



Seaburn Masterplan SPD Sustainability Appraisal Report Non- Technical Summary

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Sustainability Appraisal of the Seaburn Masterplan SPD June 2011

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Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	This Report	1
1.2	Seaburn Masterplan	1
1.3	Content and main objectives.....	1
2	How the appraisal was undertaken.....	2
2.1	How the SA was undertaken.....	2
2.2	Difficulties encountered	2
3	What is the policy context?	3
3.1	Introduction.....	3
3.2	Relevant policies, plans, programmes, strategies and initiatives.....	3
4	The baseline	5
4.1	Introduction.....	5
4.2	What is the situation now?	5
4.3	What is the situation without the masterplan?.....	6
4.4	Area likely to be significantly affected by the plan	7
5	Sustainability objectives.....	8
5.1	Introduction.....	8
5.2	The Sustainability Appraisal framework	8
6	Appraisal findings	10
6.1	Introduction.....	10
6.2	What will the situation be with the masterplan?.....	10
6.3	Issues and Problems for European Wildlife Sites.....	11
7	Mitigation	12
7.1	Introduction.....	12
7.2	How can we mitigate / enhance effects?.....	12
8	Monitoring Measures	13
8.1	Monitoring Significant effects	13
9	Consultation	14
9.1	Commenting on the Sustainability Appraisal	14
9.2	The Sustainability Statement	15

1 Introduction

1.1 This Report

- 1.1.1 Scott Wilson has been commissioned by Sunderland City Council ('the Council') to undertake an independent **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** on the Seaburn Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). SA is an assessment procedure that seeks to identify and evaluate the effects of a plan on the community, the environment and the economy – the three aspects of sustainability - and to suggest measures for improving the plans content and sustainability performance. This report provides a summary of our findings.

1.2 Seaburn Masterplan

- 1.2.1 The Council has produced a masterplan for the seafront area of Seaburn. The Masterplan and supporting information have been collated in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as part of the Sunderland City Local Development Framework (LDF). The SPD sets out the land use proposals and improvements for the area which will deliver part of the Councils emerging Seafront Regeneration Strategy.

1.3 Content and main objectives

- 1.3.1 The SPD sets out the following clear vision for the area "Building on its unique natural environment and rich heritage, the seafront at Seaburn will be an attractive, safe, clean and accessible destination for all residents and visitors, of which the people of Sunderland can be proud. Seaburn will be a family focused resort offering high quality indoor and outdoor facilities. It will be a welcoming place to enjoy all year round, providing activities and events for everyone, supporting Sunderland's aspiration to be the UK's most liveable city.'
- 1.3.2 The Seaburn Masterplan SPD is also a material consideration when determining planning applications in this area.
- 1.3.3 In order to deliver the vision a series of regeneration objectives are set out in the SPD. These are as follows:
1. To maximise the impact and improve the economic vibrancy of the area
 2. To provide high quality public amenities and facilities
 3. To create a family friendly environment which is safe and clean
 4. To offer high quality and affordable activities and events throughout the year
 5. To create an attractive and high quality environment where both residents and visitors can relax
 6. To create an area which is physically and intellectually accessible
- 1.3.4 The SPD contains a masterplan that realises this vision and objectives. The masterplan is supported by text to help explain and promote how the Council wish to see the development implemented.

2 How the appraisal was undertaken

2.1 How the SA was undertaken

2.1.1 The SPD has undergone a process of sustainability appraisal. This appraisal involved the assessment of the proposals against 14 sustainability objectives derived from the regional sustainable development framework augmented by locally distinctive criteria. The main SA report has been constructed with a chapter for each of the SA Objectives within which we have asked a series of questions:

- What's the policy context?
- What are the key sustainability objectives we need to consider?
- What's the situation now?
- What will be the situation without the plan?
- What will be the situation with the Masterplan?
- How can we mitigate / enhance effects? (our recommendations)

2.1.2 These questions correspond to the key requirements of the SEA Directive, as set out in Annex I to the SEA Directive.

