



Initial
Sustainability Appraisal
May 2012



Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

What is Sustainable Development?

What is a Sustainability Appraisal?

Chapter 2: The Scoping Report

Appraising the Local Plan Objectives

Review of the Sustainability Appraisal Framework

Collection of the Baseline Information

Chapter 3: Options Appraisal

How the options were appraised

Appraising the Growth Scenarios

Appraising the Broad Options for Growth

Appraising the Individual Sites

Appraising the Site Options

Chapter 4: Feedback

Introduction

- 1.1 The Council must ensure that the principles of sustainable development are taken into account when preparing the policies and proposals in the new Local Plan which will shape the future development of the district.
- 1.2 The Council is not required to produce a Sustainability Appraisal at this stage. However to inform the preparation of the Preferred Options document the Council has appraised options for the level of growth and locating this new development given the significance of these policy areas. We are reporting this information as it may assist people in commenting as part of the consultation. Other policy areas will be appraised in due course (incorporating feedback from the consultation process) in a full Sustainability Appraisal which will be published with the Submission Draft Local Plan.

What is Sustainable Development?

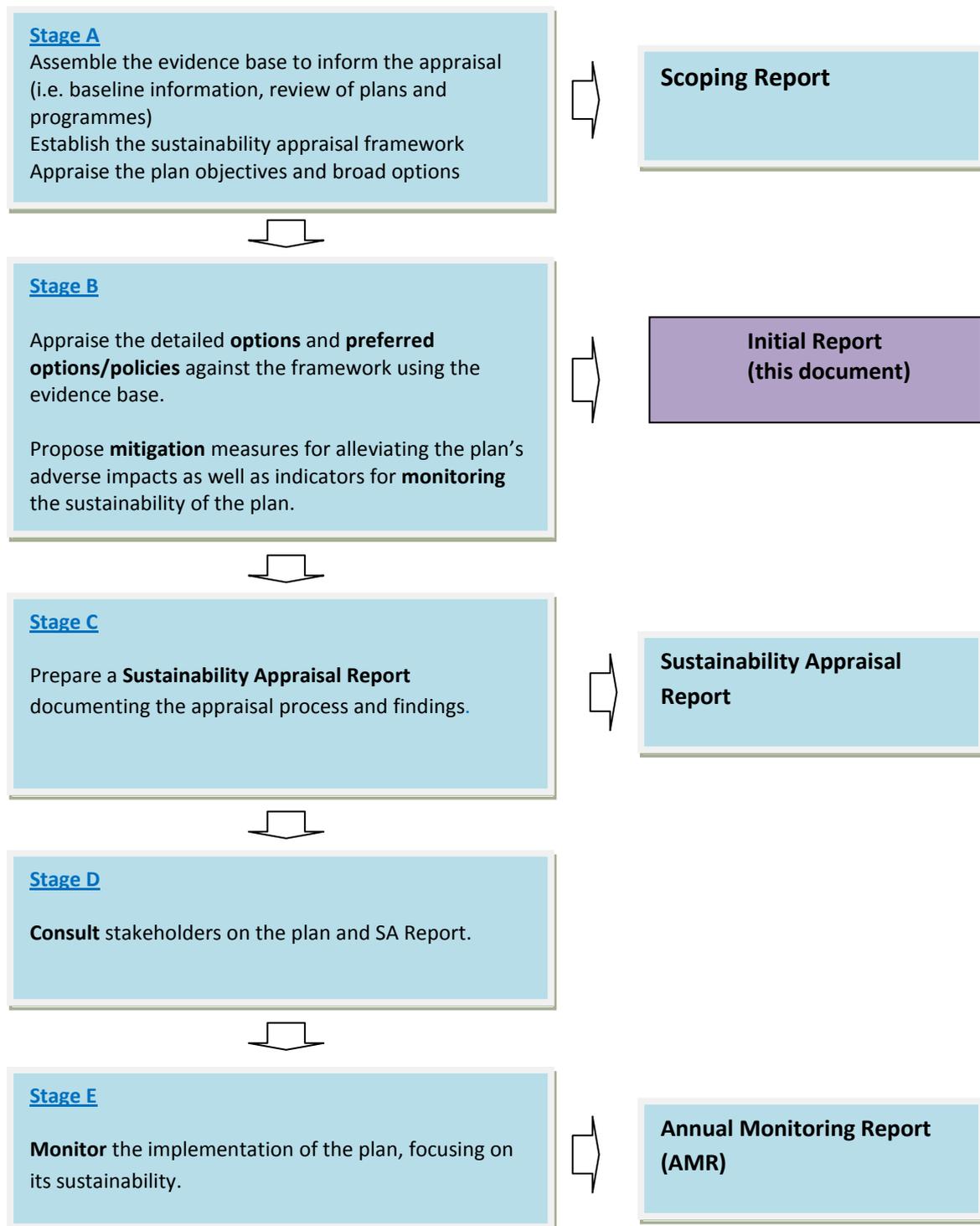
- 1.3 The aim of sustainable development is to *ensure that people can meet basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations*¹. To ensure this is achieved social, economic and environmental objectives are taken into account at all stages of decision making.
- 1.4 The UK Sustainable Development Strategy *Securing the Future* sets out five guiding principles of sustainable development identifying that in order **to live within environmental limits and ensure a strong, healthy and just society** we must do so by means of a **sustainable economy, good governance, and sound science**. Priority areas have been identified as sustainable consumption and production, climate change and energy, natural resource protection and environmental enhancement, and sustainable communities.
- 1.5 The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** recognises the importance of the planning system in contributing to the achievement of sustainable development through the following roles:
 - **Economic – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy**, ensuring sufficient land is available of the right type and in the right location to support growth
 - **Social – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities**, supplying houses to meet the needs of present and future generations, creating a high quality built environment with accessible services
 - **Environmental – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment**, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and mitigating and adapting to climate change.

