

## APPENDIX K:

### Consultation on Walsall Site Allocations DPD and Town Centre AAP Draft Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report (September-November 2011): Summary of Comments Received

Respondent	Comments	Council Response
<b>Overall Approach</b>		
<b>English Heritage</b>	<p>Draw attention to EH guidance on SA and SEA available on HELM website: <a href="http://www.helm.org.uk/upload/pdf/Strat-env-ass.pdf?1269601170">http://www.helm.org.uk/upload/pdf/Strat-env-ass.pdf?1269601170</a></p> <p>Also advise that SA working group and independent review include members able to provide specialist advice on historic environment and potential impacts on heritage assets and their settings, and that appropriate expertise on conservation and archaeology informs the preparation of the SAD and AAP.</p> <p>Agree with integrated approach towards SA, subject to caveat regarding HRA (see Other Comments), and agree that SA methodology and framework is informed by that used for the Joint Black Country Core Strategy, but strongly advise that this is tailored to reflect the scale of the plans under consideration and the local circumstances, particularly the evidence base.</p> <p>Agree with use of SA matrix at latter stages, but urge that reporting process also includes a supporting narrative and reliance is not solely placed on tabulated results which can be difficult to interpret.</p>	The Council's external conservation and archaeological advisors have contributed to the development of the SA framework, and in particular, the evidence base. The Council will consider how best to manage the appraisal process to ensure that potential effects on the historic environment are identified and given due weight.
<b>Environment Agency</b>	SA not compliant – framework needs additional indicators on water and drainage (see SA Framework section).	The SA Framework has been revised in response to the respondent's detailed comments – see below.
<b>Holford Farm Group</b>	Support integrated approach towards appraisal.	Welcome support for integrated approach.
<b>Natural England</b>	Satisfied with approach towards SEA but SA not compliant – adjustments need to be made to SA objectives (See SA Framework section)	The SA Framework has been revised in response to the respondent's detailed comments – see below.
<b>Network Rail</b>	SA should provide a strategic context for developer contributions towards infrastructure where a need is generated by new development, or where there are impacts on infrastructure arising from development.	The Core Strategy policies, in particular DEL1, already provide a strategic context for seeking developer contributions towards infrastructure where they can be justified. The need for such contributions to fund development or upgrading of infrastructure in Walsall – where a need is identified - will be considered through the emerging CIL Charging Schedule. The SA Framework has also been designed to identify potential pressures on infrastructure arising from particular options.
<b>Sehmi Associates Ltd</b>	Support integrated approach towards appraisal.	Welcome support for integrated approach.
<b>Theatres Trust</b>	Support integrated approach towards appraisal.	Welcome support for integrated approach.
<b>Walsall Council Equality &amp; Wellbeing Team</b>	Support integrated approach towards appraisal - satisfied with proposed approach on integration of EqIA.	Welcome support for integrated approach.
<b>West Midlands Low Emissions Strategy Co-ordinator</b>	Generally supportive, no specific adverse comments.	Welcome support for integrated approach.

Respondent	Comments	Council Response
<b>English Heritage</b>	<p>Suggest adding the following:</p> <p>International: The European Landscape Convention (also encompasses cultural influences on landscape) <a href="http://www.helm.org.uk/server/show/nav.20574">http://www.helm.org.uk/server/show/nav.20574</a></p> <p>Regional: West Midlands Historic Environment Strategy and Action Plan prepared by the West Midlands Historic Environment Forum and published in (2009) <a href="http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about/working-locally/west-midlands/highlights/">http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about/working-locally/west-midlands/highlights/</a></p> <p>Suggest the West Midlands edition of the “Streets for All” would be better placed at the regional level, and welcome the inclusion of the Borough’s conservation area appraisals under Local PPPs.</p>	<p>The summary of plans, policies and programmes (PPPs) in Appendix D has been shortened, simplified and updated. The detailed PPP schedules are now contained in a separate Technical Report. The list of PPPs has also been updated to reflect new documents published since September 2011 such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The suggested PPPs for SA Topic 5 (Cultural Heritage) have been added to Appendix E and to the PPPs Technical Report and “Streets for All: West Midlands” has been moved to regional section.</p>
<b>Plans, Policies and Programmes (PPPs)</b>		
<b>Environment Agency</b>	<p>Support inclusion of Water Framework Directive (WFD), River Basin Management Plans (RMBP), Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS) and Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMP) in the PPP summary, but relevance and importance of these plans needs to be better explained and reflected in the summary and SA Framework. Also draw attention to forthcoming changes to arrangements for surface water management (role of Council as a statutory SuDS Approval Board), the need to liaise with Surface Water Flood Risk Co-ordinator on possible financial implications and need for developer contributions (CIL?). Also draw attention to need for Level 2 SFRA to inform development of AAP in particular.</p>	<p>The summary of plans, policies and programmes (PPPs) in Appendix D has been shortened, simplified and updated and the detailed PPP schedules are now contained in a separate Technical Report. The list of PPPs has also been updated to reflect new documents published since September 2011 such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The suggested PPPs for SA Topic 14 (Water Environment) have been added to Appendix E and to the PPPs Technical Report.</p>
