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Seaburn Masterplan SPD Sustainability Statement

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Sustainability Appraisal of the Seaburn Masterplan SPD - Sustainability Statement September 2011

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1 Introduction

1.1 Seaburn Masterplan SPD

1.1.1 Sunderland City Council formally adopted the Seaburn Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on 20th July 2011. Alongside the preparation of the SPD the Council has carried out a parallel process of appraising and consulting on a Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

1.1.2 The SA seeks to identify the economic, social and environmental impacts of the SPD and suggests ways to avoid or minimise negative impacts and maximise positive ones.

1.1.3 When a plan or programme is adopted, the SEA Directive requires the body responsible for preparing it to make information available on how environmental, or in this case sustainability considerations and consultation responses were reflected in the plan or programme and how its implementation will be monitored in the future.

1.2 Sustainability Appraisal

1.2.1 Councils are required to undertake strategic environmental assessment of Plans under the European Parliament Directive 2001/42/EC. Article 9 of the Directive states that when a Plan is adopted authorities must inform specific environmental consultees and the public with a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan, how the environmental report (i.e. Sustainability Appraisal Report) and the result of consultations on the report have been taken into account, and the reason for choosing the plan in the light of other reasonable alternatives. In this context, the specific environmental consultees are Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage.

Plan or programme proponents should ensure that, when a plan or programme is adopted, the Environmental Consultation Bodies and the public “are informed and the following items are made available to those so informed:

- (a) the plan or programme as adopted;**
- (b) a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme...[including] the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with, and**
- (c) the measures decided concerning monitoring [of the plan]**

(Annex 9(1))

1.3 Sustainability Statement

1.3.1 This document has been prepared to address the following points:

- Section 2 – this sets out the principal findings of the SA.
- Section 3 – how the responses to consultation received during the evolution of the SPD – including comments on the provisional (draft) plan and SA Report - were taken into account in finalising the SPD.
- Section 4 – how implementation of the SPD will be monitored in the future.

2 SA Findings

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 URS Scott Wilson was appointed by Sunderland City Council to appraise and produce the SA of the Seaburn Masterplan SPD. The SA was undertaken and supported the SPD throughout its preparation.

2.1.2 By undertaking a systematic and iterative process the SA has been used to:

- develop and refine the SPD;
- assess both the positive and negative effects of the proposals;
- and revise some of the proposals and consider mitigation measures that address the effects and achieve more sustainable outcomes;

2.1.3 The SA started with the production of a Scoping Report and Context Review which were subject to consultation with the designated Consultation Bodies for the SEA (English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England) for a period of five weeks.

2.1.4 In order to assess the contribution of the SPD to future sustainable development, a series of 14 sustainability objectives for the area were developed – see Table 2.1 below. The sustainability objectives provided the benchmark for undertaking the SA. Sub-criteria were used to facilitate the evaluation of the proposals against these sustainability objectives.

Table 2.1: 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 biodiversity 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 regain '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

Sustainability Objective	Sub criteria
Adapt to and mitigate against climate change	<p>Make an equitable contribution to helping the UK cut its carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050</p> <p>Reduce the cause and impacts of flooding</p> <p>Address the risk and impacts of coastal erosion</p>
Promote, enhance and respect the region's culture and heritage	<p>Preserve the character of the coast</p> <p>Protect and enhance historic built environment by ensuring viable uses</p> <p>Prevent new development which is at odds with the character of the site</p> <p>Improve the seafront and public realm</p> <p>Preserve the historic environmental infrastructure</p>
Improve health and well-being while reducing inequalities in health	<p>Encourage recreation that will contribute to the health of residents and visitors</p> <p>Improve pedestrian and cycle routes to promote healthy modes of transport</p>
Build sustainable communities	<p>Promote and encourage community involvement and participation</p> <p>Stem the declining population by reducing out-migration</p> <p>Reduce instances of petty crime and vandalism</p>
Establish a strong learning and skills base	Maintain levels of educational attainment
Strengthen the regional economy	<p>Strengthen the local economy by encouraging local businesses to locate to the area</p> <p>Build the local tourist economy by attracting more visitors to the seafront</p>
Develop a more sustainable employment market	Establish a more diverse local economy
Develop sustainable transport and communication	<p>Reduce the reliance on the private car as a preferred mode of transport</p> <p>Reduce congestion along the A183 corridor</p> <p>Improve public transport links between the seafront and key services in the city</p> <p>Improve pedestrian and cycle routes to promote healthy modes of transport</p>

2.2 What will the situation be with the masterplan?

Environment

2.2.1 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.

- 2.2.2 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.
- 2.2.3 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.
- 2.2.4 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

- 2.2.5 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

- 2.2.6 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
- 2.2.7 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.

3 Commentary on decision making and responses to consultation

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Under the SEA Directive, this statement should set out how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme' and how the 'opinions expressed' as a result of consultation on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report (in this case SA Report) have been taken into account. Three factors therefore need to be explicitly taken into account in finalising the SPD:

1. the findings of the SA;
2. the findings of consultation on the plan; and
3. the findings of consultation on the SA Report.

3.1.2 In relation to the SA findings, Section 2 details the final SA assessment of the SPD which was produced iteratively by the Council in light of several revisions of the SA Report and ongoing engagement.

3.1.3 In relation to the consultation on the SPD, Section 3.2 outlines the consultation process employed during the preparation of the emerging plan. Detailed information on the responses received, and schedules outlining the resultant changes to the document can be obtained from the Council.

3.1.4 In relation to comments on the SA Report, Section 3.3 sets out responses to the SA Report and how these have been taken into account in finalising the SPD. Section 4.4 details how the SA Scoping Report (prepared at the beginning of the SA process) was amended in light of consultation.