¹ Source: UK Sustainable Development Strategy, 2005

What is a Sustainability Appraisal?

- 1.6 The process for ensuring the principles of sustainable development are taken into account is referred to as a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The SA ensures that social, environmental and economic considerations are taken into account in a systematic way at all stages of policy production and in doing so places the principle of sustainable development at the heart of decision making. Each stage involved in preparing the Local Plan has an associated stage in the SA process. The SA is underpinned by the requirements of the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment or 'SEA Directive' (European Directive 2001/42/EC) which requires that all plans and programmes are assessed in terms of their impact on the environment.

Figure 1: The Sustainability Appraisal Framework



The Scoping Report

- 2.1 The Council has already undertaken the first stage (stage A) of the Sustainability Appraisal process, the Scoping Report which was published for consultation alongside the Issues and Scenarios for Growth Paper in March 2011. This established the **Sustainability Appraisal Framework**, a series of economic, social and environmental objectives which will be used to appraise each stage of the new Local Plan. A series of **indicators** were identified from a range of sources to monitor whether progress will be made towards meeting these objectives. Information was collected against these indicators in order to establish the **baseline position** in the district. Using this information together with a review of other local and national policies, plans and programmes, the Council identified a list of **important issues** facing the district. More information is provided in the Scoping Report. This framework will be used to assess the impact of policies at all stages of preparing the Local Plan.

Appraising the Local Plan Objectives

- 2.2 As part of the Scoping Report the Local Plan objectives were appraised against the sustainability objectives to identify any incompatibility. No negative effects were expected to result from the Local Plan objectives and most were considered likely to have a positive or neutral effect. In a significant number of instances the impact of the Local Plan objectives was considered to be uncertain because at the time of carrying out the assessment the distribution and nature of new development was unknown.
- 2.3 The objectives were amended in the Preferred Options document in response to comments made as part of the Issues paper consultation and the *Council's Strategy for the Future and Sustainable Prosperity of Warwick District*. These were minor changes and were therefore not considered to require further appraisal.

Responses to the Scoping Report Consultation

- 2.4 The Council received a number of comments on the Scoping Report largely focused on the wording of the sustainability objectives and the relevance of key questions and indicators.
- 2.5 A review of the Sustainability Appraisal Framework was undertaken in response to these comments as well as a wider need to ensure the framework was up to date and fit for purpose. The revised framework is set out in appendix 1. Changes were made to a number of the key questions to ensure they were directly relevant to the objective and would properly assist in assessing the impact of a potential site or policy.