2.2 Difficulties encountered

2.2.1 A key issue in undertaking the appraisal was the localised nature of the proposals. The SA objectives were selected for conformity with Sustainability Appraisals for other LDF documents and the integrated regional framework of objectives. While the SA objectives were influenced by locally distinctive criteria, the majority of the regional objectives were difficult to assess within the local context of the SPD.

2.2.2 The localised nature of the SPD and its effects has meant that at times specific local baseline data has been difficult to collect. However, we have provided a baseline that is adequate to measure the effects of the proposals. Again a relatively small scale of effect will make it difficult to propose reasonable indicators for the monitoring of effects although the SPD will make a contribution towards the Council wide indicators included in the Annual Monitoring Report.

3 What is the policy context?

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 In preparing the SA of the Seaburn Masterplan key policies, plans, programmes, strategies and initiatives prepared at national, regional and local level have been considered. These contain sustainability objectives and messages that the SA has considered.

3.2 Relevant policies, plans, programmes, strategies and initiatives

3.2.1 A number of messages were highlighted in the SA process and these are included in Table 2.1 below. In the SA report the key messages from these documents are explored in more depth.

Table 2.1 Key messages for the SPD and SA

Key messages
Promote sustainable development by ensuring biodiversity is conserved and enhanced as an integral part of economic, social and environmental development. Avoid, mitigate and compensate for harm.
Contribute to urban renaissance by enhancing biodiversity in green spaces and amongst developments in urban areas
Preserve the character of the coast, designated areas, heritage coasts and the international dimension.
Protect and enhance the region's landscapes, ensuring they are recognised for the vital contribution they make to sense of place in attracting and retaining investment, talent and tourism.
Help secure safe waste recovery or disposal without endangering health or harming the environment.
Prioritise waste management in accordance with the waste hierarchy: reduce, re-use, recycle, and recover energy from waste.
Protect our human health and environment by producing less waste and using it as a resource wherever possible.
Protect and improve ground, river and sea water quality in the region, ensuring that water quality and quantity are considered in all developments and managed in a sustainable and integrated manner.
Make improvements to air and water quality, protect water sources from contamination and minimise the release of harmful products into the environment
Polluting activities which are necessary should be sited and planned so their adverse affects are minimised and contained to within acceptable limits.
Change the way we travel and the continued growth in road traffic to prevent damage to our towns and countryside and contribution to global warming.
Put the UK on a path to cut its carbon dioxide emissions by some 80% by 2050, with 26% achieved by 2020.
Flood risk should be considered at all stages of the plan and development process in order to reduce future damage to property and loss of life.
Assist in the creation of a positive planning framework for renewable energy and adopt and positively strive to achieve Government's targets and aspirations for renewable energy.
Implement an efficient and sustainable pattern of movement and communication, which enables people to have a higher quality of life.
The full potential of the historic environment should be realised and it should be accessible to all.

Preserve the character of the coast, designated areas, heritage coasts and the international dimension.

Protect and enhance the best features of the city's urban heritage, landscapes, countryside and coast; recognise the contribution of the arts, religious and ethnic diversity.

Ensure that the special architectural or historic interest of the Whitburn Bents Conservation Area is preserved and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations and for the enrichment of the City's built heritage.

Open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to people's quality of life.

Improve health and tackling health inequalities.

Promote objectives for creating sustainable communities in the North East.

Raise general levels of education and training in the city to improve residents' employment prospects

Improve the skills of the tourism workforce

Raise aspirations and increase the entrepreneurialism and educational/vocational attainment of our children and young people

Achieve sustainable development, while serving the interests of both economic growth and conservation of the environment.

Promotes the pursuit coastal regeneration through tourism.

Accelerate economic growth and raise productivity across key sectors.

Seeks to integrate different types of transport to benefit the environment, health and wealth creation.

Improve accessibility, changing travel behaviour and addressing transport constraints.