<b>Holford Farm Group</b>	<p>Agree that all relevant policies, plans and programmes have been identified.</p>	<p>Comments welcomed. No changes made in response to this representation but the summary of plans, policies and programmes (PPPs) in Appendix D has been shortened, simplified and updated, and the detailed PPP schedules are now contained in a separate Technical Report.</p>
<b>Lichfield District Council</b>	<p>Draw attention to Lichfield Canal Feasibility Study, Biodiversity Strategy and evidence relating to the Cannock Chase SAC.</p>	<p>The summary of plans, policies and programmes (PPPs) in Appendix D has been shortened, simplified and updated and the detailed PPP schedules are now contained in a separate Technical Report. The list of PPPs has also been updated to reflect new documents published since September 2011 such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The suggested PPPs for SA Topic 2 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), 9 (Landscape and Townscape) and 14 (Water Environment) have been added to Appendix E and to the PPPs Technical Report.</p>
<b>Natural England</b>	<p>Support comprehensive list of documents identified. Schedule should be updated at each stage to add new or emerging policies plans and programmes.</p> <p>Also highlight: “Safeguarding our soils: A strategy for England” (Defra, 2009) which can be found on Natural England website – relevant to SA Objectives 2 and 10. “Safeguarding our soils” provides a clear vision in relation to development and soils - we should “prevent further degradation of our soils, enhance, restore and ensure their resilience, and improve our understanding of the threats to soil and best practice in responding to them.”</p>	<p>The summary of plans, policies and programmes (PPPs) in Appendix D has been shortened, simplified and updated and the detailed PPP schedules are now contained in a separate Technical Report. The list of PPPs has also been updated to reflect new documents published since September 2011 such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The suggested PPPs for SA Topic 2 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), 9 (Landscape and Townscape), 12 (Soil and Ground Conditions) and 14 (Water Environment) have been added to Appendix E and to the PPPs Technical Report.</p>

Respondent	Comments	Council Response
<b>Sehmi Associates Ltd</b>	Agree that all relevant policies, plans and programmes have been identified.	Comments welcomed. No changes made in response to this representation but the summary of plans, policies and programmes (PPPs) in Appendix D has been shortened, simplified and updated, and the detailed PPP schedules are now contained in a separate Technical Report.
<b>Theatres Trust</b>	No reference to cultural activities, cultural facilities or key visitor destinations – these are recognised in the Core Strategy and Sustainable Community Strategy as being important for regeneration and to the evening economy of town centres.	The summary of plans, policies and programmes (PPPs) in Appendix D has been shortened, simplified and updated and the detailed PPP schedules are now contained in a separate Technical Report. The list of PPPs has also been updated to reflect new documents published since September 2011 such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Relevant PPPs on tourism and culture have been reviewed and have been added to Appendix E and to the PPPs Technical Report (see SA Topics 5: Cultural Heritage and 6: Economy and Centres).
<b>Walsall Council Equality and Wellbeing Team</b>	Reference made to Walsall's Sustainable Community Strategy (2008) and Walsall Council Corporate Plan 2010/11 – 2014/15 (2011).	No changes have been made in response to this representation as these documents are already included in the PPPs. However, The PPP summary in Appendix D has been shortened, simplified and updated and the detailed PPP schedules are now contained in a separate Technical Report. The list of PPPs has also been updated to reflect new documents published since September 2011 such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
<b>West Midlands Low Emissions Strategy Co-ordinator</b>	<p>Air Quality: suggest adding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010</li> <li>• Low Emissions Strategies- using the Planning System to reduce transport emissions: Good Practice Guidance (2010), Defra</li> <li>• Low Emissions Strategies: Supplementary Planning Policy Document Guidance (2011), Low Emissions Strategies Partnerships</li> </ul> <p>Also suggest some minor amendments to entry on West Midlands Low Emissions Strategy (including link to Council web page)</p>	The summary of plans, policies and programmes (PPPs) in Appendix D has been shortened, simplified and updated and the detailed PPP schedules are now contained in a separate Technical Report. The list of PPPs has also been updated to reflect new documents published since September 2011 such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The suggested PPPs have been added to Appendix E and to the PPPs Technical Report (see SA Topic 1: Air Quality).
