sections alongside the assessor's comments.

4.3 Vision and Objectives

4.3.1 The overall vision for Lichfield District sets out the aspiration for development in the District to be delivered in a sustainable way, to ensure that the District is a place where residents and communities feel safe/belong and are proud of the district's history, culture and the natural and built environment. The Strategic Objectives then provide more detail about how the Vision

will be achieved. Therefore, where effects on the SA objectives have been identified these are broadly very positive. Where the Local Plan strategic objectives directly address a particular SA objective, significant positive effects have been identified although in most cases the positive effects are minor due to the general nature of the objectives and the fact that they will be delivered through more detailed policies in the Local Plan Review.

4.3.2 No conflicts between SA objectives or the Borough Plan objectives were identified.

4.4 Preferred Spatial Growth Option - Our Spatial Strategy

4.4.1 The amount of housing and employment development to be provided through the Strategic 'Spatial Strategy' policies will have generally significant positive effects on **SA Objective 1: Housing Needs** as it will meet the objectively assessed housing need for Lichfield and a fair contribution to the greater Birmingham and Black Country housing market area shortfall. The Growth Option will also have a positive effect on **SA Objective 6: Stable and Sustainable Economy** by seeking to meet the identified needs for employment land in the District by delivering a portfolio of potential sites. Balancing the amount of housing and employment land will ensure that local needs are appropriately met.

4.4.2 Providing everyone with an opportunity to live in a decent and affordable home is a key social target. A steady supply of housing is necessary to generate vitality, facilitate continued economic prosperity, help support local shops and services required by local residents and help achieve the aim of creating mixed and balanced communities.

4.4.3 A full range of household sizes for all income levels and ages, will help reduce the levels of outward commuting, will help attract business and improve the supply of employees. The preferred option has the opportunity to deliver a range of housing types, including affordable housing and scores well against the social objectives.

4.4.4 The Preferred Option will contribute positively to maximising previously developed land and buildings but the option of a New Settlement which will focus new development outside of existing settlements, will have a significant adverse effect on the efficient use of land (**Sustainability Objective 4**) until the associated infrastructure and services are established.

4.4.5 The Preferred Growth Option will have a neutral score on promoting safe communities and reducing the fear of crime (**Sustainability Objective 2**).

- 4.4.6 Specific measures relating to the reduction and management of water, flood risk and surface water run-off (**Sustainability Objective 9**), minimisation of waste and recycling (**Sustainability Objective 8**), air pollution levels (**Sustainability Objective 7**) and managing climate change (**Sustainability Objective 10**) are addressed by a suite of Local Plan policies which, once the Local Plan Review is adopted, will come into force and replace the existing policies in the Lichfield Local Plan Strategy. Based on the above, the Preferred Option represent a neutral effect on these sustainability objectives.
- 4.4.7 The Preferred Option will have the potential to impact negatively on the District's biodiversity assets (**Sustainability Objective 11**) in both the urban and countryside areas but also offer the opportunity for significant ecological enhancement and habitat creation. Strategic Policies on habitats and biodiversity, Special Areas of Conservation and Green Infrastructure/Connectivity will ensure that any biodiversity loss is reduced to an acceptable minimum. Based on the above, the Preferred Option represent a neutral effect on this sustainability objective.
- 4.4.8 The Preferred Option will have the potential to result in negative impacts on the historic environment, heritage assets including archaeological remains, and their settings (**Sustainability Objective 12**). Strategic Policies on historic environment, loss of heritage assets, conservation areas and evidence to support to heritage proposals will ensure that any heritage impacts are reduced to an acceptable minimum. Based on the above, the Preferred Option represent a neutral effect on this sustainability objective.
- 4.4.9 The Preferred Option has the potential to impact negatively on the District's landscape and townscape (**Sustainability Objective 13**). Strategic Policies on natural and historic landscapes will ensure that any landscape impact is reduced to an acceptable minimum. Based on the above, the Preferred Option represent a neutral effect on this sustainability objective.