Integrate sustainable transport infrastructure into regeneration schemes thus giving greater priority to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport, making these modes of travel attractive, safe and convenient.

4 The baseline

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 A baseline provides the evidence on which the SA can compare the predicted effects of the SPD in order to determine their significance.

4.1.2 This section provides:

- an introduction to the environment, community and economy that may be affected by the SPD including sustainability issues and problems;
- a brief analysis of how this might look in the absence of the SPD;
- a focus on the characteristics of those areas likely to be most affected by the SPD; and
- a breakdown of the issues and problems in these areas.

4.2 What is the situation now?

4.2.1 The following introduces the environmental, community and economic constraints, issues and problems within the area likely to be affected by the implementation of the SPD.

Environment

4.2.2 The Seafront area comprising the residential areas of Seaburn and Roker is characterised as a predominantly 'developed' area of Sunderland's coastline. However, two internationally recognised environmental designations, Northumbria Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Durham Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC), are only a short distance from the masterplan area. These have been designated for the plant and animals species that live there.

4.2.3 Seaburn beach currently has blue flag status which recognises, amongst other things, litter free shores and good bathing water quality. Despite this there is widespread agreement among locals that litter and dog fouling are both issues within the Seafront area. Furthermore, a temporary loss of Seaburn beach's blue flag status in 2007 for failing bathing water quality indicates a shortfall in the local sewage capacity. There are no issues with regards local air quality.

4.2.4 Within the Masterplan area there is a large amount of open green space linking the coast to the SNCI inland. This includes areas of woodland and amenity grassland. However, the ecological qualities of this land as it currently stands are limited due to anti-social behaviour and poor maintenance. In addition, a small stream, Roker Burn, flows across the southern end of the site and into the sea by way of an outfall. The burn is heavily modified along its eastern extent and consequently the ecological, pollution and flood attenuation benefits of this watercourse are limited.

Community

4.2.5 Fulwell Ward in which Seaburn is situated fares well in Sunderland in terms of key health indicators. Educational attainment in Seaburn is above the average for the local authority area. It is also recognised as one of the city's most affluent areas with higher accessibility and lower deprivation than the city average. It is in the top 32% least deprived areas within England and

Wales. However, criminal statistics for Seaburn do indicate a high rate of theft and criminal damage compared to national averages.

- 4.2.6 Within a few minutes walk of the seafront is St Peters Church and Bedes way which is included in the Wearmouth-Jarrow nomination for UNESCO World Heritage site status in 2010.

Economy

- 4.2.7 The economy of the seafront area is largely focused around tourism. Consequently it has declined since the 1950s as the draw of overseas holidays have become more accessible for tourist activities. Attempts have been made by Sunderland City Council in the past to revive the fortunes of the local area including the hosting of a number of high profile events. This has had effects on local employment which is low and primarily restricted to a small number of retail facilities, hotels, bars and restaurants.

4.3 What is the situation without the masterplan?

Environment

- 4.3.1 The coastline of Sunderland is home to a large part of Sunderland's population. There is an existing degree of disturbance to local habitats as a result. However, there is little reason to believe that degradation of habitats by human activity will continue at any faster a pace than it is currently. Coastal erosion is considered to be a long term risk affecting habitats and biodiversity along the Sunderland coastline. In the short term, neglect of the masterplan area may result in environmental degradation associated with an increase in litter and urban decay. This will decrease the quality and value of the landscape and wider seafront area.
- 4.3.2 Climate change is a threat to many coastal locations and in the future may increase the rate of coastal erosion. Whilst climate change may bring higher temperatures in the summer, there will also be more periods of intense rainfall that brings with it risks of localised flooding. In turn this can lead to contaminated water reaching local water sources which could affect the water quality of Seaburn beaches bathing waters.