- 2.6 The indicators were reviewed to identify where information is no longer collected and to find more relevant indicators and /or sources of information where available. As a consequence of this exercise a number of new indicators were included (shown in red in appendix 1). In addition a number of potential indicators have been identified (shown in blue in appendix 1) where it is considered that this information would assist in appraising policies as the New Local Plan is prepared. It is intended that the Council will develop monitoring systems to collect this information in the future.

Collection of Baseline Information

- 2.7 The baseline data has been updated to ensure the most up to date picture of the district was known prior to appraising the options and to take into account the review of the Sustainability Appraisal Framework. A full set of baseline data is included in Appendix 2. This evidence base is a key component of the SA process and a legal requirement under the SEA directive. This information helps to form an understanding of the district and enables identification of sustainability issues. It provides the basis for predicting and monitoring effects of the Local Plan.

3. Option Appraisal

How the options were appraised

- 3.1 The SEA Directive requires that the environmental report should consider *'reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scale of the plan or programme'* and give *'an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with'* (Article 5.1 and Annex 1 (h)). In preparing the Preferred Options the Council has appraised different options for the level of growth, and a range of options for locating the preferred level.
- 3.2 The role of the sustainability appraisal is to provide information about sustainability implications of each of the options and to provide possible recommendations for improvement of these. It is not intended as a mechanism to determine which options should be chosen. This is the role of decision makers who will determine which range of options it will be appropriate to pursue.
- 3.3 The assessment was carried out using the professional judgement of officers in the planning policy team providing expertise in a range of policy areas. The sustainability objectives were designated equal importance, with no weight being given to any individual sustainability objective. Using this simplified method provides an indication of the sustainability performance of each of the options.
- 3.4 The following section sets out the sustainability appraisal of the various options. The options have been scored in terms of their compatibility with the sustainability objectives in the Revised Sustainability Appraisal Framework by using a simple scoring method as follows:

Strongly positive	++	2
Positive	+	1
Neutral	=	0
Negative	-	-1
Strongly negative	--	-2
Unknown	?	0

- 3.5 A full matrix showing how the different options were scored can be found in Appendix 3.

3 Appraising the growth scenarios

- 3.6 In the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report the Council appraised three potential levels of growth (ranging between 250 and 800 homes per annum) as set out in Scenarios 1 to 3 of the Issues Paper.
- 3.7 Since the preparation of the Scoping Report the Council has undertaken further work to determine what level of growth should be taken forward over the plan period. A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was published which sets out a series of household projections based on different assumptions about migration and employment growth. Two projections (600 and 700 homes per annum) were considered to be the most realistic options in terms of meeting the housing and employment needs of the district. As these levels of growth had not previously been subject to sustainability appraisal the Council ensured this was undertaken to inform the Preferred Options. A summary of this is set out below; a full schedule of how the scenarios were scored is set out in appendix 3.

Growth Scenario	Score	Summary
Trend based (600 homes p.a.)	2.5	Will have a positive impact in terms of supporting economic growth, meeting housing needs and supporting a range of sustainable transport options. There is uncertainty in relation to a range of impacts largely because the effect will be dependent on the application of other policies or the actual location of development sites. Could have negative impacts in terms of the loss of green field land and associated effects on the environment.
Employment Growth based (700 homes p.a.)	2.5	A higher level of growth per annum could have a more positive impact in terms of supporting economic growth, meeting housing needs and supporting a range of sustainable transport options. However it could potentially have a greater negative impact in terms of the loss of green field land and associated effects on the environment. There is again uncertainty in relation to a range of impacts largely because the effect will be dependent on the application of other policies or the actual location of development sites.

3.8 Overall the two growth scenarios scored the same however differences were identified in terms of the likely degree of impact on different objectives. In particular, a higher level of growth per annum would potentially make a greater contribution to supporting the economy but could have a slightly more negative impact on the environment in terms of green field development.