4.4.10 The Preferred Option focusses new growth, principally, on the strategic center and larger service villages which offer the best opportunities to increase non-car travel and reducing the need for travel (**Sustainability Objective 14**), improve health/promoting well-being (**Sustainability Objective 3**) and potentially improving educational attainment (**Sustainability Objective 5**) due to the focusing of new development in existing settlements where public transport, including opportunities for enhanced services, is available. *However, the choice to restrict growth within the Level 2 Centre (Burntwood) to within the existing urban area and the Council's encouragement for a New Settlement to come forward towards the end of the plan period means that a minor positive effect is noted for these sustainability objectives.* A significant positive score could be recorded for each sustainability objective if further growth was identified in the Level 2 Centre.

4.5 Local Plan Review: Policies

Our Sustainable communities

4.5.1 The nature of the Sustainable Communities policies means that positive effects (either minor or significant) are identified for all relevant policies in relation to reducing and managing flood risk and surface water run-off (**Sustainability Objective 9**), minimisation of waste and recycling (**Sustainability Objective 8**) and managing climate change (**Sustainability Objective 10**). The policies are likely to have a neutral effect or no link to the majority of SA objectives.

Our Infrastructure

4.5.2 Meeting housing needs and the promotion of economic prosperity are strategic objective of the Local Plan Review which are equally dependent on the delivering of timely and supporting infrastructure. The Strategic Policy has the potential to indirectly improve economic growth in the District by providing important infrastructure. The policy represents a minor positive effect on **Sustainability Objective 6** but is likely to have a neutral effect or no link on the remaining SA objectives.

Our sustainable transport

- 4.5.3 The strategic transport policies are likely to have a significant positive effect on **SA Objectives 7**: reducing and managing air quality in the District, **SA Objective 10**: climate change and **SA Objective 14**: increasing opportunities for non-car travel as it supports future sustainable transport infrastructure, improvements to the walking and cycling network and encourages developments that will contribute to improved connectivity.

Our homes for the future

- 4.5.4 Providing everyone with an opportunity to live in decent and affordable home is a key social target. Housing is a key driver to revitalisation and it is an essential community need to provide a variety of housing types. A steady supply of housing is necessary to generate vitality, facilitate continued economic prosperity, help support local shops and services required by local residents and help achieve the aim of creating mixed and balanced communities. There is a shortage of affordable housing in Lichfield District. The preferred option will further increase the pressure for affordable housing which the Affordable Housing Policy OHF4 seeks to address by encouraging the provision of affordable housing in development proposals. The provision of allocated housing areas will contribute positively to these objectives. *A specific target for the level of affordable housing would be beneficial and should be sent out in Policy OHF4 to allow future provision to be monitored.*
- 4.5.5 All the housing policies and allocations score well against the social objectives. It is the Council's intention to bring forward a range and mix of housing tenures during the plan period to support the planning of high levels of economic growth. This is likely to contribute to meeting housing needs (**SA Objective 1**) providing safe communities (**SA Objective 2**), improving health facilities (**SA Objective 3**) and employment opportunities, thereby delivering an equitable sharing of the benefits of prosperity.
- 4.5.6 The Housing policies are expected to have no effects on a relatively high proportion of the SA objectives as there is no direct linkage between the Policy and the SA Objectives. No likely significant negative effects are identified in relation to any of the SA objectives.
- 4.5.7 The housing policies and allocated housing sites will result in a neutral to slight positive effect on economic factors (**SA Objective 6**) due to jobs and training opportunities created during

the construction phase and the long term link between the provision of new homes and retention of employment/trained personnel (**SA Objective 5**) in the District.