<b>Evidence Base</b>		
<b>English Heritage</b>	<p>Needs to be more finely tuned and place-specific than the Joint Core Strategy. Information on historic environment, heritage assets and their settings will need to be more detailed. Also recommend that site by site appraisal process should include a commentary on impacts on the historic environment together with an indication of what this will mean for the development of the plans. Comments on Appendix E (Cultural Heritage and Landscape and Townscape):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of a descriptive text on the area's historical development is useful to complement any quantified data;</li> <li>• Updated "Heritage Counts" for 2011 is now available;</li> <li>• The condition of heritage assets should also be covered as for example for certain designated heritage assets via the 2011 Register of Heritage Assets at risk: <a href="http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/heritage-at-risk/">http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/heritage-at-risk/</a></li> <li>• The existing data only covers designated heritage assets, and to accord with PPS5 consideration is necessary for non-designated heritage assets as for example included in any local list or the Historic Environment Record for the area;</li> <li>• In considering the historic character of the wider landscape and townscape the baseline should incorporate available historic characterisation data, as for example the Black Country historic landscape characterisation project (contact Mike Shaw and Paul Quigley at Wolverhampton City Council). Character area profiles for Walsall are available.</li> <li>• Under this theme it would also be relevant to pick up on initiatives such as Townscape Heritage Initiatives, and previous Heritage Economic Regeneration Schemes (now titled partnership schemes) to underline the role of the historic environment in acting as a catalyst for and supporting regeneration initiatives.</li> <li>• The canal network is also part of the Borough's heritage.</li> </ul>	The evidence base for SA Topics 5 (Cultural Heritage) and 9 (Landscape and Townscape) in Appendix E has been substantially enhanced using the sources suggested (please note that the numbering of some of the SA Topics has changed). Brief descriptions of the area's historical development, key features of the historic environment and the main characteristics of the local landscape and townscape have also been included. Further detail on the evidence base for Cultural Heritage and Landscape will be provided in a separate Technical Report. The need for the appraisal of location-specific options to go into more detail has also been noted, although it is not possible to speculate on what evidence may be required at this stage.

Respondent	Comments	Council Response
<b>Environment Agency</b>	Consider the initial baseline data for Walsall is correct and welcome the identification of contaminated land, surface water run-off and culverting of the Ford Brook through the Town Centre.	Welcome support for evidence included in draft SA Scoping Report. The evidence base for SA Topics 10 (Soil and Ground Conditions) and 14 (Water Environment) in Appendix E has been substantially enhanced (please note that the numbering of some of the SA Topics has changed). Further information on the soils present in Walsall and the extent of derelict land/ land affected by contamination and geotechnical problems has been added, as has further evidence on water consumption from “The Case for Change” and Ofwat reports, and data on water quality from the Humber RBMP (we would like to thank the Agency for explaining where to find the latter information). Further detail will be provided in a separate Technical Report.
<b>Holford Farm Group</b>	Agree that all relevant baseline evidence has been identified.	Comments welcomed. While no changes have been made in response to this representation, the evidence base for all SA topics in Appendix E has been substantially enhanced to address gaps, and in response to other comments received (please note that the numbering of some of the SA Topics has changed).
<b>Lichfield District Council</b>	Draw attention to evidence reports available from Lichfield DC website: Lichfield Canal Feasibility Study, Biodiversity Strategy and evidence relating to the Cannock Chase SAC. AQMA has also been declared at Muckley Corner	The evidence base for SA Topics 1 (Air Quality) and 2 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), 9 (Landscape and Townscape) and 14 (Water Environment) in Appendix E has been substantially enhanced using the sources suggested (please note that the numbering of some of the SA Topics has changed). Reference to cross-boundary air quality problems, the issues relating to the Cannock Chase SAC and the implications of the canal restoration projects has been included. Further detail will be provided in a separate Technical Report.