Broad Options for Growth

3.9 The Council considered four broad options for locating the preferred level of growth.

- Broad Option 1 - Focus development outside the greenbelt – Given the extent of the green belt development would be concentrated on sites to the south of Warwick, Leamington and Whitnash. There would be no development sites in Kenilworth or villages in the green belt.
- Broad Option 2 – Distributed around the urban fringe
- Broad Option 3- Disperse development around the district – Development would be concentrated in small and medium sized sites, including villages. No large strategic sites would be allocated as part of this option.
- Broad Option 4 – New settlement outside the greenbelt - Given the extent of the greenbelt a new settlement would be located to the south of the district in the vicinity of Warwick, Leamington or Whitnash.

Broad Option	Score	Summary
Broad Option 1 - Focus development outside the green belt	2.5	Would have a positive effect in supporting economic growth. Concentration of sites in one area, close to the urban area, has the potential to support sustainable transport options and reduce the need to travel. However focusing development in one area could have a significant impact on the landscape and the location of sites is more likely to have an impact on the historic environment. Would meet overall housing need but restricted choice in terms of location may mean this option could not meet the needs of all residents.
Broad Option 2 - Distributed around urban fringe	6	Would have a positive effect in supporting economic growth, sites well related to the urban areas could reduce the need to travel and have the potential to meet all housing needs. Distribution of sites is less likely to have a significant impact on the landscape and historic environment.

Broad Option	Score	Summary
Broad Option 3 - Development dispersed in small and medium sites including villages (no large sites)	-9.5	Sites unlikely to be of a sufficient size to accommodate employment opportunities or support public transport improvements therefore could increase reliance on the private car. Would be more difficult to provide dedicated services, potentially impacting on existing services. Could be harder to provide a mix of housing and affordable housing. However a dispersed approach could potentially minimise impact on the historic environment
Broad Option 4 - New Settlement Outside the Green Belt	5.5	Positive impact in terms of supporting economic growth. Critical mass to support new facilities but could still generate a need to travel to access other key services and employment. Would meet overall housing needs however there would be a lack of choice in terms of location.

3.10 The Council developed the Preferred Option based on Broad Option 2, wider justification for this is provided in the housing chapter of the Preferred Options Document.

Appraisal of Individual Sites

3.11 The Council undertook an appraisal of urban and edge of urban sites considered to be suitable in the SHLAA, broad locations on the edge of villages and other sites suggested by officers in the Council. A summary of the potential impacts of these sites is set out in the table below; a full schedule of how the scenarios were scored is set out in appendix 3.

Site	Score	Summary
North of Milverton (West)	1	Scores well for economy and meeting housing need. Less likely to enable a range of sustainable transport options. No biodiversity designations but loss of greenfield land.
North of Milverton (East)	2	Scores well for economy and meeting housing need. Less likely to enable a range of sustainable transport options. Includes minor watercourse designated as a local wildlife site (LWS) linked to the River Avon.

Site	Score	Summary
North of Milverton (whole site)	5	Scores well for economy and meeting housing needs. Development of the whole site has the potential to support new transport infrastructure and provide facilities on the site reducing the need to travel. Includes minor watercourse designated as a local wildlife site (LWS) linked to the River Avon.
Land at Woodside Farm	0	Scores well for economy and will meet some housing needs. May connect into existing transport provision. Well located to existing employment areas and local centres. May support or put some pressure on existing services and community facilities. No biodiversity designations, but loss of greenfield land.
Whitnash East (Total Site)	4	Scores well for economy and meeting housing needs. Likely to enable a range of sustainable transport options and reduce the need to travel and provide facilities on site. Whitnash Brook Local Nature Reserve & LWS on eastern edge.
Whitnash East (Part)	1	Scores well for economy and will meet some housing needs. Will reduce the need to travel as located close to existing facilities. Whitnash Brook Local Nature Reserve & LWS on eastern edge.
South of Harbury Lane	8	Scores well for economy and meeting housing need. Scores well for enabling a range of sustainable transport options and reducing the need to travel – would connect into existing road network and provide a large range of local facilities & services. Tach Brook (tributary of River Avon LWS) on southern boundary of site.
West of Europa Way	10	Scores well for economy and meeting housing need. Scores well for enabling a range of sustainable transport options and reducing the need to travel – would connect into existing road network and provide a large range of local facilities & services. Close to existing town centres and employment areas. Loss of greenfield land with some grade 1 agricultural land in the north east corner of the site.