Our economic growth

- 4.5.8 Overall, there are likely to be mainly positive effects from the Employment policies. Two significant positive effects are expected for **SA Objective 6**: Achieving Stable and Sustainable economic growth, i.e. to support sustainable economic growth and improve employment opportunities in the District, including tourism and development of Drayton Manor Park together with **SA objective 5**: improving education attainment.
- 4.5.9 Policy OEE1 confirms that a total of 61 hectares of new employment land is required in the District during the plan period. No employment allocations are set out in the Local Plan Review: Preferred Option and therefore no assessment of alternative employment sites was undertaken as part of this SA. The employment policies set out the framework for the delivery of this future employment land, including the expansion of existing employment areas and future local plan allocations and thus score positively in the SA. However, the SA has not been able to consider the sustainability considerations associated with specific employment sites and this matter should be addressed in the next stage of the Local Plan Review.
- 4.5.10 Employment activity can also have an indirect positive effect on human health in the longer term. Supporting economic growth will result in an indirect positive effect on **SA Objectives 3**: promoting wellbeing.
- 4.5.11 The Employment policies are expected to have a neutral effect on a relatively high proportion of the SA objectives as there is protection built into these policies which could therefore prevent adverse impacts on the environment.

Healthy and safe communities

- 4.5.12 The nature of the Healthy and safe communities' policies means that significant positive effects are identified for all relevant policies in relation to **SA Objective 2**: Promoting safe communities and **SA Objective**: Improving health. The policies will benefit the health of local communities by ensuring that health infrastructure is delivered in tandem with strategic development proposals.

4.5.13 The policies are likely to have generally positive effects on specific SA objectives due to the specific nature of the policy but with a neutral or no link to the majority of SA objectives.

Our natural Resources

4.5.14 A large number of positive effects have been identified for the Natural Resources policies as they cover specific topics such as biodiversity, Special Area of Conservation, Green Belt, green infrastructure, natural and historic landscapes. As the policies seek to protect the natural environment and thus all the effects identified are broadly positive.

4.5.15 All the policies are likely to have positive effects on **SA Objective 11**: promoting, protecting and enhancing species and habitats and **SA Objective 12**: promoting and enhancing the historic environment.

4.5.16 In addition, the wider indirect benefits of green infrastructure mean that positive effects are also likely to result for **SA Objective 3**: Health and wellbeing, **SA Objective 7**: reducing air pollution **SA Objective 10**: Climate Change, **SA Objective 12**: Heritage and **SA Objective 13**: Landscape.

4.5.17 It is considered that all the allocated sites will result in some changes to landscape character of varying degrees. The development of the sites for housing uses will generally result in the loss of existing open agricultural land and features that provide separation between existing built up areas. In each case, the development of the site will increase the level of built development in the local area but also offer the opportunity to recreate and connect existing landscape features resulting in long term landscape improvements.

4.5.18 Based on the above, it is considered that the development of sites falling within Landscape Character Areas requiring action to enhance, restore or recreate landscape features will, generally, result in a slight adverse effect on this sustainability objective in the short term. However, an overall neutral to positive effect in the medium to long term will derive once the landscaping proposals have started to mature and the linkages become established.

- 4.5.19 Conversely, the development of sites falling within Landscape Character Areas requiring action to conserve existing landscape character/features will have a significant adverse effect on this sustainability objective in the short term but an overall slight adverse effect in the medium to long term once the landscaping proposals have started to mature and the linkages become established.
- 4.5.20 No significant negative effects have been identified for any of the Natural Resources policies in relation to the SA objectives.

Our built and historic environment

- 4.5.21 A number of likely significant positive effects are identified, mainly where a policy directly addresses an SA objective, for example Strategic Policy: Historic Environment which seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment so is likely to have a significant positive effect on **SA Objective 12**: protecting and enhancing the historic environment and heritage assets.
- 4.5.22 The strategic historic environment policies requires that new development proposals take full account of the characteristics and setting of the heritage asset to ensure that features of historic interest are protected and conserved. The implementation of the policy will therefore result in no significant or cumulative effect on cultural heritage coming forward as a result of the proposals in the Plan.
- 4.5.23 No significant negative effects have been identified for any of the built or historic environment policies in relation to the SA objectives.