<b>Natural England</b>	Suggest monitoring indicators. Biodiversity and geodiversity - impact of proposals on management of SSSIs (and PSA target for 95% of SSSIs to be in “favourable” or “recovering” condition). Protected species – impact of proposals on protected species through surveys/ conditions. Green infrastructure - spaces that have achieved “Green Flag” status, compliance of proposals with Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt). Should also consider identifying landscape quality indicators/ targets.	The evidence base for SA Topic 2 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), 4 (Communities and Population) and 9 (Landscape and Townscape) in Appendix E has been substantially enhanced using the sources suggested, and information on the management of SSSIs, and accessibility and quality of open spaces has been included (please note that the numbering of some of the SA Topics has changed). We have been unable to identify any other meaningful indicators to measure landscape quality. The detailed monitoring indicators suggested are not appropriate for inclusion in the SA framework, and in most cases, are not capable of being monitored in Walsall.
<b>Sehmi Associates Ltd</b>	Agree that all relevant baseline evidence has been identified.	Comments welcomed. While no changes have been made in response to this representation, the evidence base for all SA topics in Appendix E has been substantially enhanced to address gaps, and in response to other comments received (please note that the numbering of some of the SA Topics has changed).

Respondent	Comments	Council Response
<b>Theatres Trust</b>	No reference to cultural activities or cultural facilities. The range of town centre facilities identified in the Scoping Report should include cultural facilities. There are key visitor destinations in the Town Centre such as the Art Gallery. There are also three theatres in Walsall which should be supported (Bloxwich Library Theatre (Bookmark) specifically mentioned).	The evidence base for SA Topic 5 (Cultural Heritage) and 6 (Economy and Centres) has been substantially enhanced (please note that the numbering of some of the SA Topics has changed). Reference has been made to theatres and other notable cultural and leisure facilities in the Town and District Centres, and to gaps in range of facilities available in the Town Centre. However, the information we have on facilities outside the Town and District Centres is limited. It is recognised that this is a significant gap in the evidence base which requires attention.
<b>Walsall Council Equality and Wellbeing Team</b>	Data on disability should be included in the Communities and Population table. Further data and statistics on equality issues can be found on the Walsall Partnership website - data should be available at Ward / neighbourhood level, which will be useful in identifying areas of the Borough where differential impacts may occur. The following sustainability topics are most likely to have implications for equality: Communities and Population, Economy and Centres, Health and Well Being and Transport and Accessibility.	The evidence for SA Topics 4 (Communities and Population), 7 (Equality and Diversity) and 8 (Health and Wellbeing) have been substantially expanded and enhanced, including data to ward and Partnership Area level where available, to identify areas where differential impacts may occur (please note that the numbering of some of the SA Topics has changed). Correlation with areas of multiple deprivation (as identified in 2010 Indices of Multiple Deprivation) and areas with significant health inequalities (as identified in Walsall Health Atlas) have also been referred to under the relevant topics.
<b>West Midlands Low Emissions Strategy Co-ordinator</b>	Air Quality – Walsall Council 2011 Air Quality Progress Report is now available (note caveat about Bus Station monitoring). Also suggest adding area of exceedence in Walsall/ area of exceedence in the West Midlands Urban Area (from LTP3 Addendum) to the baseline evidence.	The evidence for SA Topic 1 (Air Quality) has been amended to reflect the comments made, as well as other comments from the Council's Pollution Control Team regarding the consistency of LTP3 monitoring with the Council's own. The relevant points arising from 2010 Air Quality Progress Report have been included.
<b>Issues, Problems and Opportunities</b>		
<b>English Heritage</b>	Welcome the recognition of the tourism benefits of cultural heritage. In the further refinement of the sustainability issues and opportunities, underline importance of having access to historic environment expertise and local knowledge of the Borough to properly inform understanding of issues, problems and opportunities, especially in the site specific context of the SAD and AAP. EH guidance on SEA/ SA provides further examples of possible issues and opportunities, for example those associated with heritage-led regeneration, and the sustainability benefits of reusing and adapting redundant and or under-used buildings.	Comments on tourism benefits of cultural heritage noted, and are reflected in the revised summary of issues, problems and opportunities for SA Topic 5 (Cultural Heritage) in Section 6 of the main SA Scoping Report. However, we have to be realistic about the scope for heritage to act as a catalyst for regeneration in Walsall, as most of the heritage assets are unlikely to attract more than local interest (see SA Topic 6: Economy and Centres). See above (Overall Approach) regarding availability of appropriate expertise to carry out the appraisals.