Site	Score	Summary
Warwick Gates Employment land	3	Scores well for economy and will meet some housing needs. Relates well to existing transport corridors close to employment areas, but further away from some local services without mass to provide its own if developed in isolation.
Thickthorn	3	Scores well for economy and meeting housing needs. Likely to enable a range of sustainable transport options and reduce the need to travel. Close to existing services and facilities with potential for some provision on site. Ancient Woodland and 2 LWS on site, loss of mainly grade 1 & 2 agricultural land.
Glasshouse Lane/ Crewe Lane	2	Scores well for economy and will meet some housing needs. Does not relate as well to existing centres as Thickthorn. Likely to enable a range of sustainable transport options, potential to provide new facilities. LWS on south eastern edge (wood).
Land at Blackdown	1.5	Scores well for economy and meeting housing need. Less likely to enable a range of sustainable transport options. Includes minor watercourse designated as a local wildlife site (LWS) linked to River Avon and loss of greenfield land deemed of high landscape value. Critical mass to provide facilities on site and support adjacent services.
Red House Farm	2.5	Will support economic activity and meet some housing needs. Well located to existing urban area and transport routes. No biodiversity designations. Could support existing services in area in need of regeneration.
Loes Farm	-1.5	Will support economic activity and meet some housing needs. Potential to connect to existing transport services. No biodiversity designations but loss of greenfield land. Land deemed of high landscape value and potential impact on Guys Cliffe Registered Park & Garden.

Site	Score	Summary
South of Gallows Hill	3	Scores well for economy and meeting housing needs. Potential to provide sustainable transport options and local facilities on site to help reduce the need to travel. Area of high landscape value, potential impact on the rural setting of the registered historic Warwick Castle Park. Loss of greenfield land and adjacent to potential LWS and tributary of River Avon LWS.
South of Gallows Hill and The Asps	3	Scores well for economy and meeting housing need. Potential to provide sustainable transport options and local facilities on site to help reduce the need to travel. Area of high landscape value, potential impact on the rural setting of the registered historic Warwick Castle Park. Loss of greenfield land and adjacent to potential LWS and tributary of River Avon LWS.
Welsh Road, Cubbington	-4	Unknown impact on the economy, will meet some housing needs. Less likely to provide a range of sustainable transport options or reduce the need to travel. Likely to support existing services but also add pressure to some. Loss of some greenfield land but includes brownfield land.
West of St Mary's Lands	-1	Unknown impact on economy, will meet some housing needs. Close to some existing services, but has accessibility issues, likely to encourage car use. Includes tributary of River Avon LWS. Currently an area of restraint due in part to the setting of historic Warwick. Reasonably well located for leisure and health facilities, might support local services.
Land South of Gallows Hill, The Asps and Park Farm	2	Scores well for economy and meeting housing needs. Potential to provide sustainable transport options and local facilities on site to help reduce the need to travel. Area of high landscape value, potential impact on the rural setting of the registered historic Warwick Castle Park. Loss of greenfield land and adjacent to potential LWS and tributary of River Avon LWS.

Site	Score	Summary
Land adjacent to Bishops Tachbrook	-2.5	Will support economic activity (close to employment areas) and meet some housing needs dependent on type, size and location. Less likely to support sustainable transport options or reduce the need to travel. Development on greenfield sites likely. Reasonably close to the urban area.
Land adjacent to Hampton Magna	-2.5	Will support economic activity (close to employment areas) and meet some housing needs dependent on type, size and location. Less likely to support sustainable transport options or reduce the need to travel, but reasonably close to Warwick Parkway. Development on greenfield sites likely. Not as well connected to the urban area as some other villages.
Land adjacent to Barford	-5.5	Provision of housing may support economic activity and meet some housing needs dependent on type, size and location. Less likely to support sustainable transport options or reduce the need to travel, likely to lead to more car travel. Adjacent to River Avon LWS and development on greenfield sites likely.
Land adjacent to Radford Semele	-4	Will support economic activity (close to employment areas) and meet some housing needs dependent on type, size and location. Less likely to support sustainable transport options or reduce the need to travel. LWS and pLWS in vicinity and development on greenfield sites likely. Some issues of flooding in the village need to be taken into account. Reasonably close to the urban area.
Land at Westwood Heath Road / Cromwell Lane	2	Scores well for economy and will meet some housing needs, however may not be well located for Warwick's housing need. Likely to enable a range of sustainable transport options, reasonably close to Tile Hill station and existing bus network. In area of high landscape value and adjacent to several local biodiversity designations including ancient woodland. Might support facilities in Burton Green.