Community

- 4.3.3 While it is reasonable to assume that Seaburn will continue to attract recreational visitors for walking, cycling, fishing and use of the beach, numbers of visitors may decline as the area continues to be perceived as run down. Furthermore, instances of crime may continue to increase along the seafront. However, quality of life indicators relating to levels of skills and educational attainment are likely to continue as there is no indication that these should decline. In general the health of the population should improve in line with city wide trends.

Economy

- 4.3.4 It is reasonable to assume that downward trends in the local tourism economy will continue without the plan. Although there are a number of measures for economic improvement likely to be contained within the Local Development Framework, it is doubtful these will be directed specifically at Seaburn. Consequently local employment is unlikely to change significantly.

4.4 Area likely to be significantly affected by the plan

- 4.4.1 Most of the outcomes to the proposals for Seaburn will affect the masterplan area itself and the surrounding area. As Seaburn is adjacent to the beach there will be some impacts on this, the sea and the SPA and SAC designated sites along the coastline. Economic effects are thought to be generally localised. There is potential however for Sunderland's seafront to have an increased regional profile over time, perhaps attracting more visitors from further afield, as a result transport effects may be felt across the city.

5 Sustainability objectives

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 In order to assess the contribution of the SPD to future sustainable development, a series of sustainability objectives were developed. These were broadly based on the objectives of the regional sustainable development framework – the Integrated Regional Framework for the North East – and the issues and problems set out in the previous sections.

5.2 The Sustainability Appraisal framework

5.2.1 The objectives are listed in Table 5.1 below, alongside sub criteria developed in order to increase the local distinctiveness of the objectives. Together these are known as the Sustainability Appraisal Framework

Table 4.1: The SA Framework

Sustainability Objective	Sub criteria
Safeguard and enhance the region's environmental infrastructure	Protect and enhance sites and habitats designated for their biodiversity value
	Enhance biodiversity in green spaces and amongst developments in urban areas
	Bring biodiversity into the day-to-day lives of Sunderland's residents by promoting the qualities of designated sites
Secure safe waste recovery / disposal without endangering health or harming the environment	Protect and enhance sites and habitats designated for their geodiversity value
	Protect the human health and environment of the seafront area by producing less waste and by using it as a resource
Protect water sources from contamination and minimise the release of harmful products into the environment.	Ensure that designated coastal bathing waters along the seafront retain 'excellent' status
	Improve the water quality of river, ground and coastal waters that are considered to be 'at risk' of not meeting Directive objectives
	Ensure that there current water and sewage capacity can accommodate the impact of new development and regeneration strategies
	Ensure surface water run-off is managed in a sustainable manner
Minimise polluting activities and contain air pollution to within acceptable limits	Ensure development supports efforts to reduce all forms of pollution, and in particular the effects of motor vehicles
Adapt to and mitigate against climate change	Make an equitable contribution to helping the UK cut its carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050
	Reduce the cause and impacts of flooding Address the risk and impacts of coastal erosion
Promote, enhance and respect the region's	Preserve the character of the coast

Sustainability Objective	Sub criteria
culture and heritage	Protect and enhance historic built environment by ensuring viable uses
	Prevent new development which is at odds with the character of the site
	Improve the seafront and public realm
	Preserve the historic environmental infrastructure
Improve health and well-being while reducing inequalities in health	Encourage recreation that will contribute to the health of residents and visitors
	Improve pedestrian and cycle routes to promote healthy modes of transport
Build sustainable communities	Promote and encourage community involvement and participation
	Stem the declining population by reducing out-migration Reduce instances of petty crime and vandalism
Establish a strong learning and skills base	Maintain levels of educational attainment
Strengthen the regional economy	Strengthen the local economy by encouraging local businesses to locate to the area
	Build the local tourist economy by attracting more visitors to the seafront
Develop a more sustainable employment market	Establish a more diverse local economy
Develop sustainable transport and communication	Reduce the reliance on the private car as a preferred mode of transport
	Reduce congestion along the A183 corridor
	Improve public transport links between the seafront and key services in the city
	Improve pedestrian and cycle routes to promote healthy modes of transport

6 Appraisal findings

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This section summarises the results of the Seaburn Masterplan SPD drawing on the detail contained within the SA Objective chapters, in terms of the impacts of the plan on the environment, community and economy.