<b>Environment Agency</b>	Support opportunities identified but advise that green multi-functional infrastructure should incorporate SuDS (e.g. dew ponds). Particularly pleased to read that the AAP will include policies on drainage. Expect to see a policy on improvement to water quality to ensure the achievement of the WFD, may be opportunity to combine these under an overarching water policy. We would like to register an interest in being consulted on the Area Action Plan, the Community Infrastructure Charging Schedule and the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.	Comments on SUDs are reflected in the revised summary of issues, problems and opportunities for SA Topic 14 (Water Environment) in Section 6 of the main SA Scoping Report. However, this will only be feasible in practice where there is minimal or no risk of pollution. With regard to the future policy, the SAD will only include site-specific policies, and will otherwise not provide any further detail than the Core Strategy, so it will only include requirements for water management and drainage in relation to specific allocations. The Agency's request to be notified about the SAD, AAP and CIL documents has been noted, and the consultation database has been updated accordingly.

Respondent	Comments	Council Response
<b>Holford Farm Group</b>	Agree that relevant issues, problems and opportunities have been identified.	Comments welcomed. While no changes have been made in response to this representation, the summary of issues, problems and opportunities in Section 6 of the main SA Scoping Report has been substantially revised to reflect the issues identified during the enhancement of the evidence base and other comments received.
<b>Lichfield District Council</b>	There is potential for cross boundary influences arising through the green network. Also need to consider provision for local need arising from within the gypsy, traveller and travelling show people community as the issues identified relate to general housing need rather than other accommodation.	Comments on cross-boundary green infrastructure issues and the need for caravan pitches for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople have been reflected in the revised summary of issues, problems and opportunities for SA Topics 2 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), 7 (Equality and Diversity), 9 (Landscape and Townscape) and 14 (Water Environment) in Section 6 of the main SA Scoping Report.
<b>Natural England</b>	To maintain biodiversity and geodiversity and create opportunities for creation, there needs to be an appropriate policy context on protecting important nature conservation sites across Walsall. Should also consider opportunity for multifunctional greenspace to address a wide range of issues e.g. contribute to functioning ecosystem services that can have a positive influence on health, can assist in adapting to the extremes of climate change (less heat-island effect than built up areas), help improve air quality and respiratory irritants, and mitigate risks associated with flooding from extreme rainfall events. Important soil resources should also be protected as they affect geodiversity and biodiversity (e.g. best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land, management and handling of soils during the development process). Should also provide opportunities for sustainable modes of transport by ensuring new development is in the most sustainable locations and by securing improvements through the development process.	Comments on creation of new nature conservation sites, the other potential roles of urban greenspace, agricultural land quality and sustainable transport have been reflected in the revised summary of issues, problems and opportunities for SA Topics 2 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), 3 (Climate Change), 4 (Communities and Population), 9 (Landscape and Townscape), 12 (Soil and Ground Conditions) and 13 (Transport and Accessibility) in Section 6 of the main SA Scoping Report.
<b>Network Rail</b>	New development can create a significant change in the usage of a part of the transport network and thus generate requirement for new or improved infrastructure and/or station facilities. New development can also impact on safety of level crossings. Effects of increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic at level crossings may cause train line speeds to have to be reduced, thereby impacting on timetabling of train services, and potential for future service improvements, which would be in direct conflict with strategic and government aims of improving rail services.	Comments on the impact of development on existing transport networks / planned infrastructure improvements, and on safety at level crossings, have been reflected in the revised summary of issues, problems and opportunities for SA Topic 13 (Transport and Accessibility) in Section 6 of the main SA Scoping Report, as well as in the SA Framework itself (see indicators Q13a, Q13b, Q13c).
<b>Sehmi Associates Ltd</b>	Agree that relevant issues, problems and opportunities have been identified.	Comments welcomed. While no changes have been made in response to this representation, the summary of issues, problems and opportunities in Section 6 of the main SA Scoping Report has been substantially revised to reflect the issues identified during the enhancement of the evidence base and other comments received.