Site	Score	Summary
Land at Oaks Farm	-1	Scores well for economy and meeting housing needs. In area of high landscape setting, particularly in relation to the setting of Kenilworth Castle. Location may make the provision of sustainable transport options difficult. Not as well located to centres as other sites in Kenilworth. Close to sports facilities and accessible countryside. Potential for some local facilities on site.
Kenilworth Golf Club	0	Scores well for economy and meeting housing needs. Less likely to enable a range of sustainable transport options, further away from the town centre than other options in Kenilworth. Area of high landscape value. Potential for some local facilities on site but does not relate well to existing facilities'.
Land at Montague Road / Ridgeway School	4	Loss of existing employment land neutralises positive impact on economy, will meet some housing needs. Accessible to town and local centres and nearby bus routes. Reuse of brownfield land. Adjacent to Grand Union Canal pLWS.
Land at Station Approach	14	Will support economic activity and meet some housing needs. Highly accessible location, reuse of brownfield land. Potential to enhance Conservation Area and support district heating system as identified in the brief. May improve a crime hotspot.
Warwickshire College	6	Will support economic activity and meet some housing needs. Accessible location, close to existing routes, facilities and town centre. Reuse of brownfield land, adjacent to River Leam pLWS.
Leamington Spa Cricket Club	3	Will support economic activity and meet some housing needs. Accessible location, close to existing routes, facilities and town centre. Loss of greenfield / playing pitch site.
Riverside House	8	Loss of existing employment land neutralises positive impact on economy, will meet some housing needs. Highly accessible location, close to town centre and existing services. Lower part of site within flood zone, adjacent to River Leam pLWS. Re use of brownfield land.

Site	Score	Summary
Leamington Spa Fire Station	9	Loss of existing employment land neutralises positive impact on economy, will meet some housing needs. Highly accessible, central location. Brownfield site with potential to enhance Conservation Area.
Large scale development at Lapworth	-2	Large number of homes has potential to support the local economy, but given location overall impact likely to be dispersed. Has potential to meet wide range of housing needs, but given location possibly not all. Less likely to provide a range of sustainable transport options but proximity to Lapworth station is a strength. Would result in loss of greenfield land. Has potential to provide local facilities on site.
Land at Lapworth	-4.5	Likely to have small impact on local economy and meet some housing needs dependent on type, size and location. Less likely to provide a range of sustainable transport options but proximity to Lapworth station is a strength. Greenfield development likely. Some existing local facilities in village. Accessible to the countryside and green infrastructure network.
Land at Fosse Way	-4.5	Will support economic activity and meet some housing needs. Less likely to provide a range of sustainable transport options or reduce the need travel. Loss of greenfield land adjacent to 2 pLWS. Site constraints may lead to problems with the location of local facilities. Does not relate as well to the urban area as other options.
Fieldgate Lane	-2	Will support economic activity and meet some housing needs. Will not support new services and facilities, but well located to urban area and provides opportunities for walking and cycling. No biodiversity designations, loss of greenfield land, and one of few examples of ridge and furrow in the area.

Site	Score	Summary
Part of South of Harbury Lane	5	Scores well for economy and meeting housing need. Relates well to existing urban area for employment needs, walking and cycling. May accommodate some services and could enhance existing. No biodiversity designations but loss of greenfield site.

Appraisal of Site Options

3.12 Following appraisal of the individual sites, the Council developed four options, for different combinations of sites, which fitted the overall approach of locating development around the urban fringe (as appraised in broad option 2) avoiding coalescence and ensuring development is provided in a range of locations. More detailed explanation of how these options were prepared is set out in the housing chapter of the Preferred Options Local Plan. Plans showing the combination of sites included in each Option are shown in Appendix 4.