Area specific policies

- 4.5.24 Each of the areas specific policies focus on improvements to the environment, economy of the level of facilities and service in the identified areas. The economy polices, therefore, score positively against **SA Objective 6**: Achieving Stable and Sustainable economic growth, i.e. to support sustainable economic growth and improve employment opportunities in the service centre and service villages together with an indirect impact on **SA objective 5**: improving education attainment.

- 4.5.25 The environment policies score positively positive effects on **SA Objective 11**: promoting, protecting and enhancing species and habitats, **SA Objective 12**: promoting and enhancing the historic environment and preserving or enhancing the District’s landscape and townscape **(Sustainability Objective 13)**.
- 4.5.26 The policies focused on the protecting and enhancing the range and access to services and facilities in the centres and villages scored positively **SA Objective 3**: Health and wellbeing, **SA Objective 7**: reducing air pollution and **SA Objective 14**: reducing the need to travel.
- 4.5.27 No significant negative effects have been identified and a neutral or no link score was recorded for the remaining SA objectives.

4.6 Local Plan Review – Housing Allocations

- 4.6.1 The Sustainability Appraisal has a key role to play in identifying allocated sites for new housing and employment growth. The starting point are all the sites identified in the Local Plan Review is the SHLAA (2019) and ELAA (2019).
- 4.6.2 Details of the Site Selection process developed by the District Council is set out at Section 2.6 and the findings of the SA were taken into account to determine the sites for allocation within the Local Plan Review. No employment sites are identified at the Local Plan Review: Preferred Option and therefore no assessment of alternatives employment sites was undertaken as part of this SA.
- 4.6.3 A total of 304 alternative housing sites were assessed against each of the sustainability objectives as part of this SA process. The SA findings confirmed that, with such a large number of potential sites being assessed an equal number of positive and negative effects were identified for each site. Whilst it is not possible to ‘rank’ the sites based on sustainability performance alone the SA findings indicate that sites falling within or on the edge of existing service centres and service villages scored positively in respect of the efficient use of land **(Sustainability Objective 4)**, **SA Objective 3**: improving access to health facilities, **SA Objective 7**: reducing air pollution and **SA Objective 14**: reducing the need to travel.

4.6.4 The initial findings of the Sustainability Appraisal were utilised by the District Council as part of a more detailed assessment of key sites (Stage 4 of the Site Selection Methodology) which informed the preferred strategic sites in the Local Plan Review. Strategic Policy OHF1: Housing Provision identifies the following strategic allocations:

- Land to the North-east of Lichfield (3,300 dwellings);
- Land west of Fazeley (800 dwellings);
- Land off Huddlesford Lane, Whittington (75 dwellings); and
- Land off Hay End Lane, Fradley (500 dwellings).

4.6.5 All the strategic allocations have a significant positive effect on providing housing to meet the needs of existing and future residents (**SA Objective 1**), a neutral or slight positive effect on enhancing the character and quality of the landscape/townscape (**SA Objective 13**) and minimising the need to travel (**SA Objective 14**).

4.6.6 As the strategic allocations are located in open land on the edge of existing settlements the each have a negative score on maximising the use of previously developed land and encouraging the efficient use of land (**Sustainability Objective 4**).

4.6.7 The remaining SA Objectives are generally neutral, or the effects are uncertain. This is due in part to the envisaged masterplan and mitigation measures identified in the policy supporting each allocation and which identifies specific protection/enhancement matters.

4.7 Cumulative Effects

4.7.1 The Lichfield District Local Plan Review: Preferred Option seeks to deliver housing and economic growth in the District over the life of the plan to meet the objectives of the Local Plan and the future needs of residents. The preferred option seeks to distribute growth within existing settlements and on the edge of the City Centre and the larger service villages.