<b>Theatres Trust</b>	Identify a need for policies to support cultural facilities and key visitor destinations in the Town Centre and other centres as these contribute towards regeneration and the evening economy. Sustainable Community Strategy includes aspiration to plan a major new cultural, educational and leisure facility in the Town Centre.	Comments on the need to support cultural facilities and visitor attractions in the Town and District Centres, and the aspiration for a new cultural, education and leisure facility in the Town Centre have been reflected in the revised summary of issues, problems and opportunities for SA Topic 6 (Economy and Centres) in Section 6 of the main SA Scoping Report, as well as in the SA Framework itself (see indicators Q13a, Q13b, Q13c).

Respondent	Comments	Council Response
Walsall Council Equality and Wellbeing Team	Highlighted that Walsall has a higher than average incidence of disability compared to other areas.	Comments on the level of disability and long-term illness have been reflected in the revised summary of issues, problems and opportunities for SA Topics 7 (Equality and Diversity) and 8 (Health and Wellbeing) in Section 6 of the main SA Scoping Report. Other relevant information on the population of Walsall, such as the ethnic mix and age range has also been added and links between population profile of different parts of the Borough and deprivation and health inequality have been identified.
West Midlands Low Emissions Strategy Co-ordinator	<p>Air Quality – suggest this should refer to other areas having high levels of NO<sub>2</sub>.</p> <p>Climate Change – suggest this should refer to “the emission of carbon and other pollutants” rather than “carbon emissions.”</p> <p>Key Opportunities – see above re: reference to “carbon emissions,” seventh bullet re: Town Centre AAP should include transport in list of sustainability requirements.</p>	Comments on cross-boundary air quality problems, the terminology used to refer to emissions, and opportunities in the Town Centre for sustainable transport have been reflected in the revised summary of issues, problems and opportunities for SA Topics 1 (Air Quality) and 3 (Climate Change) in Section 6 of the main SA Scoping Report, and in the list of opportunities identified at the end of the section. Cross-boundary air quality problems are now referred to (including AQMAs in Lichfield and Cannock Chase), the terminology used has been amended, and a reference to transport has been included in the seventh bullet of the opportunities section.
<b>SA Framework</b>		
English Heritage	<p>Welcome general thrust of the headline sustainability objectives 8 (landscape and townscape) and 5 (cultural heritage). Recommend amending objective 5 as follows: “To protect, enhance and manage <u>buildings, monuments, sites, areas or landscapes of archaeological, historical, architectural or artistic interest and their settings.</u>”</p> <p>Supporting set of decision-making criteria and indicators require further development to fully reflect the place-based nature of the appraisals as well as our recommendations on expanding the evidence base beyond designated heritage assets. We suggest the following: <b>Q5a:</b> should focus on ‘conserving buildings of architectural or historic interest and their setting, and where necessary, encourage their repair, adaptation and or reuse’ - supporting indicator also ideally needs to be extended to local list buildings as well as include Grade II listed buildings (note these are not covered by the national Heritage at Risk Register). It may also be more appropriate to split the sub-objective so that ‘will it encourage the repair, adaptation and or reuse of redundant and or under-used historic buildings’ becomes a third supporting decision-making criteria which could then use the indicator at Q8b ‘repair, adaptation and reuse of historic buildings’. This could then allow for the first part to cover heritage assets in more general terms so ‘Will it conserve, and where appropriate enhance, heritage assets and their settings’. <b>Q5b:</b> suggest an amendment to the wording from ‘preserve’ to ‘conserve’. Also query how relevant the supporting indicator is given the number of scheduled monuments at risk – could an indicator based on archaeological provisions and development proposals could be looked at? <b>Q8b:</b> Indicator based on the use of conservation area appraisal and or other historic characterisation to inform the Design and Access statement may be a possibility.</p>	The SA Framework (Appendix F) has been substantially revised to reflect the enhanced evidence base. The Objectives and Criteria for SA Topic 5 (Cultural Heritage) have been amended to reflect the wording suggested, and appropriate supporting indicators have been added to the framework. While the exact wording suggested has not been used, the issues highlighted are addressed by Indicators Q5a, Q5b, Q5d and Q9c (please note that the numbering of some of the SA Topics has changed).