6.2 What will the situation be with the masterplan?

Environment

- 6.2.1 The SPD acknowledges the importance of retaining and enhancing green space along the seafront where it is possible and seeks strong justification and mitigation proposals where it is not. In a number of areas positive measures are proposed through the green infrastructure plan which seeks to enhance the existing ecological characteristics of the area and mitigate against the negative implications of the development. This also has the potential to provide support for the local European wildlife sites. The planting of native species is an important feature of these improvements.
- 6.2.2 There will be an increase in the population frequenting this area of coastline which is within the vicinity of important international designations. However, this accessibility may also place stress on the local wildlife with waste generation and noise disturbance of the local area. The SPD provides support for visitor management through the commitment to provide a Litter Management Plan and a Dog Control Strategy within the proposals to help reduce pressure on coastal ecosystems.
- 6.2.3 Housing and retail developments will increase the pressure on the waste water infrastructure within the locale which has shown periods of limited capacity. However, the high degree of support for sustainable construction and SuDS within the SPD will alleviate the flood and pollution risks associated with the development. Furthermore, The Masterplan acknowledges the long term risks associated with the impacts of climate change and prevents development in high risk flood areas.
- 6.2.4 The increased attraction of Seaburn for visitors will augment traffic frequenting the seafront which will be exacerbated further by the large provision of parking throughout the plan area. This is, however, offset by the attractiveness of the resort for cyclists and pedestrians. Furthermore, the support provided through the plans for enhancing local public transport provision will further reduce air quality emissions associated with the scheme.

Community

- 6.2.5 The Masterplan has at its core the intention to create an area that will enable existing activities to be undertaken within an enhanced environment with increased legibility which will provide opportunities to enjoy the resort of Seaburn. The proposals will encourage enjoyment of the marine environment and will contribute to improving health. The environmental improvements also make a valuable contribution to the creation of sustainable communities.

Economy

- 6.2.6 The seafront regeneration will be of benefit to the wider Sunderland community as a whole which can boost Sunderland's tourism economy. The Masterplan will generate new business opportunities from the point of creating a local economy within the plan area. Increasing visitors will also provide support and custom for existing business. Increased capacity for new events as a result of the plans will enhance Seaburn as a regional attraction
- 6.2.7 In the long term, there may be an impetus for new businesses to move into the area. There will also be opportunities to improve the evening economy, for example through new cafes and restaurants attracted to the area. This will stimulate the local job market providing local employment opportunities.

6.3 Issues and Problems for European Wildlife Sites

- 6.3.1 Two European wildlife sites lie within the vicinity of the Seaburn Masterplan area:
- Northumbria Coast Special Protection Area (SPA)
 - Durham Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- 6.3.2 While the potential effects of the SPD on these sites are discussed in the SA Report, the issues and problems are discussed further in the accompanying 'Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report'.

7 Mitigation

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 This section suggests key methods with which the positive effects can be enhanced and the negative effects can be mitigated to maximise the ability of the SPD to achieve the SA Objectives.

7.2 How can we mitigate / enhance effects?

Table 6.1: Proposed measures with which the effects of the proposals can be mitigated or enhanced.

A habitat management plan should be provided for the site to enhance the natural characteristics of the area and ensure this is maintained through management by the council.
Soft landscaping should be influenced by planting species that could provide a supporting function to the local designations.
Proposed soft landscaping should ensure a seamless transition between coastal and inland plant species to facilitate natural green spaces and permit a pleasurable, natural coastline environment.
The provision of not only standard refuse bins but also those which may permit waste recycling including waste disposal facilities for dog foul.
Permeable paving or grasscrete within the car parking provision can help alleviate flooding and contaminated run-off and maximise the ecological potential of this hard standing.
Strengthening and highlighting access routes to Seaburn by walking, cycling and public transport
Promotion of cycling as a means to visit the site including measures for safe and secure cycle parking and cyclist changing areas.
The text of the SPD could be enhanced to make it clear that the site must be able to perform functions for all members of the community.
The masterplan proposals could be used to promote new events that would promote the Seaburn seafront area as a regional and national attraction.
The proposals could be strengthened through collaboration with the Local Development Framework.
The proposals should be supportive and complementary with employment and housing policies within the LDF Core Strategy.