Option	Score	Summary
Option 1	0	Positive effect in terms of supporting the economy. Potential negative effects in terms of reducing the need to travel and using sustainable forms of transport from Blackdown and Westwood Heath. Less critical mass to the south to support sustainable transport options.
Option 2	3.5	Positive effect in terms of supporting the economy. Most compact option of sites likely to have the least negative effects, positive in terms of reducing the need to travel, meeting the districts housing needs, and potential to have the least impact on the historic environment.
Option 3	-0.5	Positive effect in terms of supporting the economy. Potential negative effects in terms of reducing the need to travel and using sustainable forms of transport from the southern end of The Asps and land at Blackdown. Negative effect on areas of high landscape character and biodiversity importance at The Asps and Blackdown. Potential impact on historic environment as includes large concentration of development adjacent to the Warwick Castle Park.

Option 4	0.5	Positive effect in terms of supporting the economy. Potential negative effects in terms of reducing the need to travel and using sustainable forms of transport from land at Blackdown and Westwood Heath. Positive in terms of meeting all housing needs across the district
Emerging Preferred Option	0	Positive effect in terms of supporting the economy. Potential negative impact on the historic environment, landscape character and biodiversity at the Asps and land at Blackdown. Positive in terms of meeting all housing needs across the district and in particular a range of rural housing needs.

3.13 In addition to the above options seven 'category 2 villages' were identified to accommodate between 30 and 80 dwellings to assist in meeting rural housing needs. As the potential location of sites in these villages is still uncertain the appraisal has focused on the broad location.

3.14 The Council also identified eight 'category 3 villages' within the green belt where limited infill development on previously developed land within the existing villages will be permitted. The scale of this potential development is likely to have minimal impact and therefore it is considered not necessary to undertake an appraisal of these.

Option	Score	Summary
Cubbington	-1	Sites potentially adjacent to the existing urban area, with good public transport infrastructure, some existing services and opportunities for walking and cycling. Known surface water flooding issues, therefore impact is uncertain and dependant on mitigation measures.
Hatton	-4	Positive in supporting the rural economy and potentially meeting local housing needs. Infrequent public transport provision, limited opportunities for walking and cycling, and limited facilities could increase reliance on the private car.
Leek Wootton	-1	Positive in supporting the rural economy and potentially meeting local housing needs. Relatively close to Kenilworth and Warwick with good public transport

Option	Score	Summary
		provision.
Norton Lindsey	-6	Positive in supporting the rural economy and potentially meeting local housing needs. Infrequent public transport provision, limited opportunities for walking and cycling, and limited facilities could increase reliance on the private car. Impact on Conservation Area uncertain.
Rowington	-6	Positive in supporting the rural economy and potentially meeting local housing needs. Infrequent public transport provision, limited opportunities for walking and cycling, and limited facilities could increase reliance on the private car. Impact on Conservation Area uncertain. Potential flooding issues
Shrewley	-5	Positive in supporting the rural economy and potentially meeting local housing needs. Not well related to the urban area. Infrequent public transport provision, limited opportunities for walking and cycling, and limited facilities could increase reliance on the private car
Burton Green	-1.5	Close to urban area of Coventry with good public transport provision and some opportunities for walking and cycling. Potential to meet local housing needs and support the village hall. Potential impact on areas of high landscape value.

Significant effects and Mitigation Measures

- 3.15 It is a requirement of the SEA Directive that measures should be identified to prevent, reduce, and as far as possible mitigate any significant adverse effects on the environment which would arise from implementing the plan or programme **and** enhance any positive impacts.
- 3.16 These mitigation measures may comprise a broad range of forms, to include:
- Amendments to the Local Plan, including bringing forward new options or adding or deleting options;
 - Refining options in order to secure potential beneficial effects or reduce detrimental impacts. This may be achieved by securing strong policy criteria; and,
 - Technical measures to be applied during the implementation stage; for example, guidelines or applying design principles
- 3.17 In preparing the Submission Draft Local Plan the full Sustainability Appraisal will set out in detail the measures which will be needed to address any significant effects relating to the policies and proposals in the plan.

4. Feedback

- 4.1 Although the Council is not placing this document formally on consultation we would welcome any feedback to assist in preparing the Sustainability Appraisal to accompany the Submission Draft Local Plan.
- 4.2 We would invite written responses by email: newlocalplan@warwickdc.gov.uk or letter, to the address below

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