Environment Agency	<p>Recommend amendments to <b>SA Objective 12: Water Environment</b> - Use Water resources prudently, manage risk efficiently and improve water quality.</p> <p>Also suggest new Criteria linked to this Objective: 12e: Will it aid in all water bodies within the district meeting good status under the WFD? Indicator: no. of planning applications incorporating SuDS. 12f: Will new development create opportunities to de-culvert the Ford Brook? Indicator - no. of metres deculverted</p>	The SA Framework (Appendix F) has been substantially revised to reflect the enhanced evidence base. The Objectives and Criteria for SA Topic 14 (Water Environment) have been amended to reflect the wording suggested, and appropriate supporting indicators have been added to the framework. While the exact wording suggested has not been used, the issues highlighted are addressed by Indicators Q14c, Q14d and Q14f.

Respondent	Comments	Council Response
Holford Farm Group	Support SA Framework.	Comments welcomed. While no changes have been made to the SA Framework (Appendix F) in response to this representation, it has been substantially revised to reflect the enhanced evidence base and in response to other comments received.
Natural England	<p>Recommend amendments to SA Objectives as follows.</p> <p><b>SA Objective 2: Biodiversity and Geodiversity</b> - Value, maintain, restore and recreate biodiversity and geodiversity – should also refer to <u>protection</u>.</p> <p><b>SA Objective 4: Communities and Population</b> - Encourage opportunities for investment in order to grow the local economy and improve access to jobs and services – could be improved by referring to <u>access to open spaces</u> as well as jobs and services.</p> <p><b>SA Objective 10: Material Resources</b> - Use and manage land, soil and mineral resources prudently and efficiently – could be improved by referring to need to <u>protect and enhance</u> important resources (in particular, soils).</p> <p><b>SA Objective 11: Transport and Accessibility</b> - Reduce traffic congestion and promote sustainable modes of transport into and throughout Walsall – should be improved by focusing on <u>need to improve and increase sustainable modes of transport</u>, such as walking and cycling links as well as public transport.</p> <p><b>SA Objective 12: Water Environment</b> - Use water resources prudently and manage risks efficiently - more emphasis should be placed on <u>protection of water resources</u> e.g. by ensuring water pollution levels do not damage natural systems and by monitoring and restoring key ecological systems.</p> <p><b>General Comments on SA Objectives:</b></p> <p>Could be improved by considering integration of cross-cutting themes such as importance of <b>Green Infrastructure</b> (GI) and its multifunctional benefits (would assist in the delivery of a range of SA topic areas, e.g. biodiversity, landscape, health and wellbeing and climate change). For HIA, more links could also be made between <b>health and access to good quality natural environment</b> across the SA objectives.</p> <p><b>Assessment Matrix:</b> Encouraged by the detail provided by the template in Appendix G which shows an example matrix to record the SA assessment. It will be crucial to provide information on the symbols used in the matrix and how likely effects are to be recorded. This approach is recommended in the 'Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (CLG, 2005) 'When using symbols or other ways of presenting information regarding the likely effects (e.g. beneficial, adverse, uncertain, not significant), always explain and justify the choice of symbol with reference to the baseline relevant to the SEA objectives' (Appendix 7, page 75 of the Practical Guide).</p>	The SA Framework (Appendix F) has been substantially revised to reflect the enhanced evidence base. Objectives and Criteria for SA Topics 2 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), 4 (Communities and Population), 12 (Soil and Ground Conditions), 13 (Transport and Accessibility) and 14 (Water Environment) have been amended to reflect the wording suggested and appropriate supporting indicators have also been added (please note that the numbering of some of the SA topics has changed). While the exact wording suggested has not been used, the issues highlighted are addressed by Indicators Q2a, Q2d, Q2e, Q3c, Q4e, Q5e, Q8c, Q9b, Q12a, Q12b, Q13c, Q13d, Q13e, Q14b and Q14c. The assessment matrix (Appendix G) has been updated to reflect the revised SA objectives. Comments on use of symbols noted and will be reflected in tables reproduced in SA reports.
Sehmi Associates Ltd	Support SA Framework.	Comments welcomed. While no changes have been made to the SA Framework (Appendix F) in response to this representation, it has been substantially revised to reflect the enhanced evidence base and in response to other comments received.
Theatres Trust	Changes required to SA <b>Objective 7: Health &amp; Wellbeing</b> (see previous comments).	The SA Framework (Appendix F) has been substantially revised to reflect the enhanced evidence base. While the points made are not considered relevant to SA Topic 8 (Health and Wellbeing), the Objectives and Criteria for SA Topic 6 (Economy and Centres) have been revised to address the points made (please note that the numbering of some of the SA topics has changed). The issues highlighted are addressed by Indicators Q6e and Q6f.