4.7.2 This SA has also considered the cumulative effects of the Local Plan Review. The Local Plan Review will result in significant positive effects on **SA Objective 1: Housing Needs** as it will meet the objectively assessed housing need for Lichfield and a fair contribution to the greater Birmingham and Black Country housing market area shortfall and have a positive effect on **SA Objective 6: Stable and Sustainable Economy**.

- 4.7.3 The adoption of policies to protect and enhance the natural and built environment including the important landscape and heritage assets of the District will ensure that the Local Plan Review will not result in a neutral or slight positive effect on all the key SA Objectives.
- 4.7.4 The only negative score relates to the efficient use of land (SA Objective 4) due to the allocation of new housing sites on open land and the District Council's encouragement for a new settlement during the later years of the plan period.

4.8 Conclusion

- 4.8.1 The role of the SA process is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging Local Plan Review, taken together, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives.
- 4.8.2 The SA concludes that the Local Plan Review will result in significant positive effects on **SA Objective 1: Housing Needs** as it will meet the objectively assessed housing need for Lichfield and a fair contribution to the greater Birmingham and Black Country housing market area shortfall and have a positive effect on **SA Objective 6: Stable and Sustainable Economy**.
- 4.8.3 The Local Plan Review: Preferred Options confirms that a total of 61 hectares of new employment land is required in the District during the plan period. No employment allocations are set out in the Local Plan Review: Preferred Option and no assessment of alternatives employment sites was undertaken as part of this SA. The employment policies set out the framework for the delivery of this future employment land, including the expansion of existing employment areas and future local plan allocations and thus score positively in the SA. However, the SA has not been able to consider the sustainability considerations associated specific employment sites and this matter should be addressed in the next stage of the Local Plan Review.
- 4.8.4 Overall, the assessment concludes that the Lichfield District Local Plan Review: Preferred Option will generally result in a neutral to positive effect on the majority of the SA objectives. The only negative score relates to the efficient use of land (SA Objective 4) due to the allocation of new housing sites on open land and the District Council's encouragement for a new settlement during the later years of the plan period.

5.0 Mitigation and enhancement

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The Lichfield District Local Plan Review sets out site specific and policy mitigation and enhancement measures within the preferred policies. These have been assessed as part of the SA process and no further mitigation has been identified.
- 5.1.2 During the evolution of the Local Plan Review the evidence base will expand and more detailed environmental assessment work will be undertaken on each of the proposed site allocation options. The increased information will result in the identification of the specific items of mitigation and enhancement which will be fully considered in future SA's that accompany the next stage of the Local Plan Review.

6.0 Monitoring and next steps

6.1 Monitoring

- 6.1.1 The SEA Regulations state *"the responsible authority shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of each plan or programme with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action"*. The Environmental Report is required to provide information *"a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring"*. Monitoring proposals are designed to provide information that can be used to highlight specific issues and significant effects, and which could help decision-making.
- 6.1.2 Monitoring will be focused on the significant sustainability effects that may give rise to irreversible damage (with a view to identifying trends before such damage is caused) and the significant effects where there is uncertainty in the SA and where monitoring would enable preventative or mitigation measures to be taken.
- 6.1.3 The SA Scoping Report (2019) sets out suggested monitoring indicators for each of the SA Objectives used in this SA process. The Lichfield District Local Plan Review, once adopted, should be monitored in the long terms against these indicators. The suggested indicators will be reviewed at each stage of the Local Plan Review's evolution.

6.2 Next Steps

- 6.2.1 This SA has been prepared to support the Lichfield District Local Plan Review: Preferred Option. Consultation on the Local Plan Review is taking place in November 2019.
- 6.2.2 Following consultation on the Plan, the District Council will take into account any consultation responses and the findings of sustainability appraisal during the preparation of the next stage of the Local Plan Review, namely the Consultation Draft.