3.2 Approach to Consultation

3.2.1 The Seaburn Masterplan SPD – Consultation Statement provides details on the various stages of consultation that were carried out on the SPD and accompanying documents.

Pre-production Involvement on the SPD

3.2.2 The council carried out a first stage city wide consultation on regeneration options for the seafront between 16 February and 3 April 2009. The purpose of the consultation was to find out what the people who live in, work in and visit Sunderland feel should be the vision for the future of the seafront. People were asked whether the vision should be a seafront to go to for a quiet walk, family fun, watersports, great events or any other suggestions they may have.

3.2.3 Data was collected using two methods - a survey (seafront consultation form) and workshops.

3.2.4 The survey formed part of the Community Spirit Spring Survey 2009 and was also made available at:

- all libraries across the city
- the Resort Office on Marine Walk

- exhibitions in the Sunderland Aquatic Centre, Civic Centre main reception and Central Library
 - drop in sessions held on the Mobile Customer Service Centre at Marine Walk and Market Square during the consultation period
- 3.2.5 The survey results informed a draft Seafrost Regeneration Strategy for Sunderland in August 2009 which, following a period of consultation, was adopted in February 2010. A summary of the findings of this consultation process can be found in the Seafrost Findings report at www.sunderland.gov.uk/seafrost
- 3.2.6 The proposals within the Seaburn Masterplan and Design Code have been informed by the vision and development principles for Seaburn set out in the Seafrost Regeneration Strategy

Formal Consultation

- 3.2.7 The Council are required to issue a SPD for formal public consultation for a period of four to six weeks, in line with Regulations 17 and 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. The consultation period for the SPD ran from 19 October and 29 November 2010 and consisted of a number of consultation methods including:
- A letter sent to formal consultees and key stakeholders inviting feedback on the draft Masterplan and Design Code.
 - A letter, summary booklet and consultation postcard was sent to residential and business addresses within and around the site
 - A letter, summary booklet and consultation postcard was also sent to any known interested groups/individuals
 - The council published a press release in the Sunderland Echo encouraging the public and other interested parties to submit their views and comments on the draft Seaburn Masterplan and Design Code.
 - Information on the consultation and how to take part featured in the regular newsletters sent to specific target groups across the City.
 - Copies of the draft document were made available during normal opening times at Sunderland Civic Centre and all libraries within the city.
 - A series of public exhibitions showcasing the draft Seaburn Masterplan and Design Code Framework and accompanying documentation was displayed during the consultation period. They were located at the Seaburn Centre, Aquatic Centre, the Civic Centre, Sunderland Central Library, the Hetton Centre and Washington Leisure Centre (further details are set out below).
 - Staff from the City Council's Office of the Chief Executive attended exhibitions at specified times to answer any questions from members of the public (details are set out below).
 - The Summary Booklets were made available at all local libraries and at all the exhibitions and could be taken away by members of the public. The booklet contained a comment postcard allowing comments to be left in boxes at the exhibitions or returned to the Civic Centre by freepost.
 - A dedicated web page was created, which was accessed via the friendly URL: www.sunderland.gov.uk/seaburn. The page included the draft documents and an on-line response form

3.3 Consultation Responses relating to the SPD

- 3.3.1 A number of comments were made on the SPD and the accompanying SA Report during the consultation period. The Seaburn Masterplan SPD – Consultation Statement includes full details of the responses received and how they were addressed at each stage of the plan preparation process.

4 Post Consultation Alterations

4.1 Changes to the Masterplan

4.1.1 The consultation gave rise to a number of changes in the SPD. The effect these changes had on the results of the SA are outlined below:

Environment

4.1.2 The Masterplan now 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 coastal and a partial flood zone, the SPD now refers to sustainable drainage techniques, green roofs, permeable paving and appropriate public realm features in this context. Furthermore, the masterplan now highlights that developer contributions will be required for the maintenance and adoption of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) across the site.

4.1.3 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

4.1.4 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.

5 Monitoring

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The SEA Directive includes a specific requirement for monitoring the significant environmental effects of plans and programmes and the Environmental Report on the assessment (incorporated within this report) should include a description of the measures envisaged for monitoring the plan.

The ‘Environmental Report’ required under the SEA Directive should include:

“a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10”

Annex 1(i)

“Member States shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes...” (Article 10(1))

5.2 Monitoring Seaburn Masterplan SPD

5.2.1 **Table 5.1** summarises the recommendations. It will be up to the Council to consider the practicalities of monitoring and what might be achievable. Monitoring should be undertaken through the Annual Monitoring Report for the Councils Local Development Framework.

Table 5.1: Monitoring suggestions

Significant Effect	Monitoring suggestion
Uncertainty exists as to the impacts of the SPD on wildlife within the local environmental designations (The significance of this effect may be influenced by further work on the HRA).	Natural England closely monitors all SSSIs. The local environmental designations are all encompassed within Durham Coast SSSI which is in particularly monitoring for its role in supporting purple sandpiper.
Decreases in local air quality as a result of increase vehicle use and congestion associated with the proposals	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.
Increases in waste generation associated with the increased visitor numbers.	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.

Significant Effect	Monitoring suggestion
<p>There is a need to monitor the impacts of the SPD on the coastal water quality to remove the risk of compromising the beaches blue flag status.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Stimulation of the local tourism economy.</p>	<p>The Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report monitors the number of planning applications approved in tourism and cultural related developments.</p>

6 Further Information

- 6.1.1 Copies of the Adopted Seaburn Masterplan, the full SA Report and all of the related documents can be downloaded from the City Council's website:

<http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/seafont>

- 6.1.3 For further information on the SPD please contact:

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