Respondent	Comments	Council Response
<b>Walsall Council Equality and Wellbeing Team</b>	Further development of the sustainability objectives should be informed by the objectives identified in the following documents: Walsall Council Corporate Plan 2011/12 - 2014/15; and Walsall Sustainable Community Strategy.	The SA Framework (Appendix F) has been substantially revised to reflect the enhanced evidence base. Objectives and Criteria for SA Topics 4 (Communities and Population), (6: Economy and Centres), 7 (Equality and Diversity) and 8 (Health and Wellbeing) have been amended and the key issues highlighted in the documents referred to (please note that the numbering of some of the SA topics has changed). The key issues identified in the documents are addressed by Indicators Q4c, Q4e, Q6a, Q6b, Q7a, Q7b, Q7c, Q7d, Q8a, Q8b, Q8c, Q8d.
<b>West Midlands Low Emissions Strategy Co-ordinator</b>	Suggested amendments to SA Objectives: SA Objective 1: Air Quality: “Minimise air pollution and create good quality air” SA Objective 11: Transport and Accessibility: “Reduce traffic congestion and vehicle related emissions and promote sustainable modes of transport into and throughout Walsall”	The SA Framework (Appendix F) has been substantially revised to reflect the enhanced evidence base. Objectives and Criteria for SA Topics 1 (Air Quality) and 13 (Transport and Accessibility) have been amended to reflect the comments made (please note that the numbering of some of the SA topics has changed). While the exact wording has not been used, the key issues highlighted are addressed by Indicators Q1a, Q1b, Q1c, Q13b and Q13c.
<b>Other Comments</b>		
<b>English Heritage</b>	If a full HRA is deemed necessary, care should be taken that a balanced approach to the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and the HRA is adopted so that biodiversity considerations do not unduly skew the assessment process, which also includes biodiversity considerations.	Comments on the use of data arising from the HRA are noted. Under the SEA Directive, there is considerable discretion over how to respond to any significant effects identified through a SA / SEA. There is no obligation to mitigate harmful effects, unless they would be in breach of other legislation, although, the Council must justify the choices made, having considered all “reasonable alternatives.” The Habitats Directive is the obvious example of where other legislation would require the Council to mitigate harmful effects or abandon any proposals that would cause them, because the Council is legally obliged to act on the findings of the HRA if evidence of harm to the integrity of a European Site is identified. Another example would be if the SA/ SEA identified evidence of unlawful discrimination against people because of their “protected characteristics,” where the Equality Act 2010 would oblige the Council to remove or modify any proposal that was potentially discriminatory. Therefore, while the SA itself will be a balanced appraisal of options against all of the SA objectives which have equal weight, legal obligations outside of the SA process may require a stricter response in some cases where significant harmful effects are identified, whereas in other cases there will be more flexibility.
<b>Natural England</b>	<b>Habitat Regulations Assessment:</b> Note that separate Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be carried out to assess the potential effects on European sites. Welcome this approach and request early consultation on this document to ensure to any issues/ concerns can be addressed as the DPD and APP progress further. The HRA process should be used to inform the selection of development sites allocation in the DPD. It should be carried out as an iterative process and inform each stage of plan making.	Comments on HRA noted. It is intended to carry out the HRA work in parallel with the SA and to use the same evidence base to inform both, so that any inconsistencies will be avoided. The Council is fully aware of the obligations imposed by the Habitats Directive.

Respondent	Comments	Council Response
<b>Network Rail</b>	Specific request for policy requiring developers to fund qualitative improvements to existing facilities and infrastructure needed to accommodate increased patronage resulting from new development.	This is not relevant to the development of the SA framework, although at some stage the appraisal may identify that a particular option would generate a need for new or enhanced infrastructure (the framework has been designed to allow such effects to be identified in the context of whether options will complement planned improvements to transport infrastructure or put pressure on networks – see indicators Q13a and Q13b). Where an option would put significant pressure on infrastructure, the implications will be considered during the development of the SAD, AAP and CIL Charging Schedule.
<b>Theatres Trust</b>	Have provided updated contact details, would like to be consulted on Town Centre AAP.	Contact details are noted, and the Council's consultation database has been updated accordingly.
<b>Walsall Council Equality and Wellbeing Team</b>	Further advice is available from Equality and Wellbeing Team if potential impacts on equalities are identified.	Comments noted – further advice on EqIA elements of appraisal will be sought as and when required.