8 Monitoring Measures

8.1 Monitoring Significant effects

8.1.1 It is important that the likely significant effects of the plan are monitored over time so that action can be taken to address any significant problems in the future. Indicators must be identified in order to monitor each significant effect. Indicators must be robust but also practical, so that data can be collected to monitor trends in the indicator into the future.

8.1.2 Proposed monitoring indicators have been set out in the main report, and will be finalised following discussions with the Council (it is the Council who have responsibility for monitoring the significant sustainability effects of the plan. Some key monitoring effects are likely to include:

- Natural England closely monitors all SSSIs. The local environmental designations are all encompassed within Durham Coast SSSI which should remain in favourable status.
- The Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report monitors specific “hotspot” areas of Sunderland for air quality. There is no specific monitoring station at Seaburn, and is not currently identified as a “hotspot”, or problem area. Monitoring of traffic numbers overtime, may assist in indicating if comparable to other “hotspot”, the numbers are likely to cause problems.
- Waste is monitored at a city wide level by Sunderland City Council and it is difficult to isolate waste generation in small areas. Waste disposal will continue to be part of the Councils responsibilities and localised monitoring may be undertaken by other Council services.
- It will be important to work closely with the Environment Agency who monitor coastal waters particularly with respect to bathing water quality. This information is available annually from the Environment Agency.
- The Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report monitors the number of planning applications approved in tourism and cultural related developments.

9 Consultation

9.1 Commenting on the Sustainability Appraisal

9.1.1 In order to take account of the views of the community and other stakeholders a period of formal consultation on the draft Seaburn Masterplan and SPD and the Sustainability Appraisal took place.

9.1.2 Under Article 3 (6) of the SEA Directive a copy of the Sustainability Appraisal for Seaburn Masterplan was sent to the following bodies for comment:

- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Natural England

9.1.3 In addition a number of organisations with environmental, social and economic interests received notification of both the consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal for Seaburn Masterplan and the Masterplan itself.

9.1.4 The consultation gave rise to a number of changes which are require assessment before the plan can be adopted. The main changes to the Masterplan included:

Environment

9.1.5 The Masterplan places emphasis on flood risk in particular highlighting the south of the masterplan area around the Cut Throat Dene which should undergo sequential test assessment. The potential impacts of the development on the coastline are also recognised and reference is made to the North East Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2). In recognising the sensitivity of the Seaburn area as a coast location and a partial flood zone, the SPD refers to sustainable drainage techniques, green roofs, permeable paving and appropriate public realm features in this context. Furthermore, support is provided for developer contributions to the adoption and maintenance of SUDS across the site.

9.1.6 Emphasis has also been made on ensuring considerable care is also taken to minimize the impact of light pollution particularly on the intertidal area the sensitive habitat in the area.

Community

9.1.7 Any lighting improvements referenced in the SPD have been amended to place emphasis on a lighting scheme to frame and enhance the appearance of developments at night particularly at the key gateways and routes identified in this plan. This will assist in creating a sense of community safety and way finding.

9.2 The Sustainability Statement

- 9.2.1 Once the SPD has been adopted the Council will be required to provide the public and the Consultation Bodies with information on how sustainability considerations highlighted through the SA process, as well as consultation responses, are reflected in the plan or programme and how its implementation will be monitored in the future.
- 9.2.2 A Sustainability Statement will be required setting out the above information for publication alongside the adopted SPD.